



Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: September 5, 2024; Board of Supervisors Meeting
LOCATION: Okanogan Conservation District Office, Okanogan, WA and
Remotely via Microsoft Teams and Teleconference
FROM: Natalie Torres, Administrative Assistant

PRESENT:

Lorah Super, Chair
Jerry Asmussen, Vice Chair
Steve Colvin, Auditor
Phillip Dart, Supervisor
Edd Townsend, Supervisor
Randy Kelley, Associate Supervisor
Craig Nelson, Executive Director
Becky Drenner, Finance Director
Jordana Ellis, Irrigation Planner

Dylan Streeter, Wildfire Resiliency & Recovery Planner
Eli Loftis, Wildfire Community & Resiliency Lead
Emmy Engle, Communication & Outreach Specialist
Taylor George, VSP Coordinator
Chevelle Yeckel, Water Quality & Riparian Planner
Natalie Torres, Administrative Assistant
Celeste Acord, NRCS
Elliot Phillips, Public

Meeting Call to Order: Lorah Super called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. She completed a roll call of Supervisors, Associate Supervisors, staff, partners, and the public.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Agenda Approval: Phil Dart moved to approve the agenda as amended. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the August 1, 2024; board meeting minutes as presented. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report #856, which covers the checking account activity from August 2, 2024, to September 5, 2024, inclusive, was presented for the Board's approval. The following checks/payroll/direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:
Three payrolls, one with printed checks, numbers 12500 – 12516 totaling \$29,263.29, two direct withdrawals, Transaction numbers 77 – 91 totaling \$28,543.67 and 209 – 223 totaling 28,082.92.
Checks – numbers 12517 – 12548 totaling \$105,021.21.
Electronic payments – totaling \$44,428.92.
A Transfer from Savings to Checking was made in the amount of \$200,000.00.
Deposits totaling \$177,659.76 were made.

Phil Dart moved to approve Treasurer's Report #856 as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Reports:

Jerry Asmussen – Jerry reported that approximately one inch of rain fell in the past 24 hours. This week is the fair week so he will be very busy with various tasks and duties there.

Steve Colvin – Steve reported that he will be unavailable for the next 6-8 weeks due to medical reasons. He noted that the farm is doing well, although he wishes the temperature weren't 98 degrees.

Lorah Super – Lorah shared that after discovering a hay shortage in the Okanogan, she was able to locate some hay closer to home. Additionally, she reported that the Forest Service is currently in a hiring freeze locally due to a national budget shortfall.

Edd Townsend – Edd announced that the wheat harvest in the southern half is winding down, with production proving to be better than anticipated. Fall seeding is in full swing. In the Central Valley area, stock water in ponds and troughs is holding up better than expected, although conditions remain quite dry. The drought is beneficial for the PRF (insurance program) but not much else.

Phillip Dart – Phillip provided a contrasting report to Edd's. He noted that they have received almost 2.25 inches of rain in the past couple of weeks and that fall seeding has been completed. Phillip reported fall growth on some grasses. After significant overnight rain, he had to rebuild his driveway, and the Okanogan River rose nearly 2.5 feet. He is now preparing to start his fourth cutting of hay.

Associate Supervisor Reports:

Randy Kelley – No comment.

Staff Reports:

Craig reported on the DDT project, stating that he, Taylor, and Kim are working on a request for bids. They are trying to determine the best wording for the bid to maximize soil quality within their budget. The approach is, "This is what we can spend; how much topsoil can you provide?" He mentioned that only one of the two landowners is communicating with them, and they are feeling pressure to expedite the process. Currently, they are waiting for ECY to confirm their contract with the commission.

The commission tour is approaching quickly. The tour is scheduled for approximately two weeks from today. Participants will meet at 12:30 PM at the Best Western in Omak, and dinner will be provided to those who registered and paid for the dinner.

Craig reported that he applied for funding for the acquisition of Bonaparte Meadows project. If funding is provided, we will need to communicate with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation regarding transfer of the parcels to their ownership.

Craig spoke with James Thompson from the Washington State Conservation Commission, he has asked if we spoke to senators/legislators regarding our legislative priorities regarding irrigation projects. Craig explained that our Irrigation Efficiency Program funding request was almost as much as what the Commission decided to request in the coming biennium. James was just reiterating the importance of conservation districts doing their own leg work on supporting major budget requests like this. Craig reported that he reminded James that Senator Short remains in our legislative district but both house seats are up for election and the incumbents are not running. So, we will have to rely heavily upon our Senator and working to bring the elected candidates up to speed after the election.

Eli reported that they are open to partner comments on the Community Wildfire Protection Plan draft document. With numerous individuals on vacation, they expect comments to start coming in soon. A public feedback session is scheduled for September 25 at 6:45 PM at the Okanogan Public Utility District conference room in Okanogan. He also thanked Rosalie for her efforts in reviewing the large number of survey responses.

