

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING  
USDA Service Center Conference Room – Davenport, WA  
Wednesday, June 10, 2026**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:**

Meeting called to order at 9:00 AM by Chairman Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting in person or by phone were as follows: Braidy Haden (phone), Jason Echelbarger, and Ryan Wiater - LCCD Supervisors; Mary-Ellen Early, DNR; Ashley Smith, FSA; Elsa Bowen, Delaini Disher, Brean Nieman, Elayne Hovde-Knudson, Matthew Rosman, and Dean White - LCCD staff. The May 13 Board Meeting minutes and the Treasurer's Report were displayed on the big TV screen in the conference room. Mary-Ellen introduced herself and the Board Members and staff introduced themselves to Mary-Ellen.

**A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:**

1. *Jason moved to approve the May 13, 2026 minutes as presented. Ryan seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.*

**B. TREASURER'S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:**

- 2. *Jeff moved to pay and approve vouchers #13087 to #13105, along with 11 EFT's, totaling \$67,874.40. Jason seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.*
- 3. *Jeff moved to submit voucher #11 for the 26-39-FH grant in the amount of \$5,685.39 to the Conservation Commission. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*
- 4. *Jeff moved to submit voucher #9 for the 26-39-NR grant in the amount of \$1,872.75 to the Conservation Commission. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*
- 5. *Jeff moved to submit voucher #11 for the 26-39-IM grant in the amount of \$12,722.69 to the Conservation Commission. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*
- 6. *Jeff moved to submit voucher #11 for the VSP 6 grant in the amount of \$9,735.60 to the Conservation Commission. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*
- 7. *Jeff moved to submit voucher #8 for the 26-39-PFR grant in the amount of \$927.49 to the Conservation Commission. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*
- 8. *Jeff moved to submit voucher #1 for the 26-39-DG grant in the amount of \$1,872.75 to the Conservation Commission. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*

- **9. Jeff moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District VISA statement for April 24, 2026 through May 26, 2026 be approved. The total amount owed was \$394.08. Jason seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.**
- **10. Jeff moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of May 15, 2026. The total amount owed was \$293.34. Jason seconded. Motion passed.**
- **11. Jeff moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of May 31, 2026. The total amount owed was \$222.65. Jason seconded. Motion passed.**

After reviewing the statements, the Board members initialed each page of the bank statements for the checking and money market accounts.

The Board reviewed the report of the current annual leave/sick leave balances for District employees.

Brean briefly discussed the updated Special Assessments spreadsheet and noted that the revised figures were just received several days ago.

- **12. Jason moved to approve the Treasurer's report and Grant's report as presented. Ryan seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.**

## **C. AGENDA**

### **Auditor Position Transfer**

Elsa noted that with Jim Baye leaving the Board, a motion was needed to officially transfer the position of Auditor from Jim to Ryan.

**13. Jason moved to approve Ryan as the new Auditor for the Board, add his name as an approved signer on the District's bank accounts, and remove Jim as an approved signer for the District's bank accounts. Braidy seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.**

### **Special Assessment Update**

Elsa reminded the Board that the Special Assessment will be renewed again in 2026 and that the renewal process has started. The Special Assessment is reviewed for renewal by the County Commissioners every 10 years. The last time that the special assessment rate was increased was back in 2010. Since then about \$150,000 has been collected each year and the County has charged the District about \$13,000 each year for the assessment collection.

Elsa and Jeff had previously reviewed this Resolution and proposed that since the assessment rate had not been increased for 16 years since 2010, Lincoln County CD is justified in requesting a 75% increase in the Special Assessment Rate from the County Commissioners for the updated Special Assessment to be approved in 2026.

This proposed 75% increase would change the current Parcels Assessment rate from \$4.00 to \$7.00, the current Cropland acre rate from \$0.10 to \$0.28, and the current Rangeland acre rate from \$0.05 to \$0.09 per acre. The total Special Assessment collected each year would increase from about \$150,000 to \$262,500.

Elsa reported that the proposed increases in the Special Assessment would have to be presented to the Lincoln County Commissioners and then a public hearing would need to be held to give county taxpayers a chance to comment on the increased assessment rates before the Commissioners would make a decision to approve the renewal of the Special Assessment with the requested increase in the Special Assessment rate for Lincoln County CD. The 2016 Resolution noted that the public had been given ample opportunity to comment on the renewal of the Special Assessment and that no objections were received.

