

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
USDA Service Center Conference Room – Davenport, WA
Wednesday, July 9, 2025**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order at 9:02 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting in person or by phone were as follows: Braidy Haden (phone), Josh Sherwood (phone) and Jason Echelbarger - LCCD Supervisors; Mike Baden, Conservation Commission; Ryan Baye, WACD; Brandon Davis, NRCS; Roxy Jacobsen, FSA; Elsa Bowen, Delaini Disher, Brean Nieman, and Dean White - LCCD staff.

A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:

- 1. Josh moved to approve the June 11, 2025 minutes as presented. Jason seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.*

B. TREASURER'S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:

- 2. Josh moved to pay and approve vouchers #12785 to #12823, along with 20 EFT's, totaling \$630,823.28. Braidy seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.*
- 3. Josh moved to submit voucher #18 for the 24-39-FH grant in the amount of \$11,144.62 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.*
- 4. Josh moved to submit voucher #21 for the Adams CD TA grant in the amount of \$2,013.02 to Adams CD. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.*
- 5. Josh moved to submit voucher #16 for the 24-39-IE grant in the amount of \$461,714.93 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.*
- 6. Josh moved to submit voucher #10 for the CBCD ILA grant in the amount of \$0.00 to Columbia Basin CD. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.*
- 7. Josh moved to submit voucher #1 for the 25-39-TP1 (Conservation Commission) / EA-25-02 (NRCS) grant in the amount of \$134,251.60 to the Conservation Commission and NRCS. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.*
- 8. Josh moved to submit voucher #24 for the 24-39-NR grant in the amount of \$20,143.32 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.*

- **9. Josh moved to submit voucher #47 for the Cluster Engineering grant in the amount of \$18,701.14 to Stevens CD. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **10. Josh moved to submit voucher #10 for the 25-39-SFF grant in the amount of \$1,011.78 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **11. Josh moved to submit voucher #1 for the Mid Columbia Drought PP grant in the amount of \$36,578.32 to DOE. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **12. Josh moved to submit voucher #12 for the 25-39-IM grant in the amount of \$5,460.98 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **13. Josh moved to submit voucher #8 for the #23-DG-11062752-163 CWPP grant in the amount of \$0.00 to DNR. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **14. Josh moved to submit voucher #9 for the #23-DG-11062752-163 CWPP grant in the amount of \$9,800 to DNR. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **15. Josh moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District VISA statement for May 24, 2025 through June 25, 2025 be approved. The total amount owed was \$1,099.34. Braidy seconded. Discussion was held. The Canva software is graphics software used by Delaini and Trend Micro is the antivirus software used in all District staff computers.**
- **16. Josh moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of June 15, 2025. The total amount owed was \$246.24. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **17. Josh moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of June 30, 2025. The total amount owed was \$189.66. Braidy 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.

Delaini noted that the next vouchers for the VSP 5 and NE Lincoln County Well Level grants will be submitted soon and that the 24-39-IE and Direct Seed 3 grants were the only grants that had small amounts of money returned by the end of June.

Elsa proposed that Lincoln County CD in the future should follow the example that some other CD's across the state had already used to take out a line of credit to help pay for

large and expensive conservation projects like the irrigation mainline replacement project this spring so that the District staff would not have keep moving grant funds around to pay for these projects at the end of the fiscal year in June.

Brean noted that the District had not yet received the special assessment payment for July from the county. Ryan asked when the special assessment is up for renewal again. Elsa noted that the special assessment is up for renewal again in 2028.

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

C. AGENDA

Conservation Commission Grant Addendums Update

Elsa reported that the following 3 Addendums for Conservation Commission grants had been submitted to the Commission.

The Natural Resources Investments (NRI) grant Addendum was submitted for \$107,770, with \$90,000 allocated to the Ziegler dairy waste BMP's and the rest allocated to technical assistance costs and staff wages.

The Implementation Grant Addendum was submitted for \$126,713 to cover general operating costs for the District including education and outreach, staff training, meeting costs and travel for the NE Area, annual WACD and all District Board meetings, WACD and NACD investment contributions, and to hold Board Supervisor elections.

The Forest Health and Community Wildfire Resiliency grant addendum was submitted for \$90,9000 to cover technical assistance, outreach and education, training, home assessments and road address signs.

Cost Share Action

Copies of the July 9, 2025 Cost Share Action sheet were distributed for review and approval. The Cost Share Action sheet included four requests for cost share payment from the Direct Seed 3 grant for a total of \$26,497. The cost share sheet also included seven applications for cost share assistance from the VSP 6, IE (Irrigation Efficiency), SFF (Sustainable Farms and Fields), and District cost share grants for a total of \$1,090,000. The combined total of payment requests and applications for cost share totaled \$1,116,497. Discussion was held.

