



# Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102      Okanogan, WA 98840

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**TO:** The Record  
**SUBJECT:** January 13, 2026; 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, Supervisor  
Steve Colvin, Supervisor  
Phil Dart, Supervisor  
Randy Kelley, Associate Supervisor  
Bob Clark, Associate Supervisor  
Craig Nelson, Executive Director  
Tanya Margerison, Finance Lead  
Natalie Torres, Administrative Specialist  
Jordana Ellis, Water Resources Lead  
Jack Owen, Water Resources Tech

Eli Loftis, Forests & Wildfire Lead  
Sam Nurmi, Forests & Wildfire Planner  
Emmy Engle, Communication & Outreach Lead  
Rosalie Powell, Communication & Outreach Specialist  
Chevelle Yeckel, Aquatics & Habitat Lead  
Brant Smith, Aquatics & Habitat Planner  
Emily Bustamante, Youth Education Lead  
Mike Baden, WSCC  
Amber Jackson, ECY  
Scott Scroggie, NRCS  
Mike Ward, TU

**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:** There was 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:** Phil Dart moved to approve board meeting minutes as amended. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report #872**, which covers the checking account activity from December 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, inclusive, was presented for the Board's approval. The following checks/payroll/direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment: The payroll deposits for the period include two direct deposits: one covering December 1–15, 2025, in the amount of \$35,689.38, and another for December 16–31, 2025, totaling \$33,306.26. Combined, the total payroll deposits amount to \$68,995.64. Payroll deductions for

this period total \$68,833.75, bringing the overall payroll-related transactions to a total of \$137,829.39.

Checks issued during this time period include numbers 13001 through 13023, totaling \$52,122.04. Additionally, EFT debits and general ledger adjustments amount to \$12,611.32. The combined total of claims paid or processed is \$64,733.36.

Outstanding expenses remaining total \$20,462.21.

The beginning balance of the checking account was \$394,534.09. During this period, deposits totaling \$336,883.72 were made, and reconciled withdrawals amounted to \$240,333.31. After accounting for all transactions, the ending balance in the checking account is \$491,084.50.

Tanya Margerison presented the Treasurer's Report #872. Phil Dart moved to approve Treasurer's Report #872. Steve Colvin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Supervisor Reports:**

**Jerry Asmussen** – Jerry shared that the moisture is good.

**Phil Dart** – Phil shared that the few snow he experienced has left, having half-an-inch of snow at the most, leaving the ground frozen. Phil also mentioned he saw mosquitoes flying yesterday, it was 44 degrees. The weather is interesting.

**Steve Colvin** – Steve reported it was 48 degrees yesterday and pruning is happening.

**Lorah Super** – Lorah shared that the Okanogan area has experienced more sunshine, while the portion of the valley where she is located continues to have snow. She also noted that she is seeking an alternate to attend the Wednesday virtual Ways and Means Committee meetings on her behalf.

**Associate Supervisor Reports:**

**Randy Kelley** – Randy had nothing to report.

**Bob Clark** – Bob reported that during the Annual Christmas Bird Count, the first hours were conducted in rainy conditions. A total of 65 species were recorded, including several notable and new sightings: Cackling Goose, American White Pelican (new to the area), and Pileated Woodpecker. Seventeen bird watchers participated, contributing a combined total of 33 hours. The count was centered at Shell Rock Point and included areas on the Reservation, as well as Okanogan and Omak.

**Staff Reports:**

Craig shared that WACD Legislative Day is scheduled for February 10, with an afternoon session on February 9 to meet with WACD representatives to discuss next year's budget. Meetings are scheduled with Senator Short and Representative Bell, and efforts are underway to schedule a meeting with the Commissioner of Public Lands.

Craig also reported on a conversation with Rebecca Hunt, Natural Resources Director for The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, regarding roles and responsibilities in project implementation.

Additionally, Craig shared that a bill (HB 2154) has been introduced that would restrict Conservation Districts from acquiring real property of 20 acres or more. As currently written, the bill would prohibit districts from purchasing real or agricultural property, potentially limiting their ability to acquire water rights and carry out certain conservation projects. Craig also provided a second update, noting that as of Monday, no bill related to Conservation District elections has been introduced.

Lastly, Craig shared that the district is moving forward with the promotion for Programs Director, with interviews scheduled for next week. The goal is to have a decision by the end of the month. Efforts are also underway to promote and advertise in order to fill the position for our agricultural planner.

