

**CASCADIA CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR DISTRICT MEETING
Zoom Meeting ID: 987 6961 1557
1350 McKittrick St.
Wenatchee, WA 98801
Friday September 20, 2024
1:30 p.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Junell Wentz, Chair (In-Person); Amy Bridges, Auditor (Zoom); Pete Teigen, Member (Zoom); and Kurt Hosman, Member (In-Person).

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dillon Miller, Vice-Chair.

OTHERS PRESENT: Ryan Baye, WACD (In-Person); Frank Curtin, NRCS (In-Person); and the following District Staff: Ryan Williams (In-Person), Valerie Hampton (In-Person), and Nada Wentz (In-Person).

Junell Wentz, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

Consent Agenda: Approve August 16, 2024, Regular District Meeting Minutes, approve August Treasurer's Report and authorize paying bills.

M/S/C Pete Teigen moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Amy Bridges seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE: No Correspondence that requires Board response.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) REPORT: Frank Curtin

Frank briefly reported on the approaching deadline to get contracts in. He currently has 38 contracts on the books for his area, which is a lot of work for one person. The good news is he met with Ryan about filling the Conservation Planner position, which will be a Cascadia employee working directly with Frank for a three-year term. The first year will likely be mostly training unless the person has worked for NRCS before. The new Area Conservationist, Chris Clemons, started three weeks ago. An urban ag specialist is coming next week for the small urban farm training. Liz, Marcy and Kelly will be attending that training.

Joe and Liz were invited to the NRCS Central Area staff meeting to discuss Cascadia projects. Frank said they gave a great presentation, and he appreciated their taking time to do it. He is working with Patrick for an Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) sign-up for post fire work in Chelan. Patrick has been incredibly helpful and is one of the most knowledgeable resources for post fire in the state of Washington.

Frank and the Board had a brief discussion on publication of information on acres of forest health treated land. NRCS is tracking the project information, but they are only allowed to give out data on acres treated, not locations due to Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS (WACD): Ryan Baye

Ryan Baye briefly discussed the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contracts. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is having management challenges for the contracts. The Commission, NRCS and the conservation districts are discussing solutions to help landowners maintain their contracts for another year.

Ryan Baye thanked Cascadia for hosting the Area Meeting in October. Ryan mentioned work being completed by the various committees and the plans for the next legislative session. The First Amendment Auditor incidents will be brought up later in the meeting.

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION (WSCC) REPORT: Mike Baden

Not available.

