

**CASCADIA CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR DISTRICT MEETING
Zoom Meeting ID: 987 6961 1557
1350 McKittrick St., Wenatchee, WA 98801
Friday March 21, 2025**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Junell Wentz, Chair (In-Person); Amy Bridges, Auditor (Via Zoom); and Dillon Miller, Vice-Chair (In-Person) and Pete Teigen, Member (Via Zoom).

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kurt Hosman, Member.

OTHERS PRESENT: Lance Brender (Via Zoom); Ethan McJames, NRCS (Via Zoom); Elly McManus, CCD/NRCS (In-Person); and the following District Staff: Ryan Williams (In-Person); Cindy Goodell (In-Person); Alex Harwell (In-Person) and Valerie Hampton (In-Person)

Junell Wentz, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:33 P.M. and noted that Ryan is still in transit from an out of town meeting and will arrive later.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None requiring official action.

Consent Agenda: Approve February 21, 2025, Regular District Meeting Minutes, approve February Treasurer's Report and authorize paying bills.

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

CORRESPONDENCE: None requiring official response

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) REPORT: Elly McManus

Elly introduced Ethan, the Central Area RCPP Coordinator and highlighted some of the recent activities in the region. Five CSP applications have been approved; the deadline has been moved back to early May. She noted the recent Task Order with the District that was approved to continue working on the CSP program as well as RCPP and the Pear grower survey project. IRA funding is still paused. There will be a large workload if it is released.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION: Mike Baden (not available)

Pete requested introductions since there were several newer attendees, and the meeting participants offered self-introductions.

STAFF REPORT: Alex Harwell led the presentation for the Habitat Team. Among the accomplishments in 2024 were the installation of more than 5,000 plants on over 15 acres and 91 habitat structures treating about 6,580 stream feet. There were two crew members for about 6 months each, and a third who worked for two months during the summer. A project in Potato Creek in the Entiat watershed was featured in the discussion. She described the District's

development of a method to use griphoist equipment to move and install larger wood without heavy equipment. They worked with a contractor for training and safety procedures, ultimately moving a full log truck load of larger diameter trees and placing them in the habitat structures. Pictured in the presentation was a 15 foot deep incision along the creek bank. The logs were placed to help hold the banks and allow natural sediment infill to stop the erosion and stabilize the area.

Another aspect of the habitat program is the partnership with other resource agencies. In one instance, a partner was replacing a culvert in Merry Canyon and connected Cascadia with the landowner for a potential project below the site. Trout Unlimited and Cascade Fisheries assisted, and Beaver Dam Analog structure installed there has resulted in increased water retention and healthier habitat.

In another connection between District programs, the after school students have been able to capture a lot of video footage of wildlife using the habitat structure sites with their trail cam project.

Ryan arrived at 1:43 p.m.

The Habitat Team presentation continued with photos and information on some structure projects in the Chumstick Creek drainage near Mile 1. It included smaller wood that came from a forest health thinning project elsewhere in the watershed and some larger wood that was already on the site. The District is also working with the same landowner on some agricultural practices for their property.

Another positive outcome is that the teams are not only improving habitat but also involving student groups in the work and showcasing some locations as tour sites for education purposes. Cascade High School in Leavenworth, Cashmere Middle School, and several elementary schools have participated in related activities.

One of the longer-term projects is the Cushing site on the Little Chumstick, at about mile 10 on the Chumstick Highway. Since 2022, 15 structures have been installed, with the final planting in 2024. When the work started, the site had one tree and was full of reed canary grass. Now there is established native vegetation and ducks using the ponded areas of the creek. The District has funding for maintenance until 2027.

The riparian projects are attaining about 75% survival of new plants. The BDAs help to retain water to establish the plants. On other sites, temporary irrigation is installed to get them started, especially where the banks are deeply incised.

