

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING  
USDA Service Center Conference Room – Davenport, WA  
Thursday, February 12, 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 Zoom were as follows: Jim Baye and Jason Echelbarger, - LCCD Supervisors; Sidra Blake, Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Manager, and Todd Baarstad, Fish and Wildlife Biologist for Eastern Washington private lands, WDFW; Ryan Wiater, guest; Elsa Bowen, Matthew Rosman and Dean White - LCCD staff.

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

*1. Jason moved to approve the January 14, 2026 minutes as presented. Jim seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.*

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

- *2. Jim moved to pay and approve vouchers #12982 to #13005, along with 42 EFT's, totaling \$76,465.69. Jason seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.*
- *3. Jim moved to submit voucher #7 for the 26-39-FH grant in the amount of \$2,896.25 to the Conservation Commission. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*
- *4. Jim moved to submit voucher #5 for the 26-39-IE grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*
- *5. Jim moved to submit voucher #28 for the Adams CD TA grant in the amount of \$572.69 to Adams CD. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*
- *6. Jim moved to submit voucher #3 for the Mid-Columbia Drought Preparedness Program grant (quarterly submission) in the amount of \$11,076.36 to DOE. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*
- *7. Jim moved to submit voucher #7 for the 26-39-NR grant in the amount of \$326.03 to the Conservation Commission. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*
- *8. Jim moved to submit voucher #4 for the 26-39-AMM grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*
- *9. Jim moved to submit voucher #14 for the NE Lincoln Well Monitoring grant in the amount of \$25,156.51 to DOE. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*

- **10. Jim moved to submit voucher #7 for the 26-39-IM grant in the amount of \$5,287.89 to the Conservation Commission. Jason seconded. Motion passed.**
- **11. Jim moved to submit voucher #7 for the VSP 6 grant in the amount of \$6,855.44 to the Conservation Commission. Jason seconded. Motion passed.**
- **12. Jim moved to submit voucher #4 for the 26-39-PFR grant in the amount of \$1,911.53 to the Conservation Commission. Jason seconded. Motion passed.**
- **13. Jim moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District VISA statement for December 24, 2025 through January 23, 2026 be approved. The total amount owed was \$2,733.21. Jason seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.**
- **14. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of January 15, 2026. The total amount owed was \$102.69. Jason seconded. Motion passed.**
- **15. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of January 31, 2026. The total amount owed was \$111.60. 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. It was noted that the amount of funding in Fund #30, the Reserve Fund for Employee Liability Coverage, was no longer able to cover all of the potential liability and that a motion should be made at the March Board Meeting to increase the reserve funding in this fund account,

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

## **C. AGENDA**

### **WDFW Presentation**

Sidra Blake and Todd Baarstad with WDFW (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife) introduced themselves and Board members and staff introduced themselves. Sidra is the new Manager for the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area following the retirement of Mike Finch. Sidra has been employed with WDFW for 8 years and has been involved with habitat management, restoration and maintenance, including BDA's (beaver dam analogs). Sidra previously worked in Douglas County on riparian restoration projects and on prescribed burn practices on native rangeland with overgrown brush but good understory vegetation to improve the native habitat and reduce future fire danger. Sidra

is looking to implement prescribed burn practices on portions of the 20,000 acres inside the Swanson Wildlife Area to help rehabilitate areas overrun with cheatgrass.

Todd has worked as a Fish and Wildlife Biologist for private lands in Lincoln County and other Eastern Washington counties since the mid 1990's and noted that WDFW has a prescribed burn team. Todd noted that after the 700,000+ acres burned in the September 7, 2020 Labor Day fires that included the 127,000 acre Whitney Rd fire in Lincoln County, the Pearl Hill fire in Douglas County, and adjacent fires in Okanogan and Chelan counties, he could have spent the rest of his career working on fire recovery work.

