

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING  
Lincoln County Fairgrounds Kitchen  
Wednesday, March 9, 2022**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:**

Meeting called to order at 8:35 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting in person or by telephone were as follows: Jim Baye, Chris Laney, Josh Sherwood, and Braidy Haden - LCCD Supervisors; Mike Baden, Conservation Commission; Cari Roepke, NRCS; Elsa Bowen, Delaini Disher, Connor Nikkola, and Dean White - LCCD staff.

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

- **1. Josh moved to approve the February 9, 2022 minutes as presented. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**

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

- **2. Chris moved to pay and approve vouchers #11673 to #11698, along with 49 EFT's, totaling \$146,834.10. Josh seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.**
- **3. Chris moved to submit voucher #7 for the VSP 4 grant in the amount of \$8,770.68 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **4. Chris moved to submit voucher #8 for the VSP 4 grant in the amount of \$21,133.98 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **5. Chris moved to submit voucher #7 for the 22-39-IM grant in the amount of \$16,156.25 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **6. Chris moved to submit voucher #8 for the 22-39-IM grant in the amount of \$11,411.96 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **7. Chris moved to submit voucher #7 for the 22-39-FR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **8. Chris moved to submit voucher #8 for the 22-39-FR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **9. Chris moved to submit voucher #7 for the 22-39-HZ grant in the amount of \$457.28 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

- **10. Chris moved to submit voucher #8 for the 22-39-HZ grant in the amount of \$5,337.94 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **11. Chris moved to submit voucher #7 for the 22-39-NR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **12. Chris moved to submit voucher #8 for the 22-39-NR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **13. Chris moved to submit voucher #3 for the 22-39-DR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **14. Chris moved to submit voucher #4 for the 22-39-DR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **15. Chris moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for January 26, 2022 through February 23, 2022 be approved. The total amount owed was \$3,051.70. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **16. Chris moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Ag Link credit card statement with a closing date of February 28, 2022. The total amount owed was \$65.63. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

Elsa reported that the District still needed to find another bank in the local area willing to accept public funds so that all of the District's deposits in bank accounts did not exceed the \$250,000 FDIC insured limit. The only other bank in the local area that could be found and willing to accept public funds is North Cascades Bank branch in Grand Coulee. Elsa proposed that \$200,000 be deposited in a checking account at North Cascades Bank in Grand Coulee. Jeff, Jim, Delaini, and Elsa would be the authorized check signers for the account.

- **17. Chris moved to approve opening a checking account at North Cascades Bank in Grand Coulee and depositing \$200,000 in the checking account. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

Delaini passed around bank statements for the board members to initial.

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

- **18. Chris moved to approve the Treasurer's report and Grant's report as presented. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

## C. AGENDA

### Cost Share Approval

Hardcopies of the Cost Share Action spreadsheet were distributed. There were 13 applications for cost share funding from the Direct Seed 3 grant for \$21,000 apiece (250 acres maximum times \$28 per acre = \$7,000 per year times 3 = \$21,000 total for each applicant). There was also a cost share request from District cost share funds for a completed grassed waterway project for \$10,000.

**19. Chris moved to approve the Cost Share Action spreadsheet as presented. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

### Technical Assistance Request from Adams CD

Elsa announced that Adams CD had received cost share money for a livestock watering facility project in Adams County and had requested technical assistance from Lincoln County CD to implement the project. Lincoln County CD would receive up to \$8,011.13 for providing technical assistance to help implement the David Harder livestock watering facility with Board approval. The project needs to be finished by June 30 this year.

**20. Josh moved to authorize District staff to provide technical assistance to Adams CD to help implement the David Harder livestock watering facility project in Adams County before the June 30 deadline, with the District receiving up to \$8,011.13 for cost reimbursement. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**

### Elections

Delaini reported that she had recently finished counting the election ballots from the February 9 board supervisor election with assistance from Dick Erickson. A total of 19 ballots were received. Braidy was reelected to his Board Supervisor position. Chris has submitted all of the required paperwork and will be reappointed to his Board Supervisor position at the May Conservation Commission meeting.

### Tree Sale Update

Delaini reported that most of the tree sale species have been sold out, including all of the potted stock. The remaining tree and shrub species are still available for sale on the District website and by hardcopy order form. Delaini estimated that about 90% of tree sale orders were made online through the District website this year. Elsa noted that due to the continuing COVID-19 vaccination clinic being held by Lincoln County Environmental Health in the Fairgrounds kitchen building, the District will be packing and holding the tree sale pickup in the Auditorium this year for the first time ever.