STAFF REPORT: None

GRANT APPLICATIONS, CONTRACT REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Contracts and Grant Applications for Consideration at the September 20, 2024 board meeting					
Grant Applications					
Granting Agency	Title	Amount		Activities	Action Needed
Department of Ecology	Chelan County Water Quality projects	max of \$450,000		Conduct technical assistance, outreach, riparian restoration and BDAs.	Approve Grant application
Grant Contracts					
Granting Agency	Contract Title	Duration	Amount	Activities	Action Needed
Natural Resource Conservation Service	Conservation Planner for Wenatchee Office	September 23, 2024 - September 22, 2027	\$412,863.00	Utilize this contract to hire a Conservation Planner to be based in the NRCS Wenatchee office to provide support for Inflation reduction Act projects in Chelan County	Approve Executive Director to sign contract on September 06, 2024
Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board	Upper Columbia bilingual outreach	9/13/2024 - 12/31/2025	\$ 10,000.00	Bilingual outreach videos focused on salmon recovery topics	Approve Executive Director to sign contract
Bureau of Reclamation	Coordinated Resource Management 2024	09/19/2024 - 09/30/2029	\$ 926,441.00	Continuation of our 2019 agreement for project development funding. Includes equipment purchases such as a side by side, PITT tag array and a new mobile education activity such as an augmented reality sand table	Approve Executive Director to sign contract
Department of Ecology	Improving Water Quality in the Wenatchee and Lake Chelan Basins	07/01/2024 - 06/30/2027	\$ 346,050.00	Streamside project implementation, project maintenance, project development, education and outreach in Wenatchee and Chelan watersheds	Approve Executive Director to sign contract
ILAs/MOUs/MOAs/Contracts					
Agreement Entity	Agreement Purpose	Duration	Financial Commitment	Activities	Action Needed
Chelan Douglas Land Trust	Funding for Balsamroot fire post-fire treatments	09/20/2024 - 06/30/2025	\$ 85,000.00	Funding for reseeding, bulldozer line rehab and weed treatment within Balsamroot Fire footprint	Approve Executive Director to sign agreement
Cascade Fisheries	Restoration Project Assistance	07/01/2024 - 06/30/2025	\$ 15,000.00	Providing funding to Cascade Fisheries for their assistance with field projects	Approve Executive Director to sign work order
Cascade Fisheries	Cascade Fisheries Low Tech and Riparian Restoration Project Development	9/25/2024 - 06/15/2025	\$ 20,000.00	Project development funding for Colockum Wildlife Area, lower Roaring Creek (Entiat Watershed), and Larsen Creek (Peshastin Watershed).	Approve Executive Director to sign work order
Betsy Dudash	Entiat School District Native Plant Garden Designer	9/1/2024 - 3/31/2027	\$ 599.00	Funding for a landscape designer to design the Entiat School's 7th grade STEM class's native plant garden through a series of visits.	Approve Executive Director to sign agreement
Landowner Agreements/Cost Share					
Landowner Name	Project Funding Source	Cost Share Rate	Amount	Activities	Action Needed
Kathryn Sperling, Seth Christian, Chelan Valley Botanicals	WQC DOE FY2025	100%	\$ 26,366.86		Approve Landowner Agreement
Andrew Holm, Tierra Learning Center	NRI FY23	50%	\$ 4,050.00		Approve Cost-share
Entiat School District	NRCS Equity	100%	\$ 2,500.00	Install their native plant education garden and maintenance upkeep through NRCS Equity in Conservation agreement	Approve Executive Director to sign landowner agreement
Jackie Haskins	WSCC RCPP	80%	\$ 6,400.00	Forest Health Treatment on 2 acres	Approve Cost-share
Landowner Cost Share/Contract Payments					
Landowner Name	Project Funding Source	Cost Share Rate	Amount	Activities Completed	Action Needed
Peter Kostka	WSCC Forest Health	66%	\$ 38,380.02	19 acres of Land Clearing (460), Tree/Shrub Pruning (660), Woody Debris Management (384)	Approve Cost Share Payment
ILAs/MOUs/MOAs/Contracts color codes		No color is neutral cashflow			
		Rust color is CCD paying somebody else			
		Green color is CCD receiving money			

Ryan asked that the Tierra Learning Center agreement be discussed and approved separately from the list of contracts and agreements.

M/S/C Kurt Hosman moved to approve the Contracts, Cost Share Agreements and Cost Share Payments as presented, excluding the Tierra Learning Center cost share agreement. Amy Bridges seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Other Business:

Out of State Training Approval: Three staff have identified out of state training they would like to attend. Because the training is out of state, Board approval is needed for the travel and per diem rates. Lucas would like to go to a two day “Build it like a beaver” training in California. Kirk asked to go to a symposium for outdoor education in Pittsburg. Alex would like to attend the Society for Restoration Ecology North American Conference in Vancouver,

British Columbia. Ryan had them secure their spots since the requests were due before the Board meeting. The cost is covered by grants and totals about \$7,600.

Ryan and the Board discussed whether to allow the Executive Director to approve any training as long as it costs less than \$10,000. The current policy is that all out of state training must be approved by the Board regardless of cost. The Board was open to revisiting the out of state / country portion of the policy.

M/S/C Amy Bridges made a motion to approve the three out of state / country trainings for Lucas, Kirk and Alex. Kurt Hosman seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Tierra Learning Center - Equipment Cost Share Request: Tierra Learning Center applied for a cost share agreement for a compost spreader. Funds for the compost spreader would be covered by the Commission under Natural Resource Investments. The cost of the equipment is about \$8,000. The cost share portion would be \$4,000. Tierra Learning Center is a local nonprofit that works with developmentally disabled folks and includes a 40-acre farm.