Eli shared information about the North Cascades Prescribed Burn Association, noting upcoming meetings on February 10th at the Okanogan PUD, and February 12th in Tonasket.

Jack shared that this winter has been unusually warm and wet. He noted the recent flooding in the Methow and Similkameen basins, with both rivers—especially the Methow—currently well above median flow for this time of year. According to NOAA, La Niña is likely ending, with a 75% chance of a transition back to ENSO-neutral conditions in the coming months.

Snowpack conditions are mixed. The Cascade crest, particularly at Harts Pass, is doing well, but areas east of the crest have been struggling. Loup Loup Ski Bowl remains closed, and Moses Mountain and Buckhorn Mountain Snowtels are at approximately 50% of median snowpack. The Buck Mountain Snowlite station, installed last summer, is operational and currently reading 20 inches. However, the Loup Loup website reports only 10 inches at the same elevation, prompting Jack to plan an investigation this weekend.

He noted that if snowpack does not improve, the region may face another challenging year for water supply.

Tanya thanked everyone for their willingness to reschedule the 2026 board meetings to help accommodate the end-of-month financial closeout.

**Scott Scroggie** – Scott introduced himself and shared his background, including his education and professional experience, noting he is based in Wenatchee. He emphasized that he is here to assist and help align NRCS goals with the district's priorities.

Scott also shared some NRCS updates. Staff are working on payment processing, with 98% of fall payments completed, and are preparing for this year's application cycle, with the EQIP deadline on January 15. As of today, Okanogan has 64 valid applications, though there are currently many unknowns regarding programs. Scott noted that the statewide hiring pause is still in effect, and the state has been asked to identify 20 positions that need to be filled.

#### **Partner Reports**

**Mike Baden (WSCC)** – Mike shared that no funding for Forest Health or CTA was included in the governor's budget. He also noted that, as of now, no elections bill has been introduced.

**Amber Jackson (ECY)** – Amber shared that her personal development plan includes attending district board meetings to observe how the board works and how her work aligns with district activities. She emphasized that she is there to observe and learn.

**Mike Ward (Trout Unlimited)** – Mike introduced himself and provided an overview of his professional background. He expressed eagerness to continue building relationships and supporting the community. Outreach projects are moving forward, though the questionnaire will be temporarily slowed. Work completed with the support of the district—including the flyer, questionnaire, and letter—will be released to the public soon, with Mike collaborating alongside Jordana, Jack, Emmy, and Rosalie.

#### **Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans:**

**Allen Post Fire Recovery Project Cost-Share** – Sam reported that the Allen Forest near Loomis/Oroville was severely burned in the 2023 Eagle Bluff Fire and has not regenerated well. The landowners, Ronnie and May Allen, plan to replant roughly 10 acres with ponderosa pine at 400 trees per acre to improve wildlife habitat and forest recovery. The project includes site preparation and was developed in consultation with the Allens. Staff proposed a cost-share plan, with the district covering 75% of the \$15,000 estimated cost, up to \$11,250, through the post-fire recovery budget. Phil Dart moved to approve the Allen Forest Health Project Cost-Share agreement and authorized Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the finalized agreement. Steve Colvin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Interlocal Agreement Okanogan CD – Snohomish CD** – Jordana noted that Okanogan CD and Snohomish CD are proposing an interlocal agreement to efficiently share resources and collaborate. The agreement would support ongoing communication, joint work, and cooperation on shared priorities, and would remain in effect for five years unless extended by both districts. Phil Dart moved to approve the Interlocal Agreement and authorized Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the agreement. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Snohomish CD Work Order** – Jordana shared that Okanogan Conservation District staff are working to finalize the design for the Chewuch Canal Company piping project. The design is being led by Central Region Engineer Christi Fisher, who has requested support from Snohomish Conservation District's CAD technicians to help expedite the work. The services will be completed by June 30, at a cost not to exceed \$50,000, and will be funded through the SCC Irrigation Efficiencies Grant Program within the project budget. Steve Colvin moved to approve the contract/work order and authorized Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the contract. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**DNR Pass Through Interlocal Agreement** – Eli reported that DNR is looking to spend down several funding pools set to close on June 30, 2026, and has proposed an interlocal agreement with Okanogan CD to pass funds through for multiple projects. These include funding for the spring 2026 chipping season, support for DNR cost-share projects in the Methow Valley, staff time for home ignition zone assessments, and additional pass-through funding to Okanogan FD, Tonasket FD, and Fire Adapted Methow. Okanogan CD would manage its own project work and administer partner agreements. The estimated funding total is \$254,906.25, subject to change, with all activities completed by June 30, 2026. Steve Colvin moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign the DNR pass-through interlocal agreement once it is ready, and to sign the subsequent agreements between the district and the Okanogan FD, Tonasket FD, and Fire Adapted Methow. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Old Business:**