Elsa announced that District staff are looking into ordering fruit tree stock for next year since Hardy Hardware will not be selling potted fruit trees. In addition, the option of offering some larger bundle orders such as 50 stems in one bundle for some species instead of the current bundle size of 5 stems for all tree sale species. Dean reported that due to the latest arctic outbreak, the ground is still frozen in the Midwest and the tree sale stems from Cold Stream Farm in Michigan will not be shipped until March 21 at the earliest. Dean is concerned that the District will still be able to receive these stems in time for tree packing on March 30 and tree sale distribution on March 31 and April 1.

### **Upcoming EQIP Local Working Group Meeting**

The Local Working Group meeting for EQIP funding is scheduled to be held remotely on Zoom at 1 PM on Thursday, April 28 because NRCS staff are not yet cleared to hold public meetings in person.

### **Ecology Water Quality Monitoring in the Hawk Creek Watershed**

Elsa reported that she was notified by Amanda Richardson with the Department of Ecology of the scheduled preliminary watershed evaluation to be conducted this year (perhaps in March) by Ecology staff within the Hawk Creek watershed (1702000118 HUC10 boundary) in Lincoln County. Because 2022 will be the first year of watershed evaluation, no letters will be sent out to landowners. Ecology staff will only be making visual observations of Hawk Creek and its tributaries from public roads and rights of ways. Ecology staff will be comparing field conditions to the online Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture guidelines for tillage site and livestock site water quality concerns.

Elsa noted that Lincoln County CD already has an agreement with Ecology to be notified in writing before any notice of water quality violation letters are sent out by Ecology to local landowners.

### **WDFW Proviso Grant Update**

Elsa announced that WDFW Proviso grant funding for fire recovery efforts in Lincoln County areas adversely affected by the Whitney Fire is now available. Funding for the emergency hay or deferred grazing option and the wildlife friendly fencing option through the Conservation Commission will be administered by the District while the habitat recovery option funding is administered by WDFW. Four cooperators in Lincoln County have already been preapproved for the hay or deferred grazing option for up to \$10,000 each with 75% cost share. These cooperators were added to the bottom of the Cost Share Action spreadsheet. Two cooperators in the county have applied for the wildlife friendly fencing option (4 wires with the smooth wire on the top and bottom) but have not yet been preapproved for funding and only one applicant is likely to be preapproved.

**21. Braidy moved to approve WDFW Proviso grant funding for up to \$10,000 each at 75% cost share for the hay or deferred grazing option for the 4 cooperators as presented. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

Elsa announced that the WDFW Proviso grant addendum for \$5,000 had also become available to the Lincoln County CD with Board approval.

**22. Braidy moved to approve the additional WDFW Proviso grant addendum funding for \$5,000. Josh seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.**

### **WaterSMART Grant Update**

Elsa announced that the District had finally received official notice from the Bureau of Reclamation yesterday that the \$100,000 WaterSMART grant for organizing and initiating the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition had been approved and that the District as grant administrator could now start incurring costs for grant activities with Board approval. Two Requests for Proposals (RFP's) have already been developed and advertising has started in local newspapers. One request for proposals is for the facilitation of the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition meetings and organization process (\$20,000) while the other proposal is for compilation and review

of groundwater levels in the 4 county Coalition area (\$30,000). The deadline for the Requests for Proposals is Friday, April 1

**23. Josh moved to approve the advertising of the facilitation RFP and the groundwater level review RFP in local newspapers for the WaterSmart grant. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**

Elsa reported that Harold Crose with Grant County CD and sponsorship from the East Columbia Irrigation District (ECBID) was able to obtain grant funding for the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program (OGWRP) from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and from the Watershed Protection and Flood and Prevention Act (PL-566). The \$775,000 in federal funding administered by NRCS will assist in the design and construction of the OGWRP's remaining large infrastructure projects.

#### **Direct Seed 3 Grant Update**

Connor announced that Lincoln County CD originally received 13 openings for cost share funding from the Direct Seed 3 grant and then received 2 more openings for cost share funding from Adams CD that were not going to be used for grant funding in Adams County. The District now has 13 cost share applications for Direct Seed 3 grant funding approved and is looking for 2 more beginning direct seed applicants who farm in Lincoln County to complete the 15 cost share openings for the Direct Seed 3 grant.

#### **Voluntary Stewardship Program Update**

Connor reported that 5 Lincoln County VSP cost share contracts have been started and that process of identifying and installing 5 VSP monitoring sites in the county has been started. One monitoring site along Hawk Creek had monitoring sensors installed yesterday, including Pendant loggers for measuring water temperature and transducers for measuring water depth. Connor will be working on installing monitoring sensors at the other 4 sites over the next several weeks.