There was discussion on different aspects of cost sharing equipment, rental fees, potential repairs needed, funding to cover repairs and insurance coverage. They also talked about revising the cost share policies and procedures with updated criteria and priorities. The Board was asked to approve the cost share agreement for Tierra Learning Center. Amy Bridges abstained from the vote due to a potential conflict of interest.

M/S/C Kurt Hosman made a motion to approve the cost share agreement with Tierra Learning Center. Pete Teigen seconded. The motion passed. Amy Bridges abstained.

Finance Director Position: Ryan Williams emailed a Finance Director position description to the Board. Valerie has some details to add to the description. The job posting should be advertised at the end of the month, along with the NRCS position. Board approval to advertise the Finance Director position is needed.

M/S/C Kurt Hosman made a motion to approve advertising the Finance Director Position. Amy Bridges seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

NRCS Conservation Planner Position: Ryan Williams, Frank Curtin and Sarah Troutman are working on the job description for the Conservation Planner Position. The description will be close to the NRCS guidelines and give the ability to move into an NRCS position at the end of the three-year term with the District. Board approval to move forward with the job posting, interview and hiring process was requested.

M/S/C Amy Bridges made a motion to approve moving forward with the Conservation Planner Position job posting, interview and hiring process. Kurt Hosman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

WACD Resolutions:

- 1. Sustainable Farms and Fields Program:** WACD to work with WSCC and conservation districts to update the Sustainable Farms and Fields program to increase participation of the most relevant crop and farm types not being represented in the current program, such as orchards, vineyards and aquaculture.

2. **Simplify the WSCC Sustainable Farms and Fields Program:** WACD to work with WSCC, conservation districts and the legislature to simplify the language within the budget provisos to create a singular, comprehensive Sustainable Farms and Fields program.
3. **WACD Developing and Implementing a Board Supervisor Training Program:** WACD to work with the Center for Technical Development, WSCC, and conservation districts to develop a series of trainings focused on providing the skills and tools needed to be a Board Supervisor.
4. **Improving the USDA Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant Scoring Process:** WACD to work with NACD to support working with the USDA Forest Service on improving their scoring criteria transparency for the Community Wildfire Defense Grant program and any subsequent, related programs.
5. **Updating and Modernizing Administrative Requirements for WSCC Grant Programs:** WACD to work with WSCC to develop a permanent grant rule workgroup, assisted and facilitated by WACD, that includes even and representative representation of Districts throughout the State with the goal of modernizing, and improving grant rules and policies that works to prioritize efficiency, transparency and implementation of on-the-ground conservation practices.

M/S/C Kurt Hosman moved to approve presentation of all five resolutions at the Area meeting. Amy Bridges seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy Manual Updates: The current District bereavement policy does not grant extra days of leave for the death of a relative. It is limited to using a staff member's sick leave for bereavement. It was proposed to the Board to update the policy to grant three days additional bereavement leave after the death of a close family member as defined in the employee manual and give Ryan the discretion to add extra days where needed.

M/S/C Amy Bridges moved to increase the bereavement leave to three days and give Ryan the discretion of adding more days where needed and to grant two staff members retroactive bereavement leave for qualifying events that occurred in August and September. Kurt Hosman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Authorized Signatories: A new authorized signatory sheet with specifications for each person is ready for signatures from Board and specified staff members.

Executive Director's Report:

Leave Accrual: Ryan asked the Board for clarification on how many years of service he was granted when hired. When he was hired four years ago, he was given leave earning status equivalent to five years of service. His years at Cascadia now qualify him for the next step in vacation leave. The Board agreed that he is due for the next increase after his anniversary.

Vacation Carry Over: The Board approved a carryover of 30 hours of vacation leave from 2022 to 2023 for Valerie. The leave was not used in the time allotted. During our audit we were reminded that we needed to reduce Val's leave balance. The State Auditor advised that any forfeited leave can be reinstated entirely or in part by the Board. Ryan asked that Val's

leave that was forfeited in March of 2023 be extended to the end of 2024. In addition, he requested that Ryan and Val's carryover leave that was extended to March 2024 be extended to the end of 2024.

