

**CASCADIA CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR DISTRICT MEETING
Zoom Meeting ID: 987 6961 1557
14 N Mission St.
Wenatchee, WA 98801
Friday, June 16, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Junell Wentz, Chair; Dillon Miller, Vice Chair; Amy Bridges, Auditor; and M. Pete Teigen, Member.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kurt Hosman, Member.

OTHERS PRESENT: Mike Baden, WSCC; and the following District staff: Ryan Williams, Valerie Hampton, Erin Mayer, and Nada Wentz. Attendees were present in person and via Zoom.

Dillon Miller, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

Consent Agenda: Approve the May 19, 2023 Regular District Meeting minutes, approve the May Treasurer’s Report and authorize payment of current bills and any additional items needing payment by June 30 for closing grants.

M/S/C Junell moved and Amy seconded to approve the Consent Agenda. (Unanimous)

CORRESPONDENCE: None

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) REPORT: Update from Ryan

Ryan emailed the NRCS update to the Board. The new NRCS archaeologist started work last week. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) proposals are due June 30 and include a forestry proposal with NRCS, and a small farming starter pool.

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION (WSCC) REPORT: Mike Baden

The Commission is working hard at getting the budget numbers out soon. The District is in a good position to take advantage of the approved funding. Forest Health and Firewise funding is looking very good. The funding will not be coming out of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) account but through the Climate Commitment Act Fund.

Conservation Technical Assistance funding didn’t do as well as hoped. The requested funding is short of what was asked for, but not completely gone. Supplemental funding will be requested this fall.

Districts should get about the same Natural Inventory Resources (NRI) funds as they received last year. Most districts were able to bump up that amount as time went on last year.

As a reminder the Washington Cares mandate takes effect July 1.

NRCS is looking to partner with the Commission on a potential sole source contract to fully fund a few positions that would help to cover the workload. There are 17 positions needed. Mike is asking if districts have an interest in doing this. NRCS hopes that districts can hire a staff member to do NRCS work 100% of the time and do it more quickly than NRCS is able to hire. A contract has not been presented yet and there are a lot of questions regarding the administrative portion of the workload.

Mike talked with the Board about pressure for District Supervisors to be included in the general election. He asked for ideas to help address the major concerns of being on the general ballot. Some of those concerns include the general election costs, changes in the statutes governing Supervisor elections that are currently in place, and appointment versus elections. The Commission suggested having a single election day for all districts. Election resolutions would be made in the fall by each district, the information sent to the Commission, and then the Commission would prepare the ballots. Mike and the Board discussed options in further detail. The Board thought this would be a good alternative to the general ballot idea. They also would like to have further discussions about this, possibly at the July Conservation Commission interactive dinner.

STAFF REPORT: Erin Mayer

Erin gave a brief biography of her college studies and previous work. She gave a slide presentation during her report showing the work done in the Little Chumstick that includes planting riparian areas, Beaver Dam Analogs (BDAs) installed, irrigation and post assisted log structures. Close to 3,000 native plants were planted with the help of Youth Corps and Skill Source folks. Trout Unlimited assisted with the irrigation installations. The hope for this summer is to put in 120 BDAs. Partner agencies will assist with the BDAs and the post assisted log installations and the weaving between the posts that is used to slow down the water flow and create habitat for birds, frogs and other wildlife.

There will also be some maintenance on past BDA projects that involve adding to the weaving. There may be more maintenance in future years. Ryan added that there is funding for this work and gathering data for 5 years.

Grant Application and Contract Review and Approval

Grant Applications:

Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Watershed Wonders funding for Kids in the Creek / Forest / Snow and other education programs;

Grant Contracts:

Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB) providing support to Entiat Watershed Planning Unit Meetings (EWPU) and WAT meetings;
US Forest Service design and restoration of a floodplain project on Roaring Creek;

ILAs / MOUs / MOAs / Contracts:

WSCC Master Agreement – interagency agreement serving as a master agreement for all WSCC funding;
NCW Engineering Services Master Agreement – engineering services master contract for projects;
City of Wenatchee – final lease agreement for office space at the City of Wenatchee Public Services Building;

Landowner Agreements / Cost Share:

Samantha Simmons / Nick Romero WSCC Salmon Recovery Funding (SRF) agreement for BDAs and riparian planting on Little Chumstick;
Chelan-Douglas Land Trust – RCO SRF Board – agreement for BDA installation on Stormy Creek;
McDevitt WSCC NRI agreement for lop and scatter limbing and thinning;
Strutzel WSCC fencing replacement from fire damage – cancel cost share agreement;