**Public Comment** – There was no public comment.

**Water Bank Update** – Jordana provided an update on the first acquisition, noting a minor delay. The ROD-ROE was removed from the approval process by the Okanogan County Water Conservancy Board at Ecology's request to allow inclusion of additional information. Clarifications were submitted regarding the hydrogeological analysis, Annual Consumptive Quantity (ACQ), and provisions from the original water right. The next steps include confirming the methodology with Ecology and re-submitting to the Conservancy Board at the February meeting, which will reset the review timeline.

Jordana also reported that there is no progress on the Barkley acquisition, as Ecology still needs to transfer the deed back to BIC.

**Conservation Celebration** – Emmy shared that the venue for the upcoming event has been double-booked and proposed moving the event to April 29th, instead of the original date of May 13th. She invited the board to provide ideas for the keynote speaker and catering. Emmy also suggested discussing options to pay in advance and potentially increase the entry fee at the door. She asked the board to be prepared to discuss several details at the February meeting, including the general theme for the event.

**New Business:**

**Public Comment** – There was no public comment.

**Proactive Water Quality Coordination & Outreach in Johnson Creek** – Chevelle reported that the Department of Ecology has informally indicated Johnson Creek may be evaluated in the coming years for potential water quality violations. She noted that early, voluntary engagement with landowners could help address concerns before regulatory enforcement is needed. This creates an opportunity for Okanogan Conservation District to pursue Water Quality Centennial funding to support outreach, technical assistance, and voluntary conservation efforts. Chevelle added that she will begin early coordination with Ecology's Central Region and water quality staff to clarify timelines and promote landowner-driven solutions.

**Okanogan CD Election Policy** – Natalie discussed the Okanogan CD Election Policy – Candidate Biography & Statement, emphasizing its role in ensuring a fair, consistent, and transparent election process. She noted that the policy provides all candidates with an equal opportunity to present their qualifications, sets clear guidelines on content and formatting to prevent unfair advantages, and protects the district by ensuring that information shared with the public is accurate, professional, and nonpartisan. Steve Colvin moved to approve the addition and practice of the Okanogan CD Election Policy – Candidate Biography & Statement, with changes made as needed. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution 2026-01 Emergency Declaration** – Craig reported that Okanogan CD has received multiple requests from private homeowners along Davealarr Drive near Mazama for assistance with ongoing flood and debris flow risks originating from the Cedar Creek burn scar. Recent rains have caused debris flows and flooding that have impacted residents, local utilities, county public works, and WSDOT.

Craig is recommending that the board declare an emergency to allow coordination with landowners, the Washington State Conservation Commission, and USDA NRCS to evaluate use of the Emergency Watershed Protection Program. If approved, staff would seek funding from the Washington State Legislature to cover the required 25% match, as well as engineering, permitting, and project coordination costs. Phil Dart moved to approve Resolution 2026-01 Emergency Declaration and Need for Expedited Construction. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**2026 WACD Legislative Day Attendance** – Craig informed the board about the 2026 WACD Legislative Day and asked members to review their calendars to determine their availability to attend.

**Annual Work Plan** – Craig presented the annual work plan, which he revised with the support of the entire staff. He clarified that while some areas or projects may list only one name, it does not indicate that they are the sole person performing the work; rather, they are overseeing the completion of the work. He also noted that once the work plan is approved, the annual budget will be attached. Phil Dart moved to approve the 2026 Annual Work Plan. Steve Colvin 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.

Phil Dart moved to approve board meeting minutes. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Phil Dart moved to approve Treasurer's Report #872. Steve Colvin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Phil Dart moved to approve the Allen Forest Health Project Cost-Share agreement and authorized Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the finalized agreement. Steve Colvin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

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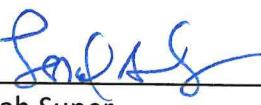
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Phil Dart moved to approve the 2026 Annual Work Plan. Steve Colvin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

  
Lorah Super  
Chair

2/10/26  
Date

  
Natalie Torres  
Administrative Assistant

2-10-26  
Date