

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING  
USDA Service Center Conference Room – Davenport, WA  
Wednesday, February 12, 2025**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:**

Meeting called to order at 9:01 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting in person or by phone were as follows: Josh Sherwood, Braidy Haden, and Chris Laney - LCCD Supervisors; Mike Baden, Conservation Commission, Ashley Smith, FSA; Jason Echelbarger, guest; Elsa Bowen, Delaini Disher, Brean Nieman, Matthew Rosman, and Dean White - LCCD staff.

Board members and staff introduced themselves to guest Jason Echelbarger. Jason noted that he farms just east of Reardan and in the Almira area. Jason has expressed an interest in becoming a future Board member and attended the meeting to become more familiar with Board meeting activities. Board members thanked Jason for taking time this morning to attend the meeting.

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

*Board members requested by consensus that the discussion about any dress code for the WACD Annual Meeting in the WACD Report section on page 6 be deleted.*

*1. Braidy moved to approve the January 14, 2025 minutes as amended. Josh seconded. There was no further public comment. Motion passed.*

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

- 2. Braidy moved to pay and approve vouchers #12633 to #12661, along with 67 EFT's, totaling \$82,348.34. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.*
- 3. Braidy moved to submit voucher #13 for the 24-39-FH grant in the amount of \$1,469.52 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.*
- 4. Braidy moved to submit voucher 11 for the 24-39-IE grant in the amount of \$242.82 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- 5. Braidy moved to submit voucher #5 for the CBCD ILA grant in the amount of \$0.00 to Columbia Basin CD. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- 6. Braidy moved to submit voucher #19 for the 24-39-NR grant in the amount of \$211.31 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.*
- 7. Braidy moved to submit voucher #42 for the Cluster Engineering grant in the amount of \$2,403.85 to Stevens CD. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*

- **8. Braidy moved to submit voucher #5 for the 25-39-SFF grant in the amount of \$219.10 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **9. Braidy moved to submit voucher #10 for the NE Lincoln Well Monitoring grant in the amount of \$8,429.72 to DOE. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **10. Braidy moved to submit voucher #7 for the 25-39-IM grant in the amount of \$21,416.68 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **11. Braidy moved to submit voucher #19 for the VSP-5 grant in the amount of \$9,468.86 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **12. Braidy moved to submit voucher #11 for the Direct Seed 3 grant in the amount of \$83,691.63 to DOE. Josh seconded. Discussion was held. Elsa noted that the District had just found out that Ecology might be willing to extend the Direct Seed 3 grant one more year to June 30, 2026 due to the relatively high amount of funds still remaining in the grant. Delaini will further investigate the option to extend the Direct Seed 3 grant, and in the meantime, encourage grant cooperators to submit their cost share reimbursement requests soon after grant tasks have been completed. There was no further discussion. Motion passed.**
- **13. Braidy moved to submit voucher #4 for the 25-39-PFR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **14. Braidy moved to submit voucher #3 for the 23-DG-11062752-163 CWPP grant in the amount of \$2,518.97 to DNR. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **15. Braidy moved to submit voucher #4 for the 23-DG-11062752-163 CWPP grant in the amount of \$2,326.87 to DNR. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **16. Braidy moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District VISA statement for December 24, 2024 through January 23, 2025 be approved. The total amount owed was \$1,671.65. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.**
- **17. Braidy moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of December 31, 2024. The total amount owed was \$35.36. Josh 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 noted that many of the grant payments received for January looked below average for January due to issues with her District emails not being quickly sent to the multiple grant funding agencies as expected. District staff in general had experienced problems with sending emails to fellow staff members in January that had ended up in the recipients Spam folder for some unknown reason(s), but this issue has more or less been resolved. Brean noted that there were some October 2024 bank statements that needed to be initialed and that they were included with the rest of the January bank statements that needed to be initialed by Board members. In addition, Elsa noted that Brean was having problems with getting early bank statements from Key Bank for Board meetings early in the month, but in order to get email bank statements from Key Bank early in the month, the District would be charged \$25 a month, and so this option is not going to be pursued at the moment.