#### **CRP 58 Signup Task Order**

Elsa reported that the CRP 58 Task Order had been signed. The white 4-door pickup is now ready to be driven to the Ritzville Field Office for Glen Riehle, retired NRCS employee, to use for CRP field checks in Adams County starting in April. Glen has been hired as a temporary employee for the District to conduct the CRP field checks in Adams County.

#### **WACD Update**

Jeff gave an update on WACD. The WACD Board of Directors met on February 23 on Zoom. Kirk Robinson, the Interim Director for the Conservation Commission, is working with the recently selected Executive Director, Chris Pettit, to help with the transition in leadership for the Conservation Commission.

The acquisition of PL-566 funding to help fund the design and construction of the OGWRP's remaining large infrastructure projects was recognized as a significant step forward in transitioning off of declining deep irrigation well aquifers and on to surface water from the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project. Bill Blake, WADE (Washington Association of District Employees) President, announced that the 2022 WADE training is scheduled to be held in person at the Sleeping Lady in Leavenworth. The cost to WADE for hosting the training at the Sleeping Lady is about \$90,000 per year.

Code of conduct issues for CD's were raised in regards to the proposed change in Board Supervisor elections that were agreed upon by general consensus by WACD and the Conservation Commission. The associated legislative bill that contained the agreed upon changes was then derailed by a King County legislator's attempt to strike out the key language in the bill and replace it with language requiring that all CD's place their board supervisor elections on their respective county general ballot in the fall, regardless of whether or not the smaller CD's across the state could not come close to afford paying for the added cost. In the end, this bill with the unpopular amendment never made it out of Committee and thus died for the 2022 Legislative Session. It is expected that changes in the procedures for Board Supervisor elections will be revisited in 2023.

### **Conservation Commission Report**

Mike noted that the 2022 Legislative Session will end tomorrow. The supplemental budget to the Conservation Commission may be one of the largest ever seen. With the potential for much more cost share funding this biennium, conservation districts will be expected to step up to facilitate more cost share projects and show more conservation implemented on the ground to the Legislature. Legislative efforts to respond to the proposed changes to Policy 1025 by Ecology were not successful. For the time being, Ecology's proposed change to require water rights for all diversions of water from a stream or lake or pond for providing offstream livestock water is on hold.

Mike noted that agreement for free District employee email through Gmail will be ending soon. The Conservation Commission is working on ways to transition to a new email provider for CD's. Dean asked, and Mike noted that employee email as a CD employee needs to be saved to a computer or other storage medium and that it is illegal for district employees to delete their email as it is considered public information and might be requested sometime in the future. Elsa noted that she had heard that the free use of ArcGIS software through the agreement with NRCS may also be ending in the near future. Mike thanked Delaini for her facilitation of the recent Hazards training on Zoom. Jeff thanked Mike for attending another Lincoln County CD board meeting in person.

Mike announced that the Conservation Commission meeting and tour that was to be hosted by Lincoln County CD back in May 2020 but was cancelled is now on for May 2022. The meeting tour to be hosted by the District has been scheduled for Tuesday, May 17.

### **NRCS Report**

Cari noted that the West Palouse Team has recently finished ranking EQIP applications. Adams County had 31 applications, but only 1 was preapproved. Lincoln County also had 31 applications, but only 5 applications were preapproved. NRCS-WA has submitted a request for more EQIP funding. The classic CSP signup ends at the end of March. The WPT has received 84 applications so far.

RCPD funding has been obtained for the WRIA 54, the Lower Spokane watershed, and will be administered out of Spokane County. The far northeast corner of Lincoln County is part of WRIA 54 along with parts of Stevens County and Spokane County. Landowners and operators with 51% or more of their farmland inside WRIA 54 are eligible to apply for RCPD funding through NRCS. Elsa noted that RCPD funding has been available for Lincoln County operators in the far southeast corner in WRIA 34, the

Palouse watershed, but after several years of applications, no Lincoln County operators have been approved for WRIA 34 RCPP funding.

The current regular CRP signup #58 ends on Friday, March 11. COVID-19 restrictions have been relaxed in the Davenport office with 75% of office staff allowed in the office at a time and with masks no longer required to be worn by staff but can still be worn if staff wants to wear masks. Linda Knutson has resigned as Program Assistant in the Davenport office due to personal reasons. Jeff asked if NRCS has any cost share targeted directly for producers to implement weed seeker technology to only spray expensive herbicides when weeds are encountered in a crop field. Cari noted that NRCS has a pest management practice but does not have any cost share funding available at this time for weed seeker technology as far as she knows.