However, there is currently no WDFW funding for him to work on recovery work for the July 2025 Western Pines Rd fire (5,800 acres) in northeastern Lincoln County. In addition, there are cultural resource concerns that would have to be addressed before any ground disturbing activities as part of fire recovery work could be implemented. Todd also noted that one of the factors that impeded fire fighters and caused the Western Pines Rd fire to grow so large was that there was no good ingress and egress out of the area due to the old separate roads with no complete main roads to quickly access the spreading fire. There were residents of some houses and cabins right along the Spokane River that had to jump in their boats and canoes to escape the fire while watching their buildings burn.

Todd also emphasized that he and Sidra were here today to introduce / reintroduce themselves to the Board and to the landowners and residents of the county and to let them know that they are willing and available to work on habitat and wildlife issues in the county as much as possible.

### **Upcoming Internal Audit**

Elsa announced that the annual Internal Audit would be conducted on Monday, February 23 starting at 1 PM. All Board Members are encouraged to attend. The Schedule 22 form is to be completed along with other required documents.

### **Elections Update**

Elsa distributed hard copies of the revised draft elections ballot for review. Ryan and other meeting attendants noted that one edit needed was to add an "l" in between dry & and to read "...primarily dryland wheat along with..." in the About the Candidate section of the ballot. The election ballots will not be mailed out until March 1. Walt's Mailing out of Spokane will be handling the preparation and mailing of the ballots again to the approximate 8,000 registered voters in Lincoln County. The mailed ballots will include a return envelope with the postage already paid.

Elsa briefly reviewed the history of why the District has been mailing the Board Supervisor elections ballots out to the registered voters in the county for the last several years. The District previously advertised the Supervisor elections in the Lincoln Advertiser and local newspapers and notified voters to call in or stop by the office to request a ballot to vote in the elections. These elections typically resulted in only 10 – 20 ballots received back by the District. The State Legislature has not been satisfied with the low amount of voter participation in CD board supervisor elections across the state and has been investigating a requirement to have CD board supervisor elections placed on the November county ballot across the state. The District found out that the cost of placing the Supervisor elections on the Lincoln County ballot would cost the District about \$30,000 per year. The District then chose to try mailing out the estimated

8,250 ballots to registered voters in the county by itself in March 2023 with a lot of employee time for the first year, and then in March 2024 & 2025 with ballot preparation and mailing taking care of by Walt's Mailing for about \$8,000 year (from the Implementation grant) and about a 12% return of the voter ballots to the District. This new voting procedure has greatly increased voter participation in the county and saves the District about \$22,000 a year and much employee time to instead spend on conservation projects across the county. Lincoln County is the only CD in the state so far that is using this new voting system.

### **Direct Seed Conference Report**

Jason noted that there was pretty good turnout at the conference and that the tradeshow was better and more relevant to producers than the Spokane Ag Show. There were some good speakers and presentations along with some not so good speakers, but the breakout meetings were pretty good. One of the breakout sessions covered weed spraying drones. One operator is needed for every weed spraying drone to operate it and change the batteries as needed. The largest weed spraying drones can now carry a 20 gallon spray tank. The conference also noted that funding Weed It units for targeted weed spraying will now be covered by EQIP, which is needed because the reduced costs for the new units is still about \$70,000 apiece.

Ryan also attended the conference, but like Jason, did not attend the one day soil health training day. Both heard that the training was expensive to attend and that the training given was below the level of most ag producers attending the training and did not take the primary audience into consideration.

### **Zeigler Dairy Farm Nutrient Management Plan Certification**

Elsa reported that the WA Department of Agriculture has now certified that the Zeigler Dairy Farm has met the requirements for its Nutrient Management Plan. All dairies in the state are required to have their own Nutrient Management Plan on hand any time that the Dept. of Ag stops by to inspect their dairy. Lincoln County CD has assisted the Zeigler dairy in meeting the NMP requirements by funding dairy infrastructure projects including the dairy lagoon and concrete runways project. Jeff signed the NMP certificate on behalf of the Board.

