

**CASCADIA CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR DISTRICT MEETING
Zoom Meeting ID: 987 6961 1557
14 N Mission St.
Wenatchee, WA 98801
Friday, July 16, 2021
1:30 p.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dillon Miller, Vice Chair; Amy Bridges, Auditor; and Kurt Hosman, Member.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Junell Wentz, Chair; and Jim Bartelme, Member.

OTHERS PRESENT: Chris Wright, NRCS; and the following District staff: Valerie Hampton, Ryan Williams, and Nada Wentz. Attendees were present in person and via Zoom Meeting / conference call.

Dillon Miller, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:45 p.m.

Consent Agenda: Approve the Minutes of the June 18, 2021, Regular Meeting and the July 8, 2021, Special Meeting minutes, approve the Treasurer's Report, and authorize payment of bills.

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

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) REPORT – Chris Wright

Two of three Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) projects have been completed this year. There are five or six more EQIP projects in Chelan County. Chris is working on three Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) projects. Two are orchards in Chelan and one is a crop farm in Wenatchee. Chelan County has an intensive Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) workload to figure out. NRCS will be busy and the District will have a lot of work to do as well.

NRCS hired a new forester who will be housed at the Okanogan office. He will be a good resource to help with plan reviews. Joe Lange is involved with post fire work for the fires going on right now. We will be hearing from him about burn scars and private landowners needing assistance.

OLD BUSINESS

Conservation Commission Projects: District staff are working on finalizing the ranking criteria for cost share applications. Many are eligible for the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) grant funds. More information will be included later in the meeting.

Project Updates by Region:

Lake Chelan Basin: There have been site visits for irrigation efficiencies projects at vineyards in Chelan as well as a forestry project. Some will be cost share projects.

Entiat Watershed: Sophie Kandul is the new Resource Technician. She is currently working on a riparian planting project.

Wenatchee Watershed: Patrick and Liz are working on fire assessment site visits in this area to assist the Fire Districts. The Wildfire Ready Neighbors contract was extended to September 30 and staff will continue to conduct site visits under this funding.

Southern Chelan County (Water Resource Inventory Area [WRIA] 40): No activity this month.

Grants and Contracts:

Auditor Data Sharing Agreement: This agreement is between the District and the Washington State Auditor (SAO). It defines requirements for handling data and authorizes the SAO to receive confidential information from Cascadia CD.

Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) Contract: The Department of Ecology (DOE) crew is scheduled to come this fall and next spring to help with the chipping program. The contract covers four weeks of time at about \$20,000.

Forest Service Joint Venture Agreement (JVA): Carlos Polivka, from the US Forest Service, has requested a five-year contract for the District to assist with conducting a Chinook predation field study in Lake Wenatchee, with the potential to add money as the work progresses and additional funding sources are identified. The current study that is winding down looks at ways to control Tussock moth outbreaks using a natural virus to keep populations low. Tussock moth outbreaks can kill Douglas-fir trees.

Chipper Sharing Agreement: Ryan continues to work with Enduris on an agreement between Cascadia and the Fire District for shared chipping machine use. More information will be brought to the next Board meeting.

Professional Engineering Agreement (PE) with Kittitas CD: This is an engineering cluster agreement with Kittitas CD that covers professional engineering services between the following CDs: Kittitas, Okanogan, Foster Creek, Cascadia and South Douglas. It provides for shared access to professional engineering services. The agreement is good until June of 2023.

Post Fire Assistance Funding: This is a Commission funding pot for assistance to folks affected by recent fire damage. Funding was requested for staff time to respond to landowner requests for assistance. This funding can be used to develop post-fire recovery projects.

M/S/C Kurt moved and Amy seconded to approve the following contracts: Washington State Auditor Data Sharing Agreement, Washington Conservation Corps, US Forest Service Joint Venture Agreement, Professional Engineering Agreement with Kittitas CD, and Conservation Commission Post Fire Assistance. (Unanimous)

Rates & Charges Update: A draft letter about Rates and Charges was emailed to the Board yesterday. It was modeled after the last one, with information about the Public Hearing held on July 8. Ryan asked that the Board approve the letter so he can include it in the Rates and Charges information packet to be sent to the Chelan County Commissioners.

M/S/C Kurt moved and Amy seconded to approve the Rates and Charges letter to the Chelan County Commissioners. (Unanimous)

Blazer Update: The appraisal amount to repair the Blazer was just below the insurance threshold. It has been repaired, and Ryan plans to bring it to Wenatchee. Once he has driven the Blazer, it will be better known whether it is travel worthy / trustworthy to keep as a second district rig or if it should be surplus. Mark has agreed to use his own vehicle for work.

Personnel Update:

Resource Specialist II Update: The application period was extended another two weeks. Interviews will be on Monday & Tuesday. Discussion followed regarding a second round of interviews, including a panel consisting of Ryan, a Board Member and a third person. This person will handle the coordination work needed for the Entiat.