Elsa noted that an EQIP contract for planting 400 ponderosa pine seedlings in the Sand Flats area next to the Spokane River had been cancelled due to a Native American camp site next to the river in or adjacent to the project area that had surfaced in a recent preliminary NRCS cultural review for the EQIP grant application. District staff had already worked with the landowners on a trail restoration and conifer seedling project in the area back in 2017, went through the cultural resources review process with the State and local Native American tribes, and thought that cultural resources issues had already been addressed.

The 400 ponderosa pine seedlings had recently been ordered from Spokane CD. Due to continuing demands for ponderosa pine tree seedlings and low supplies, Spokane CD was quite willing to take these seedlings back for other customers and will reimburse Lincoln County CD in the near future.

Elsa also noted that she will contact US Bank soon and request that the current \$643.27 in Rewards Dollars Available on the District VISA card be deposited in the checking account in US Bank.

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

## **C. AGENDA**

### **Pacific Northwest Canola Association**

Elsa announced that the District had received the annual support request from the Pacific Northwest Canola Association. Lincoln County CD has provided \$250 annual support to the PNW Canola Association in recent years. Board members asked what services the District has received from the Association in past years. Braidy noted

that the District has received the use of the logo and thanks from the Association for the support. It was also noted that the annual PNW Canola Association meeting was held on January 29 and that Braidy was selected as President.

**19. Josh moved to renew the \$250.00 support to the PNW Canola Association for 2025. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**

### **Burn Permit Application Online**

The Department of Ecology has worked on developing an online agricultural burn permit application known as BPA for the last several years and released it for use by ag burn permit applicants last year. The District has yet to receive any online BPA ag burn permits to process. Lincoln County CD receives relatively few ag burn permit applications to process, and in 2024, only two paper applications were received, processed, and permits issued. The dry spring, summer, and fall with elevated fire danger contributed to the very low number of burn permit applications received.

Another possible reason for no BPA applications received online so far is that applicants must first log into Secure Access Washington, setup their own SAW account, log onto the Ecology Air Quality portal, click on the BPA option, and then learn how to apply and pay for ag burn permits online in order to receive ag burn permits online from their house or business without having to fill out the paper burn permit application form and either mail or drop off their permit and check in person at the office.

Dean noted that he had participated online with recent BPA training from the Ecology East Region Office in Spokane. His Air Quality portal account with SAW was upgraded to a Business Account so that he would be able to see and process any BPA applications received online. After the meeting, Dean emailed Daniel Matsche at the ERO office and asked if any kind of training for potential BPA applicants in Eastern/Central Washington might be held in the near future to help train Lincoln County ag producers on how to use the BPA online application to obtain burn permits. Daniel wanted to know if District Board members would be in favor of Ecology offering BPA permit application training to local producers, given the relatively low number of ag burn permits typically issued in the county. Daniel also noted that burn permits obtained through BPA have the burn permit fee payments sent online to Ecology, which must then send the Lincoln County CD's portion of the fee to the District as the ag burn permit authority at the end of the first half and second half of the year.

Dean noted that processing the long-established paper ag burn permit applications and entering the information into the AQPPS tab in SAW can sometimes require 2 hours or more for each permit received. However, county producers used to filling out the paper permit applications appear to prefer this old established method, and many may not even know about the new BPA permit option process or want to take the time and effort to learn how to use BPA.

By general consensus, Board members agreed that for now, the District was not interested in requesting training for county producers on how to use the BPA permit system and will continue to use the paper permit applications until if and when there are more producers interested in using BPA and more ag burn permits to process.

### **Elections Update**

Copies of the draft two-sided Supervisor elections ballot were distributed. Delaini reported that Walt's Mail out of Spokane will be used again to handle the large

workload of stuffing, labeling and mailing the ballots to the 8,000+ registered voters in the county. The estimated cost of the election this year is \$4,000, which is far less than the estimated \$30,000 cost of adding the election to the November general election ballot. March 24<sup>th</sup> has been selected as the election day for 2025 and the deadline for all election ballots to be postmarked. The ballots will be mailed out to all registered voters a full 2 weeks before the election day deadline.