### **Tree Sale Update**

Elsa reported that some of the tree and shrub species have already sold out. Tree Sale order pickup is scheduled for Thursday and Friday, April 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. The District will rent and park a refrigerated trailer at the Fairgrounds again and Jim has agreed to refill the trailer's diesel tank as needed.

### **Grants Update**

Copies of the Cost Share Action sheet for the February 12 Board meeting were distributed. Elsa reported that the only item for approval on the sheet was the request for cost share payment on a completed grassed waterway project along the Lincoln and Adams County line for \$11,250.

***17. Jason moved to approve the Cost Share Action sheet for the February 12 Board Meeting as presented. Jim seconded. Motion passed.***

Elsa reported that the District's application for a new Direct Seed grant (#4) has been moved by the Department of Ecology to its draft list for further consideration. Because

the grant contracts from Ecology typically begin in July and August, the District would be able to offer contracts to Lincoln and Adams county producers this coming fall if the grant application is approved. Ecology has increased the reimbursement rate from \$28 per acre to \$44.69 per acre on up to 250 acres per year on the 3 year contracts. The main stipulations for the Direct Seed grant is that the cooperators can't already be implementing direct seeding on their land and they can't already own their own direct seed drill.

Ecology has recently funded the District to implement a riparian restoration project along Hawk Creek north of Davenport.

The Terry Husseman grant applications to remove the tires from the banks of a small stream in the Porcupine Bay area and to install beaver dam analogs (BDA's) below the Harman bridge along Estate Rd. have both been submitted to Ecology.

The Edwall Drainage Cleanout Project and flood reduction grant application, known as the Floodplains by Design 2027-2029 Pre-Application, has also been moved to the next level for funding consideration. Elsa will be attending a future meeting to testify in support for funding the grant which has been estimated to cost \$900,000. A future meeting will also be held at the Edwall Firehouse and will invite all of the Edwall area landowners who would be affected by the drainage cleanout project to gain their support for the project.

### **Legislative Day**

Jeff attended Legislative Day on February 10. One of biggest issues for discussion was the proposed elections bill from King County to have the CD Board Supervisor Elections placed on the November general elections ballot, regardless of the cost and the requirement that all CD Supervisor candidates fill out the complete and very involved F1 Financial Disclosure form. The proposed bill would also remove the requirement for CD Supervisors to be a landowner within the CD District boundary. In general, Jeff noted that most current CD Supervisors are not so much against removing the landowner requirement compared to the requirement to fill out the complete F1 Financial Disclosure form. A previous survey of current CD Board Supervisors has already recorded that the vast majority of these Supervisors would quit from their CD Board position before they would ever fill out the F1 form.

Jeff reported that the primary sponsor of this bill withdrew it from further consideration in the 2026 Legislative Session. WACD has agreed to work on revising the elections bill for next year to make it more acceptable for CD's across the state and find a new legislator to sponsor the bill. Elsa reminded the Board that if the District was ever required to have CD Board Supervisor elections in the November Lincoln County general election ballot, a CD Board Supervisor candidate could not run while serving in another elected board position on the ballot such as a hospital board or school board.

Jeff also noted that the proposed bill to allow CD's to buy land has failed in this session. In general, there is no new money to help fund programs and legislators can only shift money from one program to another program. Jeff asked about forest health funding and increased fire risk but nobody seemed to want to discuss this issue. The state will be releasing an agriculture viability report in the future. It has already been noted that there has been a significant drop in potato and wine consumption and that the producers of these crops in the state can no longer afford to grow the large amounts of these crops like they used to grow. There is also a proposed bill to reduce the work

week from 40 hours to 32 hours but there are questions on whether or not it will make it out of committee.

The Conservation Commission is requesting that conservation districts submit funding requests for prospective projects and cost for the 2027 – 2029 biennium. The question that CD's must ask themselves is whether to be realistic about projects and cost or to include all possible projects and costs if funding became available.

### **Conservation Commission Report**

There was no Conservation Commission Report.