Cost Share Payments:

McDevitt WSCC NRI cost share payment for thinning, approve payment pending certification;
Zook WSCC NRI cost share payment for thinning, approve payment pending certification;
Rudolph WSCC NRI final cost share payment, approve payment pending certification;

M/S/C Pete moved and Amy seconded to approve the grant applications, contracts, landowner agreements and cost share payments as presented. (Unanimous)

OTHER BUSINESS

Policy – Branded Clothing: Ryan reviewed the updates and edits to the branded clothing and personal equipment policy. After a brief discussion with the Board, they were asked to approve Resolution 2023-2.

M/S/C Amy moved and Pete seconded to approve Resolution 2023-2, Branded Clothing and Personal Equipment. (Unanimous)

Policy – Cost Share: The Cost Share policy needs to be updated at the beginning of the biennium. Ryan reviewed the changes to the landowner cap and the labor rate change from \$22 an hour to \$25 an hour.

M/S/C Pete moved and Amy seconded to approve Resolution 2023-3, Cost Share Policy. (Unanimous)

Executive Director’s Report:

There are a lot of changes coming with the funding received for this biennium. Ryan discussed some of the ideas he’d like to implement with the funding, including hiring an outreach specialist emphasizing information engagement with adults. This would free up current staff time for the planning, coordination of events, and getting the work done. The outreach specialist could handle things such as the website and provide bilingual support to District residents for various programs.

Ryan asked the Board for their thoughts, adding that he’d like to hire someone as soon as the funding is in place. A draft of the job description will be brought to the Board for approval at the next meeting. The Board was asked to formally approve moving forward with the work plan.

M/S/C Pete moved and Amy seconded to approve Ryan developing an outreach specialist job description and moving forward with his work plan. (Unanimous)

July 19-20 Commission Meeting & Tour:

Ryan discussed the upcoming Commission meeting and tour. The tour will cover District projects in Cashmere, Chumstick/Eagle Creek at the “Learn & Burn” site, and the Stargazer Lane projects. It will end at the Wenatchee River Institute for the interaction dinner. The meal price was set at \$28 per person. He asked the Board’s permission to have the District cover the cost of the Board, staff and ten partner agency folks to attend the dinner.

M/S/C Pete moved and Junell seconded to cover the Commission interaction dinner costs for attending Board members, staff and up to ten partner agency representatives. (Unanimous)

Center for Technical Development (CTD):

The CTD has funds to hire another person to help with certification and trainings for districts. They will need to have District support for the additional staff person. Cascadia may be a good fit for this. Ryan asked the Board for their input on willingness to host the position.

Board Member Comments & Open Discussion:

Pete thanked Ryan for emailing the reports in advance of the meeting. He also gave updates on the Chumstick Wildfire Coalition meeting. There are a lot of questions regarding the prescribed burns. Folks are in favor of it and also afraid of fires getting out of hand because of the lack of information and training needed before conducting a prescribed fire. If the District brings on a new outreach person in the next year, maybe this could also be a part of the workload. Ryan mentioned that the District’s role is to organize and provide safe burn training.

Staffing Update: Patrick is on sabbatical now. Isobel Woolner was hired to help Joe with the workload and the cost share side of things. Patrick had a great rapport with the landowners and agency folks he worked with. We welcome Isobel as she joins the District, and as she helps with the forest health program workload that Patrick built up.

July 2023 Meeting Date and Agenda: The next Regular meeting is July 21, 2023, at 1:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m.

Summary of Official Actions:

Approved the Consent Agenda;

Approved the following Grant applications, Contracts and Landowner Cost Share agreements:

Grant Applications:

Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Watershed Wonders funding for Kids in the Creek / Forest / Snow and other education programs;

Grant Contracts:

Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB) providing support to Entiat Watershed Planning Unit Meetings (EWPU) and WAT meetings;

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Zook WSCC NRI cost share payment for thinning, approve payment pending certification;

Rudolph WSCC NRI final cost share payment, approve payment pending certification;

Approved Resolution 2023-2, Branded Clothing and Personal Equipment;

Approved Resolution 2023-3, Cost Share Policy;

Approved Ryan developing an outreach specialist job description and moving forward with his work plan;

Approved coverage of the Commission interaction dinner costs for attending Board members, staff and up to ten partner agency representatives.

VICE CHAIR_____

OFFICE ASSISTANT_____