M/S/C Kurt Hosman moved to reinstate the vacation leave of Val and Ryan that were carried over into 2023 and 2024 to be used by the end of 2024. Pete Teigen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Area Meeting: The WACD Annual meeting will be held at Northern Quest Resort & Casino in Airway Heights, near Spokane, the Monday through Wednesday following Thanksgiving. Ryan asked that a Board member or two attends in order to support the resolutions that will be voted on at the meeting.

Landowner Recognition: Staff have discussed a desire to give a small token of appreciation to volunteers that help with KITE, KITC, or are stellar landowners that go over and above the work agreements. The Commission has a limit of \$25 for landowner recognition. Staff have suggested water bottles with the District logo, or metal signs for landowners hosting tours. The Board was asked for input. Amy and Junell like the idea of giving out water bottles or hats as way to say thank you.

First Amendment Audits: Ryan Williams and Ryan Baye discussed First Amendment Auditors that visit public offices throughout the state. Several conservation districts in the state have been visited by them. The experiences of those Districts were discussed. Ryan Williams is learning more and is working to train staff on these issues. He may ask the Board to update policies that will not infringe on First Amendment Auditor's rights but also keep staff safe.

Equipment Rental Fees: Ryan asked the Board for their input about fees to cover the costs of replacement parts in the form of rental fees or damage deposits for the Biochar kiln loan program. The Board preferred maintaining enough funding to cover any repairs due to potential damage and not charge a rental fee. Joe will move forward with the loan program, without rental fees.

Salary Schedule Review: Ryan proposed reviewing the 2025 salary schedule in depth with two Board members. He would like to meet a couple of times before the December meeting to review the District salary schedule compared to other agencies. Junell and Pete offered to participate. The findings will be presented to the Board at the December meeting.

October Meeting Date, Location and Time: The next regular meeting is October 18th, 2024, at 1:30 pm. at the Cascadia CD office, 1350 McKittrick St. Ste. B, Wenatchee, WA 98801.

The meeting adjourned at 4:09 PM.

Summary of Official Actions:

Approved the Consent Agenda;

Approved the following contracts, agreements and cost share payments:

Grant Applications:

Dept. of Ecology (DOE) – Chelan County Water Quality projects to conduct technical assistance, outreach, riparian restoration and BDAs;

Grant Contracts:

Natural Resource Conservation Service – Conservation Planner for Wenatchee office;
Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB) – Upper Columbia bilingual outreach;
Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) – Coordinated Resource Management 2024;
Dept. of Ecology (DOE) – Improving Water Quality in the Wenatchee and Lake Chelan Basins;

ILAs / MOUs / MOAs / Contracts:

Chelan Douglas Land Trust (CDLT) – Funding for Balsamroot fire post-fire treatments;
Cascade Fisheries – Restoration Project Assistance;
Cascade Fisheries – Cascade Fisheries Low Tech and Riparian Restoration Project development;
Betsy Dudash – Entiat School District Native Plant Garden Designer;

Landowner Agreements/Cost Share:

Kathryn Sperling, Seth Christian, Chelan Valley Botanicals – WQC DOE FY 2024 riparian planting;
Entiat School District – NRCS Equity – Install native plant education garden, maintenance upkeep through NRCS Equity in Conservation Agreement;
Jackie Haskins – WSCC RCPP – forest health treatment;

Landowner Cost Share/Contract Payments:

Peter Kostka – WSCC Forest Health – land clearing, pruning, woody debris management;

Approved the three out of state / country trainings for Lucas, Kirk and Alex;

Approved the cost share agreement with Tierra Learning Center. The motion passed. Amy Bridges abstained;

Approved advertising the Finance Director Position;

Approved moving forward with the Conservation Planner Position job posting, interview and hiring process;

Approved presentation of all five resolutions at the Area meeting;

Approved increasing the bereavement leave to three days and give Ryan the discretion of adding more days where needed and to grant two staff members retroactive bereavement leave for qualifying events that occurred in August and September;

Approved reinstating the vacation leave of Val and Ryan that were carried over into 2023 and 2024 to be used by the end of 2024.

CHAIR _____

OFFICE ASSISTANT _____