

**CASCADIA CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR DISTRICT MEETING
1350 McKittrick St., Wenatchee, WA 98801
Friday September 19, 2025**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Junell Wentz, Chair; Russ Truman, Member (In Person); Amy Bridges, Auditor (arrived later in meeting); Pete Teigen, Member (Via Zoom).

MEMEBERS ABSENT: Dillon Miller, Vice-Chair

OTHERS PRESENT: Allisa Carlson, Conservation Commission (In Person), Lance Brender (Via Zoom), and the following District Staff (In Person): Ryan Williams, Elizabeth Jackson, Marcy Bartelheimer, and Valerie Hampton.

Junell Wentz, Chair , called the meeting to order at 1:37 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

CONSENT AGENDA - Approve July 18, 2025 Regular District Meeting Minutes, approve July and August Treasurer's Reports and authorize paying bills.

**M/S/C Russ Truman moved and Pete Teigen seconded to approve the Consent Agenda.
The motion passed unanimously.**

CORRESPONDENCE: None requiring official action.

NRCS REPORT – None

CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT – Allisa Carlson

In the process of hiring a new South East Regional Manager, the Conservation Commission also rearranged the district assignments to spread the workload more evenly. Cascadia is now part of Allisa's group. Since she is based in Ellensburg, she should be able to make it to more meetings and events than Mike could from the Spokane area. Allisa mentioned some other recent and upcoming staff additions at the Commission for communications, administration and finance. The budget request for the next legislative session has been submitted to the Office of Financial Management OFM) with several priorities, the first being forest health. Cascadia will be hosting a meeting of the Regional Managers this month, which will include the election training on 9/25.

AG TEAM PRESENTATION

Elizabeth and Marcy presented an overview of agriculture projects funded by the Conservation Commission Implementation Grants encompassing two state fiscal years from July 2023-June 2025 as well as a variety of other funding sources. Kelly Luebbering contributed to both the work and the presentation content but was away on leave the day of the meeting.

Agricultural conservation practices have historically had limited available funding in eastern Washington. In recent years, forest health has enjoyed a lot of attention and has been well-funded, leaving more of the flexible dollars for other work and allowing the District to triple its ag program.

In the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) program the goals include community benefits while addressing a natural resource concern, usually focused on irrigation. Local priorities drive the use of the funds rather than being prescribed by the Conservation Commission. Previously the District's NRI funds were split with forestry but other recent funding opened an opportunity to include different practices such as high tunnels. All of the cost share projects require landowner match.

Featured projects:

Campo Farm and Kitchen with two projects including pollinator habitat and a high tunnel with irrigation efficiency elements. The farm supports a small catering business using fresh produce and will be featured in an upcoming episode of Washington Grown.

Lavina farm hosts a private community garden along with pasture and hay fields. Practices included pasture upgrades, hay planting, tree and shrub establishment, irrigation upgrades and microirrigation for the garden. In the future, they plan to keep livestock with Cashmere High School FFA students.

Feathers and Flowers Farm installed a cover crop and sprinkler system and also applied for Salmon Safe certification.

Grace Lutheran Church installed raised beds and hosted a microirrigation workshop with funding from the NRCS Equity in Conservation program.

Heavenworth Farm installed a compost facility built from a kit by O2 Composting as well as irrigation upgrades. A riparian restoration project is also planned for the property. They hope to host public farm visits in the future.

Specialty pears are part of the future goals for Matt Jones and Summer Hess. They made use of the Okanogan CD no-till drill in their cover crop project and also participated in a District Beaver Dam Analog project last summer.

Paton Pioneer Orchard converted handlines to R10 sprinklers and upgraded their filter system.

Amy joined the meeting via Zoom at 2:04 pm

Snowgrass Winery upgraded from impact sprinkler to microirrigation for their small vineyard and sheep grazing operation.

Wenatchee River Institute added microirrigation, conservation cover crops in their community garden area, and tree and shrub establishment. The Xerces Society provided native plant kits.