Delaini noted that she had been working on developing several sentences to add to a new Direct Seed grant contract agreement sheet that would require cooperators to agree to use all of the grant money allocated to their contract and to submit their cost share payment requests in a timely manner well before the end of the next Direct Seed grant.

Those cooperators who did not complete their Direct Seed project and/or did not spend all of the grant money allocated to them would be given a lower ranking on future grant applications. An allowance would be made for cooperators who contacted the District and reported that they would not be able to implement their Direct Seed grant project and spend their grant funding well ahead of the grant expiration date. Jeff

suggested that Delaini have the proposed grant language amendment available to the Board 2 – 3 months from now. Jason suggested that allowances be made for future unexpected adverse conditions such as drought.

19. Josh moved to approve the 4 payment requests from the Direct Seed 3 grant for a total of \$26,497. Jason seconded. Motion passed.

20. Josh moved to approve the overall Cost Share Action spreadsheet for the July 9, 2025 Board Meeting as presented for a total of \$1,116,497. Jason seconded. Motion passed.

Washington Conservation Society

Elsa announced that the District had received the annual request for support from the Washington Conservation Society. The District has given \$150 support in recent years and obtained a Memorandum of Understanding from the Society.

21. Josh moved to approve the renewal of the \$150 support for the Washington Conservation Society for 2025 along with the Memorandum of Understanding. Jason seconded. Motion passed.

NRCS Assistant Chief Visit

Elsa reported that District staff will be giving a tour of the dry Allington Bay boat launch on Pacific Lake to Assistant NRCS Chief Louis Aspey on July 15 to show him the mostly dry lakebed of Pacific Lake nowadays. Copies of the 2-page District flyer describing the mostly dry condition of Pacific Lake alternating with short periods of lake water in wetter years along with photos of water and lots of boats in the 1960's compared to water in 2018 versus no water again in 2022 were distributed. Following the stop at Pacific Lake, Assistant Chief Aspey will head to the Columbia Basin to attend a special tour of the recently completed OGWRP (Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program) EL 86.4 System. District staff will be attending the public tour of the EL 86.4 System hosted by CBSWC (Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition) on Thursday, July 17.

Hawk Creek Water Quality Assessment Update

Elsa reported that Robin Dunlap with the Ecology Eastern Region Office had recently sent notice of water quality violation letters to 5 livestock owners with livestock operations along Hawk Creek north of Davenport. Elsa and Elayne drove out to Hawk Creek yesterday to speak with the affected livestock operators. Some of the operators only have 2 horses next to the creek while other operators have 50 or more cows next to the creek.

Joel Metcalfe is the new local water quality contact with Ecology for Lincoln County. Ecology is requesting that Lincoln County CD apply for a riparian fencing grant with funding to help livestock operators install riparian fencing along their section of Hawk Creek to reduce livestock impacts on water quality. Ecology also has a separate pot of money to pay these livestock owners \$200 an acre for 15 years to compensate them for the loss of pasture due to the riparian fencing. It also sounds like Ecology will now help to cost share for repairing riparian fencing damaged by high runoff events.

Ryan asked what the current riparian fencing setback would be for the Hawk Creek area. Elsa noted that the setback would be 50 feet back from the top of the bank and that there would also probably be tree and shrub planting requirements within the riparian fenced area.

Update on Signing CRP Contracts Resolution for CD's

Elsa noted that last year Lincoln County CD had developed a resolution that local CD's should have the option to opt out of the current requirement from FSA to sign all new CRP contracts within their district boundary. The resolution was approved and forwarded from the NE Area meeting, then from the WACD meeting to NACD. However, there has been no movement above NACD because FSA says that their written policy requires that CD's sign new CRP contracts within their boundary. Ryan commented that it would probably take political pressure from local Congressional Senators and Representatives in order to have much impact on USDA officials in order to update CRP policy and allow CD's to opt out of signing new CRP contracts.

Elsa reminded Board members that Lincoln County CD has not signed any new CRP contracts for the last 5 years and does not want to sign the contracts because the District has no say in the CRP contracts and because it would take hours of unpaid time for Board members to sign all of these contracts every year. There are 127 new CRP contracts this year in Lincoln County, and there are an estimated 1,200 CRP contracts expiring in Lincoln and Adams counties next year.

Mike reported that he sits on the NASCA (National Association of State Conservation Agencies) Board and has been making the plea there to allow CD's to opt out of signing new CRP contracts.