Taylor shared that the Voluntary Stewardship Program's Technical Panel schedules site tours every two years, with ours planned for October 2nd. She noted that anyone interested in receiving an agenda for the tour can reach out to her for more information.

Emmy shared that it is fair week and thanked Rosalie, Dylan, and Emily for their contributions. The booth is full of activities, and today they welcomed 300 kids and 250 adults. She expressed gratitude to everyone for their help. Additionally, a community survey has been created to gather information on community priorities. Emmy will be in Miami next week.

Becky reported that she is testing a new approach to the voucher process this month, as last month did not go smoothly. She anticipates the need for a new printer and mentioned the necessity of reconnecting with the auditor.

NRCS Report

Celeste requested that anyone with ideas regarding the report emailed earlier should send them her way.

Partner Reports

There were no partners present.

Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans:

TL Ranch Wildfire Recovery Fencing Project – Taylor reported that the boundary fencing for the TL Ranch property on Happy Hill was destroyed in the 2015 Okanogan Complex Fire. The goal of the project is to rebuild the fences along the original lines, allowing the third-generation landowners to use the land for grazing. Jerry Asmussen moved for either Craig or Lorah to sign the cost-share contract and for staff to submit the addendum for a total cost-share amount of \$26,077.85. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Perrault Well Relocation RGP Cost-Share Project – Taylor shared that the Perrault Well Relocation project was initially approved on June 6, 2024, with a project budget totaling \$40,785.00. This included \$26,000 specifically allocated for the cost share and implementation of drilling a new well and decommissioning the old one, while the remaining funds were designated for staff time, cultural resources, travel, and other related expenses. Since the initial approval, the project has faced delays and a change in contractors, resulting in estimated costs that exceed the previously approved \$26,000 cost share. Approval has been granted by Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) Regional Manager Mike Baden and WSCC Riparian Grant Program Manager Amy Martin to proceed with a request for additional funding to cover these increased costs. Jerry Asmussen moved for Craig to revise and sign the Perrault Well Relocation Cost Share Contract. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Tetra Tech Personal Service Contract, Amendment #1 – Chevelle announced that the Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) required for water quality monitoring at Palmer Lake is still under review by the Department of Ecology, resulting in a delay of two to three months. This has also pushed back the training and technical support from Tetra Tech, as outlined in the Scope of Work. The current contract end date is September 30, 2024. As a result, Okanogan CD staff are now scheduled to receive training in Spring 2025 and will need technical support for final reporting to the Department of Ecology at the end of the grant agreement. To address these delays and ensure sufficient time for training and support, staff are requesting an amendment to extend the contract end date to December 31, 2025. Edd Townsend moved to approve the contract amendment and authorize Craig or Lorah to sign the Tetra Tech contract amendment upon finalization. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Amendment to Schertenleib IEGP Cost-Share Contract – Jordana explained that the Schertenleib project involves replacing aging hand and wheel lines with a 4-span pivot system with an end gun to cover 34.18 acres (identified as #442 Sprinkler System). Additionally, a 40-foot extension of the 6" mainline (identified as #430 Irrigation Pipeline) will be added to accommodate the pivot. The project, which was ranked 3rd in the 2024 ranking process, has a total cost of \$102,221. At an 85% cost share rate, the contract would provide the landowners with \$86,887.00, leaving Mr. Schertenleib responsible for 15% of the total cost, amounting to \$15,334.00.