Their next project will include raised beds and microirrigation. Raised beds were not an available practice in the Commission's Conservation Practice Database System. Although the District requested that they be added as an eligible item, the process took too long to make completion of the work feasible in that grant cycle. The contract for that portion was delayed to the next round.

Junell Wentz is converting her property from growing cherries to establishing a Christmas tree farm. The area has issues with tall weeds. She is working to control the weeds and install a regenerative cover crop with a gras mix focused on clover for low height and nitrogen input to the soil. With irrigation repair and weed control around the tree establishment rows, the grant deadline required a tight timeline.

Tierra Learning Center needed a spreader to meet their need to do more frequent application through the growing season. They are composting food waste, prunings and spent garden plants. Other landowners in the Chumstick area can borrow the spreader as part of their cost share agreement, making the investment more beneficial for the whole area.

Laurel's Crown Dairy, another manure spreader recipient, is building a creamery that will have a visitor area and viewing window. A planned interpretive sign will explain the carbon cycle.

In addition to the featured projects, updates were reported on the current grants the team is administering. They include Salmon Safe through the Environmental Protection Agency, National Association of Conservation Districts technical assistance projects, National Fish and Wildlife Irrigation Efficiencies to benefit salmon, Conservation Commission programs including \$107,000 in Natural Resource Investments, Sustainable Farms and Fields-supported biochar workshops, cost share for Eastside Rebuild, technical assistance and orchard outreach, and four Department of Ecology grants.

The Jones Shotwell Ditch Company conversion project from open ditch to a closed pipe system had to be paused last year, but is now set to proceed this fall. The cultural resources work is complete, permits are in place, easements obtained, and contractors secured. Construction is starting October 1. The District is handling the Conservation Commission's Irrigation Efficiencies Grant Program cost share contribution of \$1.5 million and a Department of Ecology \$500,000 grant toward the project. The cost share agreement is on this month's approval list.

GRANTS, CONTRACTS and COST SHARE (see chart next page)

Contracts and Grant Applications for Consideration at the September 19, 2025 board meeting					
Grant Applications					
Granting Agency	Title	Amount		Activities	Action Needed
Grant Contracts					
Granting Agency	Contract Title	Duration	Amount	Activities	Action Needed
Grant PUD Priest Rapid Coordinating Committee (PRCC)	Wenatchee and Okanogan Comprehensive Thermal IR Surveys for Cold Water Species	TBD	\$258,000.00	Conduct comprehensive thermal infrared surveys of cold water habitat for salmonids in the Okanogan and Wenatchee Watersheds	Approve Executive Director Signature of Grant Agreement
Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board	Entiat WAT	October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026	\$10,500.00	Hold entiat planning unit and watershed action team meetings	Approve Grant Agreement
DOE Streamflow Grant #2022-00188	Amendment 2 - Stream Gage & Extension	4/19/2024 - 1/31/2029	up to \$140,00.00	Operate Roaring Stream gage as requested by WA Dept. of Ecology	Approve Executive Director to sign Grant Amendment
Franklin CD	Wheat Week Support	July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026	\$ 15,000.00	Wheat week lessons for NCW	Approve Interlocal Agreement
Chelan County Natural Resources Department	Upper Wenatchee Home Hardening	June 03, 2025 to May 31, 2026	\$ 221,148.15	Conduct site visits and implement home hardening cost share in the Upper Wenatchee Area (Chiwawa and North Shore)	Approve Sub Award Agreement
Chelan County Natural Resources Department	Lake Wenatchee Home Hardening	June 03, 2025 to June 04, 2026	\$ 43,500.00	Conduct site visits and implement home hardening cost share in the Lake Wenatchee Area	Approve Sub Award Agreement
Chelan County Natural Resources Department	Cashmere Home Hardening	June 03, 2025 to April 30, 2026	\$ 107,140.00	Conduct site visits and implement home hardening cost share in the Cashmere Area	Approve Sub Award Agreement
ILAs/MOUs/MOAs/Non-Grant Contracts					
Agreement Entity	Agreement Purpose	Duration	Financial Commitment	Activities	Action Needed
Washington Conservation Corps	Crew time 2025-2026	October 01, 2025 to September 07, 2026	\$ 49,280.00	Contract for 32 days @\$1540/day of WCC crew services	Approve Executive Director to sign Agreement
Adopt-a-Stream Foundation	Agreement for Services	September 19, 2025 to February 28, 2026	up to \$15,000	Cultural Resources Support for two AASF projects	Approve Executive Director to sign agreement
Lichen Land and Water	Roaring Engineering Design Phase II	Upon Signing - January 1, 2028	\$157,400	Roaring Creek Floodplain Reconnection (Stage 0) - Phase 2	Approve Executive Director to sign contract amendment
Lichen Land and Water	Monitoring and Stream Gaging	Upon Signing - January 1, 2028	up to \$140,00.00	Subcontract operating Roaring Stream gage	Approve Executive Director to sign contract amendment
Ecological Services LLC	PBA Facilitation	August 1, 2025 to September 1, 2026	\$ 15,000.00	Facilitate PBA Steering Committee meetings, build out PBA trailer, host 3 community events, write grant proposals for PBA	Approve and sign Agreement
Landowner Agreements/Cost Share					
Landowner Name	Project Funding Source	Cost Share Rate	Amount	Activities	Action Needed
Jones Shotwell Irrigation Company	WSCC Irrigation Efficiencies	40%	\$1,500,000.00	Install a Pumping Plant and Irrigation Pipelines to replace an open ditch canal to a closed system.	Approve Cost Share contract
Ric Escobedo	WSCC Regional Conservation Partnership Program	29%	\$ 25,795.00	20 acres of forest health treatment	Approve Cost Share contract
Landowner Cost Share/Contract Payments					
Landowner Name	Project Funding Source	Cost Share Rate	Amount	Activities Completed	Action Needed
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 discussed the list of agreements for approval and the potential fire impacts to the Roaring Creek project. He indicated the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) may provide some post-fire funding for the Lower Sugarloaf burn areas.