WACD Update

Ryan reported that the Washington State Public Policy Board has released a 55-page report on the potential impacts on all CD's across the state if they would be required to move all Board Supervisor elections to their county's November general election ballot. The largest impact would be the \$25.1 million dollars total cost for all CD's to make this change to their elections.

Jeff noted that he attended the Strategic Planning Session in Bow several weeks ago. He also attended the following tour at the PMC nursery. One item of discussion was on COLA (Cost of Living Adjustments). A few CD's are making COLA adjustments on the average of all staff wages in their district instead of doing COLA's on individual salaries. Jin Brown, the long-term PMC Nursery Manager is retiring by the end of the year. Assistant Manager John Knox is next in line to become the new manager. The PMC nursery is currently growing 1.6 million seedlings, including 180,000 ponderosa pine seedlings for Spokane CD. Benton/Franklin CD's joint operation has been terminated.

Ryan noted that he and Tom will be moving into the same office space to save money. Ryan also noted that he has heard that there will be no new Farm Bill approved this year and that IRA funds will be transferred into regular USDA funds. Ryan will have all planning done for the annual WACD Meeting this fall by Labor Day.

WADE Training Update

Brean and Matthew attended the recent WADE training at the Sleeping Lady in Leavenworth. Brean commented that it was a good opportunity for her to meet other CD employees in person that she had only spoken with by phone before the training. She attended good sessions, enjoyed the good food, and enjoyed the opportunity to meet other CD employees and exchange ideas with them. This year's WADE training had 293 total participants attending and it was noted that there are about 511 total CD employees across the state.

Conservation Commission Report

Mike reported that Forest Health funding had taken a significant reduction from the state budget cuts and that only \$90,000 maximum would be available per CD for the 2026 fiscal year. A survey of CD's taken by the Commission found that Forest Health and Conservation Technical Assistance were the highest priorities. Supplemental budgets, if available, will be distributed in the future, but with the state already with a \$700 million budget shortfall, funding will be hard to obtain for supplemental budgets. The Conservation Commission is working to distribute the all the funding from that it did receive out to conservation districts.

The Conservation Commission is working with NRCS to develop CRP task orders, Conservation Technical Assistance task orders and Engineering task orders for CD's across the state. A new SE Washington area representative is being sought and one Governor and one DNR appointee have yet to be filled on the Commission.

County Commissioners Report

There was no County Commissioners Report.

NRCS Report

Brandon reported that NRCS never received any more IRA funds and will not be getting these funds in the future. These funds would have provided about 75% of the funding for new NRCS conservation projects across the county. The IRA funds may instead be incorporated into any new Farm Bill that may or may not be approved later this year.

FSA Report

Roxy reported that the deadline for spring acreage reporting is next week. The signup deadline for ECAP (Emergency Crop Assistance Program) is Monday, August 11. Signup for the new SDRP (Supplemental Disaster Relief Program) program begins tomorrow and has \$16 billion of relief funding for producers adversely affected by natural disasters such as wildfires, floods, excessive heat, winter storms, freezing temperatures, qualifying drought conditions, and other disaster conditions. Almost all CRP contract offers have been approved. The average payment rate of about \$30 per acre is less than previous CRP signups.

Miscellaneous

Dean described the recently updated Davenport Well #1 well level charts for Etape and transducer charts that were distributed. The highest well level measurements since measurements were restarted in June 2018 were taken on April 15 at 118.11 feet, but then the well level had already dropped down about 8 feet to 126.23 feet below ground level by June 27. The peak well level is assumed to be related to the large runoff event in late February, and the subsequent sharp drop in well level is related to the large water pumping starting up in mid-April in the main city well, Davenport Well #6 to water the city park, the football field, and Davenport residents watering their lawns. Dean predicted that the lowest well levels this year will probably drop down to the same 134 foot level seen in recent years due to the increasing number of water users on the Davenport water system. Davenport Superintendent of Public Works Jeremy Holderby has estimated that about 110 new taps (water users) have been added to the system since 2018.

Request for Public Comment

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

Chairman Jeff Schibel adjourned the meeting at 10:59 AM

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting is on Wednesday, October 8. There are no meetings scheduled for August and September due to harvest and seeding.

Respectfully submitted,


Josh Sherwood, Secretary


Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 21 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the June 11, 2025 minutes as presented.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #12785 to #12823, along with 20 EFT's, totaling \$630,823.28.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher #18 for the 24-39-FH grant in the amount of \$11,144.62 to the Conservation Commission.
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