The Okanogan CD Board approved the project on August 1st, 2024, and Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) funding was approved on August 13th, 2024. Recently, Mr. Schertenleib discovered that the anticipated alternate funding for necessary electrical work will not be available. To install and properly operate the pivot, three power poles must be removed and one relocated. Mr. Schertenleib is requesting an amendment to the cost share contract to include this additional \$3,391.00 expense. This amendment would increase the total project cost to \$105,612.00, raising the cost share amount to \$89,770.00 and adjusting the landowner's share to \$15,842.00. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the contract amendment and authorized Lorah or Craig to sign the contract once WSCC approves the amendment. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Amendment to Water Bank Grant – The Okanogan Conservation District (OCD), in collaboration with Okanogan County, is establishing the Okanogan County Water Bank (OCWB). OCD is currently utilizing funding from the Department of Ecology Water Banking Grant Program to purchase water rights for the OCWB under grant WRWBP-2123-OkanCD-00008. Ecology plans to add an amendment to the grant to facilitate the acquisition of a second water right for 91 acre-feet that the bank has secured interest in purchasing. This amendment, which has been reviewed and approved by staff at both OCD and the Department of Ecology, will add \$941,800.00 to the grant, bringing the total funding allocation to \$1,874,523.00. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the contract and authorize Craig to sign it, supporting the Okanogan County Water Bank project operations. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Clark Fire Recovery Project – The Clark Property, located on Neville Ridge Road, was heavily impacted by the 2015 Okanogan Complex Fire. The previous owners initiated a salvage logging operation that was later abandoned, leaving over sixteen piles of woody debris, estimated at 330 tons. These piles pose a significant fire hazard, particularly as they are intermixed with regenerating vegetation and near a new cabin/homesite being constructed by the Clarks, who acquired the property two years ago. The project aims to remove these hazardous fuel concentrations without burning the material, which would exacerbate ongoing air quality issues in the Okanogan Valley. Instead, the debris will be chipped and redistributed on the property to amend the soil. The total estimated cost for the project is \$11,068.59, with a district cost-share contribution of 75%, amounting to \$8,301.44. This project will be funded under the WSCC Forest Health grant. Additionally, the district is providing technical assistance to the Clarks in coordination with Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding a potential DNR-funded replanting project. Phil Dart moved to approve the Clark Fire recovery project and authorize Craig to sign it when it is ready. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Colbert Lost Lake LLC FH Cost-Share – Eli reported on the Colbert Lost Lake LLC property, located along the western bank of Lost Lake northeast of Wauconda, WA. This 37-acre property is part of a cluster of private inholdings within the Tonasket Ranger District of the Colville National Forest. Forest inventory indicates an average tree density of 325 trees per acre (TPA). The property was last harvested just before the family took ownership in the early 1960s and has now entered the canopy closure stage of succession. It was partially burned in the 2021 Walker Creek fire, primarily affecting the northeastern corner near the Colville National Forest, while the remaining unburned areas are overstocked and pose a fire risk to nearby cabins and the Lost Lake campground. Eli proposed a thinning from below treatment over 25 acres, divided into a 9.5-acre unit with lower stocking but abundant ladder fuels, and a 15.5-acre unit that is densely stocked with young lodgepole pine and Douglas fir. The goals of the project are to reduce fire risk, enhance forest health and productivity, and improve wildlife habitat. The desired tree density is 170 TPA (with a maximum of 222 TPA to qualify for cost-share payment). Treatments will include hand piling, mastication, and burning of slash, with five wildlife habitat piles to be installed. The total estimated cost for the project is \$53,894.86, with a district cost-share contribution of \$40,421.15, subject to minor changes based on final contracting. This project will be funded under the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) Forest Health grant.

Phil Dart moved to approve the Colbert Lost Lake LLC cost-share and authorize Craig to sign it when it is ready. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Jensen Forest Health – Eli presented details on a project located in northeastern Okanogan County, specifically in the Aeneas Valley. The forest inventory indicates considerable variability in stocking density among plots, with an average of 364 trees per acre (TPA) and an average diameter at breast height (DBH) of 7.3 inches. The dominant species in the area is Douglas-fir, accompanied by moderate amounts of ponderosa pine and western larch. The terrain features slopes ranging from 5% to 40%, large rocky outcroppings, and multiple benches rising up to 2,900 feet in elevation. The goal of the project is to reduce fire risk by implementing a thinning from below strategy, targeting a desired tree density of 170 TPA (14' x 16' spacing). Due to the patchy nature of the stand, some areas may exceed the target density while others may fall below it, but the overall density must remain below 222 TPA. Given the steep terrain, heavy equipment cannot be used, and most of the work will be carried out by hand, including methods such as lop and scatter, pile burning, and chipping. Additionally, three wildlife habitat piles will be created using the slash. The project will be funded through WSCC Forest Health funds. The total budget and management plan are still to be estimated, pending resolution of a measurement issue with the project area. Phil Dart moved to approve the Jensen Forest Health cost-share contract and authorize Craig to sign it once the final cost-share amount has been determined. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Water Bank Update – Jordana shared that the planning team has held two meetings to review the Business and Guidance document drafted by Aspect and are currently halfway through the review. This process has highlighted the need for additional business documents and tools, which Aspect is now working on. These include:

- A website for the bank that will serve both the CD and the County.
- An incoming water right checklist to assess the suitability of water rights for the bank.
- A cost-benefit analysis to assist in processing incoming water rights.
- An internal map to visualize priority areas in the County concerning water supply and demand.
- A "suitability" map to identify where acquired water rights can be utilized.

The County is still progressing on its application for the Pine Creek water right and is drafting a position description for a Water Resources Coordinator who will manage the grant on the County's behalf.