Ryan requested feedback on the format and content of the grant budgets presented with a summary for each new grant with a detailed project budget for the Board to review and approve. Ryan would then have authority to execute subcontracts, equipment purchases and other expenditures that fall within the approved budget without needing to bring individual actions back to the Board for additional approval.

M/S/C Pete Teigen moved and Russ Truman seconded to approve the Grant Contracts and Detailed Budgets, Agreements and Cost Share agreements as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Budget Updates: Ryan showed the Board the final 2025 budget with the second half updates. He described the current status after taking recent changes into account, and indicated that the uncertain items are mostly settled now. The first page/first half budget was previously approved. The rest is new information. The columns in the document include secured funding and the estimated 2025 need, actual to date as of September 1 and the percent spent.

M/S/C Amy Bridges moved and Russ Truman seconded to approve the revised 2025 District budget as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Health Care Coverage: The new plan offerings have been reviewed and the rates compared with Ryan's cost projections. The rates increased but are still within the projected amounts. Ryan recommended offering the same plans as last year: a \$500 deductible medical plan and a \$3,000 high deductible medical plan with Health Savings Account. Both plans include dental and vision. He proposed keeping the same benefit policy, with the district covering the full premium for eligible employees and half the cost of dependent coverage.

M/S/C Russ Truman moved and Amy Bridges seconded to approve offering the \$500 deductible and \$3,000 HSA medical plans for 2026. The motion passed unanimously

Vehicles: Ryan learned of an opportunity to assume a state vehicle lease for a truck being returned by another district. He wanted to consider it for Kim Lancaster, who has been using her own vehicle for work on cultural resources projects all over the state. After reviewing the terms, Ryan determined that she would have to drive about 17,000 miles per year to break even on the lease, so it would not be the best option. However, he does think it would be a good idea to provide her with a vehicle. She needs a 4WD or AWD truck because of the remote places her work takes her. He is proposing to buy a Ford Maverick Hybrid. The District should recoup the costs in 6-7 years. After some discussion, the Board decided to approve a higher estimated cost to allow for any necessary accessories or other expenses related to the purchase

M/S/C Pete Teigen moved and Amy Bridges seconded to authorize Ryan to purchase a Ford Maverick Hybrid or similar vehicle up to 45,000.00. The motion passed unanimously.