Lucas and Alex both have drone licenses. They have been capturing footage of various sites. They recently showcased one where a prescribed burn was done to help jump start weed management on the property, to be followed with limited chemical control to prep for a fall native seed planting. The drones are also used to document riparian projects, highlight education programs, and capture partner events such as beaver releases. Drone shots can also be used to map treatment areas and plan actions needed for restoration. The staff are developing a

monitoring protocol and hope to add a 3rd drone to implement it. The new plan is funded by the Department of Ecology.

Plans for 2025 include a four-person seasonal crew starting in April. They expect to plant 1500 live stakes, install 100 new structures and maintain 150 priority structure sites. They will also help partner agencies with some of their projects. Next fall there are 6,000 plants scheduled for planting on 11 acres. New sites this year include Joe Creek and 25 Mile Creek.

Several Board members commented that it was a great, thorough report and they'd like to tour some of the sites. Ryan said he would add a tour to future meeting plans.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ryan attended the Conservation Commission meeting in Grays Harbor this week. He said it was a good tour, and he would discuss the meeting later in the agenda. He presented the applications and contracts for Board consideration and discussed the purpose of the various contracts.

Contracts and Grant Applications for Consideration at the March 21, 2025 board meeting					
Grant Applications					
Granting Agency	Title	Amount		Activities	Action Needed
Grant Contracts					
Granting Agency	Contract Title	Duration	Amount	Activities	Action Needed
ILAs/MOUs/MOAs/Contracts					
Agreement Entity	Agreement Purpose	Duration	Financial Commitment	Activities	Action Needed
KR Creative Strategies	Outreach Consulting Services	03/21/2025 - 06/30/2025	\$ 14,540.00	Assistance with visual library, develop cohesive display booth for events, e-newsletter strategy and process assistance	Approve Executive Director to Sign Contract
Lichen Land & Water	Potato Creek Sediment Study	3/31/25 - 6/30/25	\$ 20,000.00	Provide study and report of sediment deposition, analysis of erosions, fire and road effects, relating to low tech (BDA) restoration at Potato Creek	Approve Executive Director to Sign Contract
Ecological Services	2025 Field Season Assistance	5/1/25-10/31/25	\$ 68,000.00	maintenance assistance, implementation assistance, planting, weed removal, material sourcing	Approve Executive Director to Sign Contract
Lichen Land & Water	Roaring Creek Geophysics	3/31/25 - 6/30/25	\$ 30,000.00	Provide Lichen Land & Water regional based funds to conduct geophysical testing of subsoils to manage risk for losing stream and also aquifer refill time after bypass is removed (i.e. stream response to Stage 0 methods). Lichen will likely subcontract for this specialty field testing. Additional funding will be amendment to existing CCD-Lichen contract.	Approve Executive Director to Sign Contract
American Forest Management	Union Valley Fuel Break	3/24/2025- 6/30/2025	\$ 75,000.00	Create Shaded Fuel Break on alternate egress road connecting Union Valley to Putterman Gulch Road. Thinning, Pruning, and piling	Approve Executive Director to Sign Contract
Landowner Agreements/Cost Share					
Landowner Name	Project Funding Source	Cost Share Rate	Amount	Activities	Action Needed
Wenatchee River Institute	WSCC NRI	100%	\$4,147.68	2 Demonstration projects: 1) E Lorene Community Garden: Micro-irrigation (441), Conservation Cover (327); and 2) Native Plant Garden: Micro-irrigation (441), Tree/Shrub Establishment (612).	Approve Cost Share Agreement
Landowner Cost Share/Contract Payments					
Landowner Name	Project Funding Source	Cost Share Rate	Amount	Activities Completed	Action Needed
Susan Kidd, Snowgrass Winery	WSCC NRI	60%	\$3,104.40	Micro-Irrigation (441) in vineyard	Approve Cost Share Payment
Tierra Learning Center	WSCC FH	46%	\$ 10,300.00	Land Clearing (460) Tree and Shrub Pruning (660) Woody Debris Management	Approve Cost Share Partial 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			

The KR Creative contract is in final review and negotiations. The company also works with Washington Grown, and they are planning to feature some local landowners in upcoming television episodes.