Stewardship Forester Application: This announcement was extended as well. The advertisement is listed with the Society of American Foresters along with the local newspapers and the District web site. Some good applications are starting to come in.

Staffing Change: Ryan requested that Kirk's position be bumped up to 30+ hours, effective July 1. The change includes 6-hour holidays and other benefits. Because Kirk was on unpaid leave during the first part of the month, Board approval is needed to pay the July 4 holiday. There is enough funding and work for the next two years to support the position. A brief discussion followed regarding additional curriculum to add to the current programs. They also talked about classes for teachers to learn the material and implement it in their classrooms. The Board was asked to approve the increased hours and benefits for Kirk.

M/S/C Kurt moved and Amy seconded to approve increasing Kirk's position to 30+ per week with benefits and authorize holiday pay for July 4. (Unanimous)

Staff Kudos: Phil Archibald and Rick Edwards both had wonderful things to say about the work Liz does.

NEW BUSINESS

Policies:

Rates and Charges Appeal Process Policy: An appeals policy is required for the Rates and Charges system. The policy sets a process for landowners who wish to appeal the per-parcel rate. Ryan and the Board briefly discussed the process and reviewed the resolution.

M/S/C Amy moved and Kurt seconded to approve Resolution 2021-11 Appeal Process for Rates and Charges. (Unanimous)

District Policy Review: Employment policies, as well as all other District policies need to be consolidated and updated. Ryan obtained permission from Okanogan Conservation District to use their policy template to modify and use for Cascadia policies. Kurt volunteered to review the proposed policy changes. The updates will then be sent to the Board for review and comments.

Executive Director's Report:

Election Update: The June election was certified and Dillon is renewed as a board member. The District has now met all the requirements of the Commission.

Building Purchase Update: The buyer of the Wenatchee World building backed out, so the building remains on the market.

Chipping Incident Update: There has been no word from the landowner yet. Any new information will be brought to the next meeting.

Post Fire Response: Carol Cowling asked the District to help with the Batterman Fire landowner assistance. The plan is to have South Douglas CD cover Patrick's time and Cascadia will cover Liz's time for the assessment work. Some of Sophie's time may also be used to collect GPS information on burned fence line. Carol is working with landowners and asking them to contact Cascadia.

Climate Auditors Program: The Conservation Commission was asked to work with some legislators to develop an engineering position called "climate auditor". Work would include conducting energy audits and a potential cost share program on ways to reduce carbon footprints. As far as it was described, the program is not regulatory. Board members felt the name Climate Auditor may scare landowners away, whereas the title Energy Auditor may make landowners feel more open to the idea. There has been an NRCS program available to fund energy audits for several years, but it has been less prominent recently. The Commission is looking for Districts who might have interest in this program. Ryan will send the information to the Board. The response deadline is the end of July.

Livestock Technical Assistance Update: The Commission has changed how they do funding for this program. Livestock TA is now available to all districts. Ryan asked for approval to apply for this funding; the Board agreed.

WACD Dues: The Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) sent out their annual dues notice. The amount is lower than in previous years. The WACD Annual Meeting this fall will be a hybrid of virtual sessions and an in-person business meeting.

Financial Subcommittee: Ryan and Valerie discussed the idea of forming a financial subcommittee where they could talk about topics such as funding challenges, overhead rates and budgets. The group would brainstorm ways to streamline the budget process and make it more efficient and easier to report. They would bring any suggested changes to the Board for approval. Amy and Kurt expressed interest in being a part of the subcommittee.

Chelan County DNR Update: Ryan continues to meet with Mike Kaputa to talk about how we can share resources and better coordinate our activities. Archaeology work is one such resource. Ryan would like to have a County-wide agreement so that any department of Chelan County could access District services. More information will be shared at the next meeting.

VSP Update: Ryan and the Board talked about the idea of re-engaging in the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) meetings. The Board said it would be good to get on the email list and catch up on the progress that has been made.

Set August 2021 Regular District Meeting Date and Agenda: The next Regular Meeting is Friday, August 20, 2021, at 1:30.

The meeting adjourned at 3:01 p.m.

Summary of Official Actions:

Approved the Consent Agenda;

Approved the following contracts: Washington State Auditor Data Sharing Agreement, Washington Conservation Corps, US Forest Service Joint Venture Agreement, Professional Engineering Agreement with Kittitas CD, and Conservation Commission Post Fire Assistance;

Approved the Rates and Charges letter to the Chelan County Commissioners;

Approved increasing Kirk's position to 30+ per week with benefits and authorize holiday pay for July 4;

Approved Resolution 2021-11 Appeal Process for Rates and Charges.

VICE CHAIR _____

OFFICE ASSISTANT _____