***14. Jason moved to approve and pursue the renewal of the Special Assessment for Lincoln County CD by the County Commissioners in 2026 with the proposed 75% increase in the Special Assessment rates. Braidy seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.***

#### **Local Working Group**

The 2026 Local Working Group meeting was held on June 3 in Ritzville. The meeting was held at the conference room at Adams County Public Works behind the courthouse. Jeff noted that the meeting was well attended this year with about 25 – 30 participants and with 9 growers mostly from Adams County. The IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) funding is no longer available. For 2026 NRCS-WA statewide will receive a total of \$37.8 million for EQIP funding and \$13.8 million for CSP funding. More funding will be available in 2027. The Forestry funding pool for Adams and Lincoln counties was deleted since there were no cooperators on the waiting list and funding can be obtained from other funding pools. The remaining three funding pools include Rangeland, Pasture, and Cropping for Erosion Control. One new practice now available for funding is Practice 595 drone applications for agricultural uses. The Audubon Society is now offering addition funding for agricultural practices that are beneficial for birds.

NRCS is now looking at funding the applicants who have been applying and reapplying for grant funding for the longest time before funding newer applicants. Several ag producers complained that in recent years the entire yearly funding available for Lincoln and Adams counties has been given to just one producer who listed the most practices to be sure to get the highest amount of points to get funded. The dissatisfied producers were advised to follow the process of creating a new resolution for changing the LWG funding policy and present it first to their local CD for approval and then forward it on to the local Area Meeting. If approved at the Area meeting, the resolution will be sent to the annual WACD meeting in late fall for review and possible approval to change the current LWG funding policy.

#### **NRCS Interlocal MOU Agreement with Lincoln County CD**

Printouts of the Memorandum of Understanding between NRCS and the District were distributed for review at the May 13 meeting. Elsa noted that an updated MOU between NRCS and the District needs to be signed by the Board and returned to NRCS by June 18. Elsa and Enduris (insurance company for LCCD) have subsequently reviewed the existing interlocal agreement and could not find any significant issues. Elsa reported that the District will have to keep a yearly list of its activities such as taking and

forwarding phone calls and speaking with local producers that benefit the NRCS employees in the office. Current components of the existing Interlocal Agreement include the use of office space and occasional use of NRCS pickups and side by side ATV's. Elsa calculated the office space currently being used by the District by using a tape measure to measure all of the District cubicles along with the Manager's office.

Elsa also reported that the recent sale of the Davenport USDA Service Center to a different owner has failed and has thereby been returned to the original owner.

**15. Ryan moved to approve the NRCS Interlocal MOU Agreement with Lincoln County CD as presented. Jason seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.**

### **Recent Training and Workshop Attended**

Elsa reported that District staff had recently attended a lot of training and workshops.

Elayne, Elsa and Dean attended the May 20 Lincoln County Cattlemens Association meeting at Davenport Memorial Hall. Lawyer Toni Meacham led the discussion on the fines from Ecology and loss of rented of DNR grazing land affecting the Wade King Ranch which has rented the grazing land for many years in NE Douglas County and was being penalized by Ecology for cleaning out and maintaining artificial dugout water ponds needed to water their cattle while grazing on the rangeland. Toni is leading the effort to get this issue addressed in a trial by jury in court in order to protect the Wade King Ranch constitutional rights.

Delaini and Brean attended the Crab Creek Summit at Wanapum Heritage Center in Grant County on May 28 that was hosted by Columbia Basin CD.

Elayne attend a recent Wildfire Hazard and Land Planner workshop in Wenatchee on June 4 that addressed fire history in Washington, fire behavior and comprehensive wildfire plans.

Elayne and Brean attended the Society for Range Management tour on June 5 in the Palisades area along the southern portion of Moses Coulee in Douglas County to tour the KV Ranch and the Billingsley Ranch and learn about their practices to manage their cattle herds and protect the irrigated pasture and sagebrush steppe rangelands.

Delaini attended 2 days of WADE training at the Sleeping Lady near Leavenworth. Some of the sessions that she attended included the elections update and the legislative session. Conservation districts are now being encouraged to invite their local legislators to attend tours of CD projects in their own counties.

### **Washington Grown Filming in County**

Elsa reported that Washington Grown had visited the Zeigler dairy farm two weeks ago and filmed the dairy and the numerous critical dairy infrastructure projects that had been installed at the dairy with technical and financial assistance from the District. This film segment will be made public on a future Washington Grown TV broadcast. Elsa noted that she had met with Kara with Washington Grown and agreed that Washington Grown will be visiting Lincoln County once a year to film District projects across the county and broadcast them on the Washington Grown television program.