Delaini reported that the Grant Distributed Cost Share and the Other Projects and Services sections on the front side of the ballot had been updated and that the District website address had been included to direct voters to the website for more information on the District projects, staff and board members. The bottom third of the ballot on both sides is the official ballot that voters will cut off and return to the District without removing any of the informational portions of the ballot. The Recent Projects photos on the back side of the ballot have been updated and a brief candidate description for Braidy has been added. Also included on the back is Celebrating 50 Years of Conservation Efforts to inform voters that the Lincoln County Conservation District has been promoting and assisting conservation efforts in the county for the last 50 years. Delaini will make the font more embellished to help catch the voter's attention.

Elsa noted that she has a little more information to have added to the Candidate description for Braidy. Elsa also described the previous voting method that voters used to request an absentee election ballot and that typically resulted in only about 20 ballots received for the Supervisor elections each year. In comparison, the new method of mailing ballots to all 8,000+ registered voters in the county has resulted in 800 ballots received back in 2023 and 1,100 ballots received back in 2024 with the information on District projects and services included on the ballot.

Chris asked if all of the Board member names could be included on the ballot. Delaini will look into fitting the Board member names on the ballot. The Supervisor Elections ballot with the proposed additions was approved by the Board by general consensus.

### **Tree Sale**

Brean reported that 65 orders have been received so far but had slowed down recently due to the cold weather. A hard copy of the tree sale flyer was passed around. The vast majority of the tree sales have been made online through the District tree sale webpage. More potted stock this year has been included in the tree sale, and customers like the option to buy 1 pot of an offered species. The tree sale is now sold out of western larch, thinleaf alder, serviceberry, and blue elderberry. Once a species is sold out, additional stems are not ordered except in a very few cases. The Pink Sparkler spirea has been a very popular species in the tree sale this year.

Jeff noted that the District does not make much money on the tree sale and that the tree sale is much more of a service to the county than a money-making activity. Brean noted that she had provided some training on how to use Springbrook accounting software for tree sale accounting to several Stevens CD employees. Elsa noted that the refrigerated trailer has been ordered and will be parked again in front of the kitchen building. Chris asked if it would be possible for the District to assemble a native shrub seed collecting team to make up for the lack of some eastern Washington winter hardy seed source seedlings from the PMC. Dean noted that it takes a lot of time and effort to collect native shrub berries and that the last time seed

was collected by District staff was with funding from riparian restoration grants that the District in general no longer receives.

### **Grants Update**

Delaini reported that \$1,000 in grant funding from the 25-39-IM grant, with assistance from Karen Hills with the Sustainable Farms and Fields Program, had been applied for and received by the District to pay for soil health analysis or more traditional soil lab analysis, along with staff time, travel time, and mileage involved with the soil sampling. Delaini will reach out to producers who had soil health samples taken in the last several year with WaSHI (Washington Soil Health Initiative) would be interested in having follow up sampling or new field sampling done this spring. Jason Bishop and Josh already expressed an interest in having more soil sampling done.

The District also applied for and received a \$3,000 STAR (Saving Tomorrow's Agricultural Resources) grant to use for soil sampling and learning how to use the STAR soil sampling data entry application.

Delaini reported that the FLOURISH (Farmers Leading Our United Revolution in Soil Health) will expire in 2027. FLOURISH is not accepting any new agricultural producers at this time, as it has 27 producers already participating in the grant from Washington, Idaho and Oregon. Palouse CD serves as the FLOURISH grant administrator and website administrator. Jason Bishop, who farms in the Edwall area, is the only Lincoln County producer participating in FLOURISH. Delaini and Brean have been downloading soil sensor data and collecting soil samples on Jason's farmland. As with all the other producers participating in FLOURISH, Jason has plots on conventional till farmland to compare with plots on direct seeded farmland with cover crops and livestock grazing. The FLOURISH grant reimburses the District for the time that Delaini and Brean spend on Jason's ground in the grant.