One of the agreements with Lichen Land and Water is a study and report on sediment deposition and erosion analysis, fire and road effects related to low-tech restoration in Potato Creek. The US Forest Service is interested in documentation of the impact of projects in the area. The funding is through the District engineering cluster. The Roaring Creek contract is for continued data collection for the Stage 0 design and preparation for a construction funding grant application.

The contract with American Forest Management for thinning in Union Valley around a planned alternate egress route will involve several miles of treatment.

The Landowner Agreement Wenatchee River Institute to install native gardens and other practices, to be funded as a Natural Resources Implementation project will continue work on the site while the corresponding federal project is paused.

M/S/C Pete Teigen moved and Dillon Miller seconded to approve the contracts and payments as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Lance commented that last year was terrible for orchardists , and wondered if there are any programs to help alleviate costs and allow them to stay in business. Ryan said the District is trying to identify what would actually be helpful and then help start them down the path to particular programs. Lance said he is willing to generate a forum of interested landowners to try and have an impact on the situation. He believes it needs to be done over the next 6-8 months to avert more conversion of land.

Operations and Policy Manual Updates: Ryan provided a list of proposed updates and changes to the Operations Manual, including adding references to the Finance Director position that was recently added. Other changes further define authorities for the Executive Director and clarify staff benefits and leave policies. Ryan reviewed them in detail with the Board.

M/S/C Amy Bridges moved and Pete Teigen seconded to adopt the Operations and Policy Manual as updated, with additional grammar edits as needed. The motion was approved Unanimously.

Grays Harbor Tour: Ryan reported that the Grays Harbor tour included a brewery and the District's crab program. Attendees sorted crabs to learn about the program to collect, measure, weigh, freeze and compost invasive green crabs. The species eats up to 40 butter clams per day, rips up eel grass beds that are important for salmon habitat, and inflicts other damage.

Grants Manual Update: The proposed updates to the Conservation Commission Grants Manual have been released for public comment. Four programs were updated in detail, and there are plans to work on more of them in the near future.

Election and Conservation Fair: The Supervisor Election is next Tuesday, March 25 at Pybus Public Market from 2 – 8:30 pm. There will be a Conservation Fair from 3-6 pm and a Pybus University class on prescribed fire at 7 pm.

Scheduled Vacations: Ryan will be out of the country for vacation April 3-14. Junell will be out of the area April 1-11. Patrick and Dillon will be in charge while they are away.

Amy left the meeting at 3:55 pm.

Proposed Letter: A letter to the Washington State delegation has been suggested regarding the release of federal funding for conservation projects. After a brief discussion, the Board approved Ryan signing the letter on behalf of Cascadia.

M/S/C Dillon moved and Pete seconded to authorize Ryan to sign a letter to the Washington delegation urging the release of federal funds for conservation work. The motion passed Unanimously.

Local Working Group: The next meeting of the Local Working Group is April 17 in Chelan.

Next District Meeting: The next regular meeting is April 18 at 1:30 pm. Pete noted he will be away and unable to attend.

The meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

Summary of Official Actions:

Approved the Consent Agenda;

Approved the following contracts, agreements and cost share payments:

ILAs / MOUs / MOAs / Contracts:

KR Creative Strategies – Outreach Consulting Services;

Ecological Services – 2025 Field Season Assistance;

Lichen Land & Water – two contracts, Roaring Creek Geophysics and Potato Creek Sediment Study.

Landowner Cost Share Payments:

Susan Kidd, Snowgrass Winery - \$3,104.40 for micro-irrigation in vineyard;

Tierra Learning Center - \$10,300.00 for land clearing, tree and shrub pruning, and woody debris management;

Adopted the updated Operations and Policy Manual;

Authorized Ryan signing a letter to the Washington congressional delegation urging release of federal funds for conservation work.