### **Grants Update**

Matthew attended the Lincoln County Fire Commissioners meeting on May 19 and provided an update on the CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan) and on the efforts to update the county Fire Chief contacts spreadsheet. The amount of additional

Forest Health grant funding from the Conservation Commission has been reduced from \$89,000 to \$53,000 per CD due to the large number of CD's across the state requesting the Forest Health grant funding. Matthew now has 30 cooperators on the waiting list for Forest Health grant funding and needs to review this list.

Elayne noted that \$90,000 had been received from the Terry Husseman grant for tire removal from the streambank of a small stream in the Porcupine Bay area. Elayne also noted that for the Audubon Lake intermittent stream tree and shrub planting grant application that was not approved, she will work harder in the future to contact and involve other local agencies and groups by asking for letters of support and include some special projects such as wildlife and pollinator projects. Jeff suggested that for the Audubon Lake area project, support should also be requested from the City of Reardan and the Lions Club who have done a lot of work already on the public land around Audubon Lake.

Delaini reported that the annual VSP tour in Lincoln County has been scheduled for October 20<sup>th</sup> and will probably take a full day. A meeting will be held first followed by the field tour. Conservation Commission, Ecology and WDFW partners are planning on attending the tour.

Delaini also noted that she has received permission to conduct VSP water monitoring on portions of the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area that will include water temperature, barometric pressure and stream flow.

Elsa reported that District staff are working on writing the CRP plans for the 150 CRP contracts for the CRP Task Order that need to be completed by June 30. Elsa also noted that she attended a recent Edwall Drainage Cleanout Project meeting and found out that she needs to setup up a tour for local legislators to visit the project area in the field so that these legislators will be more likely to help approve the funding needed to implement the Edwall cleanout project in the near future.

#### **Cost Share Spreadsheet**

There was no Cost Share spreadsheet to review for the meeting.

#### **WACD Report**

Jeff reported that WACD is now requesting that 2 new directors from the NE Area join the WACD Executive Board with the retirement of John Floyd from Ferry County. Jeff and 18 other directors participated in the recent monthly WACD Zoom meeting which focused on the SW Area this time. The PMC currently has about \$100,000 in outstanding payments owed to it for tree and shrub orders this spring. WACD will be working with Western Washington University to develop the updated elections bill for the 2027 legislative session. Elsa noted that the Conservation Commission and its staff cannot lobby for the passage of new bills in the Legislature but that WACD can lobby for bills. A Board Supervisor from Franklin County has approached WACD and asked it consider investing in a cloud seeding project that would cost around \$900,000.

#### **Conservation Commission Report**

There was no Conservation Commission Report other than noting that a replacement for the NE Area Manager position formerly held by Mike Baden has still not been selected.

### **County Commissioners Report**

There was no County Commissioners report.

### **NRCS Report**

There was no NRCS Report.

### **FSA Report**

Ashley reported that spring crops, perennial forages and CRP acreage reports are currently being processed and need to be reported by the July 15 deadline. Nominations for a new County Committee member for the Harrington/Odessa area will open June 15 to replace this position that has been held by Deric Schmierer.

Jason asked if the FSA form 902 needs to be updated by the end of August if there have been changes in a farming entity. Ashley noted that as an FSA employee, she cannot initiate a discussion about the 902 form with a producer unless the producer asks her first about the 902 form for their farm. Ashley currently has 650 FSA 902 forms to update by September 15 but cannot start working on them until the FSA software is updated at the end of June. In general, producers are strongly recommended to review and update their form 902 as needed every year in order to maintain their eligibility for FSA and NRCS programs.

Ashley noted that an offer has been sent to one applicant for full-time employment at the Davenport FSA office. Ashley will have to readvertise later to fill the second position for full-time employment at the office. Ashley also requested that producers contact the office as soon as possible after seeding to report their fall seeding acreage because the office staff will be down to two employees again for a while with Roxy on maternity leave later this fall.