### **County Commissioners Report**

There was no County Commissioners Report.

### **NRCS Report**

There was no NRCS Report.

### **FSA Report**

There was no FSA Report. Elsa announced that the 2026 CRP signup had opened up today at FSA. The Continuous CRP signup will run from February 12 – March 20 and the General CRP signup will run from March 9 – April 17.

Elsa noted that the District has been applying for CRP task orders to write conservation plans for the last several years, and that there are 130 CRP contracts each in Lincoln and Adams counties that will be expiring in 2026. The District will apply for the CRP task orders again, but if the Conservation Commission and NRCS don't receive adequate funding for CRP task orders in 2026, Lincoln County CD will not be able to conduct these task orders and NRCS staff will be in a difficult position to try and complete writing the conservation plans for all of the new CRP contracts themselves.

Jason noted that CRP field checks on his ground in Lincoln County were a lot more stringent and involved compared to the CRP field checks done on his ground in Grant County. Elsa noted that most of the existing native grass CP-2 stands in Lincoln County have been failing their CRP field checks due to the declining or disappearing native grasses and forbs in these stands.

### **Miscellaneous**

Elsa announced that she and Matthew would be attending the April 6-9, 2026 After the Flames Conference at the Suncadia Resort in Cle Elum, Washington.

Matthew, Elsa, Delaini, and Brean will be attending the Sims Table training for District staff in the conference room using the Sims table and projector.

Elsa noted that FSA staff are working on getting air conditioning available for the conference room.

The PNW Canola Association will be holding its annual meeting in Moscow, Idaho on February 26.

Matthew is planning on taking drone training and getting his license. Elsa noted that Lincoln County did not want the old and out of date District drones and that the District will have to look into buying new drones.

Elsa requested that the October 2026 Board Meeting be changed from October 14 to October 1.

### **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 11:15 AM.

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 11. Please keep in mind that both Joe Davis with Enduris Insurance and the Reardan FFA Debate Team will be giving presentations at the March 11 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Josh Sherwood, Secretary

---

Dean White, Minute Taker

#### **SUMMARY:**

All 17 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the January 14, 2026 minutes as presented.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #12982 to #13005, along with 42 EFT's, totaling \$76,465.69.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher #7 for the 26-39-FH grant in the amount of \$2,896.25 to the Conservation Commission.
- 4. M/S/P to submit voucher #5 for the 26-39-IE grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission.
- 5. M/S/P to submit voucher #28 for the Adams CD TA grant in the amount of \$572.69 to Adams CD.
- 6. M/S/P to submit voucher #3 for the Mid-Columbia Drought Preparedness Program grant (quarterly submission) in the amount of \$11,076.36 to DOE.
- 7. M/S/P to submit voucher #7 for the 26-39-NR grant in the amount of \$326.03 to the Conservation Commission.
- 8. M/S/P to submit voucher #4 for the 26-39-AMM grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission.

- 9. M/S/P to submit voucher #14 for the NE Lincoln Well Monitoring grant in the amount of \$25,156.51 to DOE.
- 10. M/S/P to submit voucher #7 for the 26-39-IM grant in the amount of \$5,287.89 to the Conservation Commission.
- 11. M/S/P to submit voucher #7 for the VSP 6 grant in the amount of \$6,855.44 to the Conservation Commission.
- 12. M/S/P to submit voucher #4 for the 26-39-PFR grant in the amount of \$1,911.53 to the Conservation Commission.
- 13. M/S/P that the Lincoln County Conservation District VISA statement for December 24, 2025 through January 23, 2026 be approved. The total amount owed was \$2,733.21.
- 14. M/S/P to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of January 15, 2026. The total amount owed was \$102.69.
- 15. M/S/P to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of January 31, 2026. The total amount owed was \$111.60.
- 16. M/S/P to approve the Treasurer's report and Grant's report as presented.
- 17. M/S/P to approve the Cost Share Action sheet for the February 12 Board Meeting as presented.