The amendment to add the Barkley acquisition to the existing grant is ready for signature. The next steps involve Barkley and their lawyer finalizing the necessary work with Ecology to prepare the right for sale. While updates on this process are limited, it is ongoing. The subsequent step is to appraise the water right value. Harry Seely from West Water Research, the firm previously engaged, has indicated that a draft appraisal could be ready in about a month.

once a work agreement is signed. Staff will proceed with this once the contract with Ecology is finalized.

New Business:

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Associate Supervisor Application – Craig announced that Ivan Oberg had submitted a letter of interest to be considered an Associate Supervisor for the district. In accordance with our policies, the board will review applications (letters of interest) for appointment as an Associate Supervisor within 60 days of receiving the letter. Additionally, the board may vote to appoint applicants as Associate Supervisors at any district meeting held after the receipt of the letter of interest. Jerry Asmussen moved to appoint Ivan Oberg as an Associate Supervisor of the Okanogan Conservation District. Phil Dart second the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

WACD Resolutions – Craig announced that Cascadia Conservation District will host the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) North Central Area Meeting on October 16. Key business will include discussing and approving resolutions, which address finance, agency policy, and legal changes. Resolutions are typically reviewed and approved at local CD meetings before being presented at the Area Meeting. If endorsed, they proceed to the WACD Annual Meeting and, for federal issues, to the National Association of Conservation District meetings. Resolution discussions start in September, with final approval in October.

Vehicle Purchase – Craig shared OCD has secured funding from the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) Forest Health grant for a new pickup. Although we applied for the funding, we still need board authorization to proceed with the purchase. The new pickup will replace our aging F-150, which we expect to surplus within the next 6-9 months. The board discussed having air bags added to the suspension of the Ram 2500 pickup we previously purchased to allow it to tow our chipper. Then with this approval we should purchase a smaller ½ ton size truck for more common everyday type use. Phil Dart moved to approve the purchase a new vehicle up to \$75,000 using WSCC Forest Health grant funding. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Extending Temporary Appointments – Craig reported the workload for several programs highlights the need for continued communication and technical expertise that Rosalie Powell has consistently provided. Extending her employment to June 30, 2025, would help manage significant program demands. Current policy allows the Executive Director to appoint temporary employees for up to 9 months, so extending Rosalie's term would require board approval. Additionally, we seek board approval to extend Terri Williams' appointment beyond the originally planned end date of December 31. Her continued assistance is needed for developing our next 5-year and annual plans. While her work may conclude before reaching a 9-month appointment, preparing for an extension is advisable. Edd Townsend moved to extend Rosalie and Terri's temporary appointments to June 30, 2025, based upon continued funding and workload need. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

New Employee Positions – Craig discussed that the staff workload remains high, necessitating the addition of new positions. We have secured funding for a full-time conservation planner in

the Irrigation Efficiencies program to support Jordana. However, we also face significant workloads in water quality, riparian projects, and financial administration.

We have not yet determined the precise budget or position levels required for these areas.

Therefore, we seek authorization to begin recruiting for an Irrigation Planner immediately and to hire up to two additional full-time employees (one technician/planner and one financial assistant) if funding and workload justify these positions. Phil Dart moved to create an additional Irrigation Planner position and authorize staff to immediately begin recruitment and hire a person for the irrigation position and direct staff to evaluate current and anticipated future workload and budget for staffing needs. Craig is authorized to create up to one technical position and one financial position based on the evaluation findings. These positions will be reviewed with Chair Lorah Super. The staff is authorized the immediate recruitment and hiring for any positions deemed necessary following this review. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Lorah Super adjourned the meeting at 7:56 PM.

Summary of Motions

Phil Dart moved to approve the agenda as amended. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the August 1, 2024; board meeting minutes as presented. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Phil Dart moved to approve Treasurer's Report #856 as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved for either Craig or Lorah to sign the cost-share contract and for staff to submit the addendum for a total cost-share amount of \$26,077.85. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

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Edd Townsend moved to approve the contract amendment and authorize Craig or Lorah to sign the Tetra Tech contract amendment upon finalization. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the contract amendment and authorized Lorah or Craig to sign the contract once WSCC approves the amendment. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the contract and authorize Craig to sign it, supporting the Okanogan County Water Bank project operations. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

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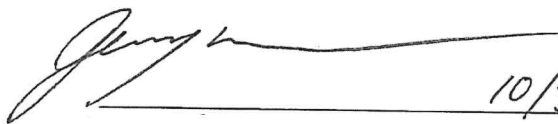
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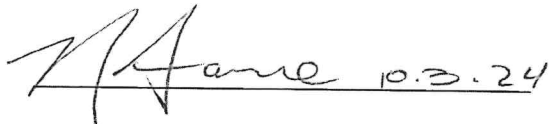
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Jerry Asmussen
Vice Chair

Date

10/3/24



Natalie Torres
Administrative Assistant

Date

10.3.24