### **County Commissioners Report**

Commissioner Stedman sent an email noting that he would not be able to attend or call into the meeting today and so there was no County Commissioners Report.

### **FSA Report**

There was no report from FSA.

### **Miscellaneous**

Dean noted he had finished updating the cumulative crop year precip spreadsheet up through the 2020 – 2021 crop year and up through February as available. The updated Excel spreadsheet with 22 tabs for the current 22 active precip stations in the county was emailed out to precip cooperators with email. Saving the updated cumulative precip spreadsheet as a PDF would require saving each precip station tab as a separate tab and so a PDF file or hard copy printout of just the precip cooperator station for those cooperators without email will be mailed out sometime later this year. The updated Excel spreadsheet was also mailed as an attachment to all board members for their information.

Dean spoke briefly about the selected screenshots saved to PDF for the 2022 SoilCon – Washington Soil Health Week webinar on February 22 & 23 that he emailed as an attachment to all board members. Over 900 attendees registered to watch and participate in SoilCon 2022. The webinar sessions were recorded and will be available on the WSU CSANR (Center for Sustainable Agricultural and Natural Resources) website. Dean noted that soil pH and soil organic carbon along with the prevention of soil erosion/soil degradation are recognized as master soil health variables that are necessary in good condition in soils in order to have good soil health. Dean also reviewed the 4 NRCS core principles for soil health: Maximize soil cover, minimize soil disturbance, maximize continuous living roots in the soil as much as possible, and maximize biodiversity through diverse crops and livestock on the soil.

Dean also mentioned that the photos of the runoff at the bridge over Crab Creek on Rocky Ford Rd on March 2 represented a low to moderate runoff at about 300 CFS. This is the first runoff even seen here since 2019. With the 0.5 to 1.0" of rain received on February 28/March 1 in many parts of the county, the small layer maybe ½ to 1" thick of thawed out soil at the surface helped to prevent a much larger runoff event from occurring, especially on conventionally seeded winter wheat fields. The increasing use of direct seeding in the upper WRIA 43 watershed also probably helped to reduce the amount of runoff, but how much is unknown.

Elsa and Delaini displayed the Eddie Johnson Memorial Sign on poster paper. The design will be copied and applied to sign that will be installed at the WSU Wilke farm at the east edge of Davenport.

Chris asked about the proposed plan for Lincoln County CD to host the May 17 Conservation Commission tour. Elsa noted that the general tour agenda developed for May 2020 will most likely be used. The tour will start in Reardan and visit a straw wattle manufacturing plant at Wagner's, and then several grassed waterway projects and the Hwy 2 Living Snowfence may be visited while heading west. A catered lunch will be served at the Fairgrounds kitchen. The tour will then head west to the Swanson Lakes area to look at Whitney Fire burned areas and may look at well level measurement methods in nearby wells. The tour will return back to Davenport for catered dinner.

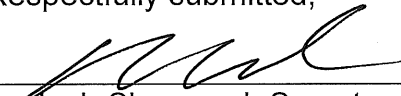
Chris suggested, and everybody agreed by general consensus, that it would be better to serve the meals at Memorial Hall because of the much better acoustics there as compared with the Fairgrounds kitchen.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment pertaining to District operations.

Chairman Jeff Schibel adjourned the meeting at 10:25 AM. The next board meeting is scheduled as an in-person meeting on Wednesday, April 13, 2022 starting at 8:30 AM at Lincoln County Public Works in Davenport. A telephone call in number will be available for those people wishing to participate by phone.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Josh Sherwood, Secretary

  
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Dean White, Minute Taker

### **SUMMARY:**

All 23 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the February 9 minutes as presented.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #11673 to #11698, along with 49 EFT's, totaling \$146,834.10.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher #7 for the VSP 4 grant in the amount of \$8,770.68 to the Conservation Commission.
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- 19. M/S/P to approve the Cost Share Action spreadsheet as presented.
- 20. M/S/P to authorize District staff to provide technical assistance to Adams CD to help implement the David Harder livestock watering facility project in Adams County before the June 30 deadline, with the District receiving up to \$8,011.13 for cost reimbursement.

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- 22. M/S/P to approve the additional WDFW Proviso grant addendum funding for \$5,000.
- 23. M/S/P to approve the advertising of the facilitation RFP and the groundwater level review RFP in local newspapers for the WaterSmart grant.