Rates and Charges Renewal: It is time to start the process. The Board discussed conducting a rate study and including possible targeted programs and education in the projected budget. The advantage of these funds is they can be used according to local priorities. Ryan will talk with the County Commissioners about a potential raise and what they want to see, get estimates for the rate study and prepare to do the values survey. Junell said she may be available to go with Ryan to meet with the commissioners.

NC Area Meeting Resolutions: The Area Meeting is October 23 in Mansfield. Russ wants to attend; Junell is also available. Ryan had an idea for a resolution for WACD to do their own budgeting process that does not necessarily have to match the Commission's request. They could do a needs assessment, bring it to the state meeting, come up with a policy for the Districts to vote on, and use that to direct the lobbyist. The WACD Annual Meeting is December 1-3 at Northern Quest in Spokane. The business day on Wednesday is free. The other days include training, committee meetings and other information. Only Board members can vote at these meetings.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Ryan Williams

After the Flames Conference: This is a national 3-day conference to be held at Suncadia in Cle Elum next April. The topics include post fire recovery, restoration and other related work. Ryan would like the District to be a sponsor. A \$1,000 sponsorship includes one registration, a display table and recognition as a sponsor.

M/S/C Russ Truman moved and Amy Bridges seconded to sponsor the After The Flames conference at the \$1,000 level. The motion passed unanimously.

Local Representatives: Ryan will be meeting with Representative Mike Steele to discuss local projects our representatives can support. Forest Health outside the Leavenworth area took a big hit in the recent budget. There is a lot of need in Chelan County. Ryan wants to ask if Rep. Steele would support a direct budget request for something like that.

Amy left the meeting at 4:15 pm

There was general discussion about ideas for tour stops for legislative officials.

Next Meeting: The next Regular Meeting will be Friday, October 17.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Summary of Official Actions:

Approved the Consent Agenda;
Approved the following Grant Contracts and Detailed Budgets, Agreements and Cost Share payments:

Grant Contracts and Detailed Budgets:

Grant PUD Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee (PRCC) - \$258,000 Thermal Infrared Surveys;
Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board - \$10,500 Entiat Watershed Action Team (WAT) support;
Department of Ecology Streamflow Grant 2022-00188 Amendment 2 - up to \$140,000 to operate Stream Gage;
Franklin CD \$ - 15,000 Wheat Week program support;
Chelan County Natural Resources Department, 3 projects:

- \$221,148.15 Upper Wenatchee Home Hardening;
- \$43,500 Lake Wenatchee Home Hardening;
- \$107,140 Cashmere Home Hardening.

ILAs / MOUs / MOAs / Contracts:

Washington Conservation Corps - crew time 2025-26;

Adopt-a-Stream Foundation - cultural resources support;

Lichen Land and Water, two contracts

- Roaring Creek Engineering Design Phase II
- Monitoring and Stream gaging;

Ecological Services LLC - PBA Facilitation.

Cost Share Agreements/Amendments:

Jones Shotwell Irrigation Company - \$1,500,000 pumping plant and irrigation pipelines;

Ric Escobedo - \$25,795.00, 20 acres forest health treatment.

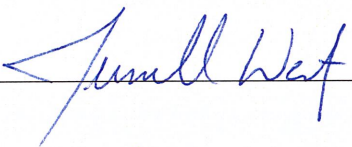
Approved the revised 2025 District budget as presented;

Approved offering the \$500 deductible and \$3,000 HSA medical plans for 2026;

Authorized Ryan to purchase a Ford Maverick Hybrid or similar vehicle up to 45,000.00;

Authorized sponsoring the After The Flames conference at the \$1,000 level.

CHAIR

 10/17/25

RECORDER