### **Ag Burn Task Force Meeting and New BPS Ag Burn Permit Training**

Dean reported that he attended the semi-annual Ag Burn Task Force meeting on June 3 online. The current Task Force supported research project for reducing agricultural burning is named Straw2Value and addresses the conversion of surplus straw to renewable natural gas for distribution through the existing natural gas grid. Birgitte Ahring with WSU is leading the work on this research project. Birgitte reported that 5 million tons of straw are produced in Washington every year and that 4 million tons of this straw is wheat straw. An advanced wet oxidation plus steam explosion pretreatment process is used to release more product from the lignocellulose in the straw. The pretreated straw is then mixed with manure in an anaerobic digester and hydrogen gas from water electrolysis is added to the mixture to produce natural gas (methane) in an hour.

Jeremy Wolfe with the Spokane National Weather Service station reported that the average March – May temperature for 2026 was 50.1 °F, which is 2.5 °F above average. The predicted El Nino will affect weather more this winter than it will for this summer and fall.

Daniel Matsche with Ecology reported that 406 ag burn permits were issued for the first half of 2026. Columbia County had the highest burn acreage with 11,777 acres burned. Lincoln County only had 2 burn permits issued from the Spokane office for only 20 acres burned total. Daniel reported that there are still significant issues with ag burn permit holders not mailing the blue post burn postcard or reporting online to Ecology within 7 days after the ag burn(s) have been completed. In the future there may be

adverse repercussions for the ag burn permit holders that don't submit their burn permit report to Ecology in a timely manner that may include the denial of ag burn permits issued to these non-reporting ag burn permit holders for the following year. Ecology has adopted the new RCW's 173-400, 173-425 and 173-430 that apply to flame cap kilns that can only be used to burn agricultural silvicultural (forest) materials with these RCW's. Flame cap kilns are not approved at this time for other outdoor burn materials such as tree or shrub trimmings from residential areas.

It was noted that November 2026 is the 25 anniversary of the Save our Summers settlement agreement. Save our Summers sued the Department of Ecology for not complying with the State Clean Air Act in the late 1990's as related to agricultural burning, including grass seed and grass turf burning. This agreement laid the foundation for the rule making and ag burn program as it is today.

Elsa and Dean will be attending the training for the new AQBPS (Air Quality Burn Permit System) system with Ecology that will replace the current AQPPS and BPA systems for obtaining ag burn permits. The AQBPS system will be online based and will require cooperators who want to apply for, fill in, and pay for their requested ag burn permit online must first obtain a working login with Secure Access Washington (SAW) to obtain their ag burn permit. Cooperators who don't wish to obtain a SAW login and apply for their ag burn permit online can still fill in the blanks on the revised paper burn permit forms that will be available starting July 1 from Ecology or the District, bring them into the Davenport USDA office along with a burn location map and check or cash, and work with District staff to get their burn permit through the District. In this case, the ag burn permit check will still be written out to Lincoln County CD and deposited by the District. Ecology will still send out their semi-annual reports for ag burn permits issued for Lincoln County and let the District know how much of the ag burn check money received by the District needs to be paid back to Ecology.

### **DNR Report**

Mary-Ellen Early with DNR announced that she is hoping to attend the District Board meetings every month if possible but also noted that she is also a member of the fire response team and may not be able to attend the meetings during a busy fire season. Mary Ellen reported that DNR is leading the development of Wildfire Hazard and Risk Mapping initiative as directed by Senate Bill 6120. A draft map of the Wildfire Hazard Map of Washington is available to view on the DNR website. An upcoming listening session on the initiative will be held in Spokane Valley at Mirabeau Park in the Lilac Room at 6 PM. Webinars will also be held on July 16 and August 12 by Zoom and will start at 5 PM.

Mary Ellen also reported DNR crews can work on fuel reduction projects on forest land in Lincoln County. If DNR funding for a year is not all used up, the leftover funding could be used to fund DNR work crew projects in the county, but the District would first have to sign up on the DNR waiting list in order to have a chance to get funded. For any questions on fire prevention assistance from DNR, please send Mary Ellen an email and she will get back to District staff as soon as possible.

### **Request for Public Comment**

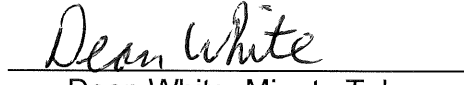
Jeff asked if there was any more public comment for the meeting. There was no public comment.

**15. Jason moved to adjourn the meeting. Ryan seconded. Motion passed.  
The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 AM.**

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 8.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Josh Sherwood, Secretary

  
Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 15 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the May 13, 2026 minutes as presented.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #13087 to #13105, along with 11 EFT's, totaling \$67,874.40.
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