There was no Cost Share Update spreadsheet for the meeting today due to no grant applications or cost share payment requests received.

### **WACD Legislative Day Update**

Jeff and Chris attended the 2025 WACD Legislative Day in Olympia. Jeff noted that there was a good turnout with about 60 CD Supervisors and staff from around the state participating in Legislative Day. Jeff and Chris spoke with local 9<sup>th</sup> District legislators Joe Schmick, Mark Schoesler, and Mary Dye. Representative Schmick and Senator Schoesler are not in favor of the proposal for Whitman and Palouse CD's in Whitman County to buy private farmland in the county and manage it as District property. Representative Dye is not in favor of wind turbine farms in the 9<sup>th</sup> District, and one reason for this is that the wind turbine companies are expected to leave before the lifespan of the wind turbines expires and will not be around to pay for and remove the 4 ft. thick concrete turbine bases. Jeff mentioned to Joe, Mark and Mary that the Lincoln CD position on wind turbine farm establishment in the county is neutral, while the County Commissioner's position on wind farms is that local farmers/landowners in the county have the right to sign up for wind turbine installation on their land and to get paid for leasing their ground to the wind turbine companies.

Jeff reported that the Lincoln County resolution which would give conservation districts across the state the option to opt out of signing CRP contracts from FSA and that was already approved at the NE Area meeting and the WACD Annual Meeting,

has been forwarded to NACD and has progressed to the NACD list of resolutions to review.

Jeff also noted that the job performance of WACD Executive Director Tom Salzer will now be evaluated once a year.

### **Conservation Commission Report**

Mike reported that most people in the Conservation Committal are noncommittal about the status of the current proposed biennium Budget. Newly elected Governor Bob Ferguson is still seeking at least a 6% budget reduction, which will hurt larger state agencies more as compared to the Conservation Commission. The Forest Health program funding request from the Commission has already been reduced in the Governor's proposed Budget. The Conservation Commission is committed to make do with the available funding from the new Budget.

A bill is currently in the State Legislature to remove the cap on rates and charges which will affect conservation districts that use rates and charges. The Conservation Commission will be reviewing some suggested updates to the Commission's grant manual. The budget for a new Farm Bill appears to be OK at this time, but IRA (Inflation Reductions Act) funding that hasn't already been contracted for CSP and EQIP projects by NRCS may or may not be available anymore for new projects in the future. NRCS projects with IRA funding that have already been contracted should be OK as is.

The upcoming EQIP Local Working Group is scheduled for February 25, 2025 from 10 AM to noon at the Davenport Public Works basement meeting room on Hwy 25 just northeast of town. Mike will be facilitating the LWG meeting again.

### **2024 Calendar Year Precip Maps and Spreadsheets**

Hard copies of the 2024 Calendar Year Precip Totals and the 2024 versus 2023 Calendar Year Precip Comparison maps and spreadsheets were distributed. Dean noted that the 2024 Calendar Year Precip Totals map and spreadsheet also included the historic November plus December precipitation that comprised half or more of the calendar year precip total at many of the cooperator precip stations and helped many of the precip stations to approach or exceed the long-term average crop year precip total, in spite of the otherwise dry 2024 calendar year.

The 2024 versus 2023 Calendar Year Precip Comparison map and spreadsheet showed that the majority of precip stations received more precip in 2024 compared to 2023, and this was also primarily due to the historic November plus December precipitation.

### **ArcGIS Pro Cost Increase**

Copies of the email from Andrew Phay, Whatcom County CD on the impending cost increase for conservation districts across the state to continue using ArcGIS Pro to create GIS maps were distributed. Elsa noted that NRCS has been talking about dropping CD's across the state from getting free usage of ArcGIS Pro from ESRI through the NRCS/USDA Enterprise Level Agreement for several years already, and this will now come to pass as of April 22, 2025.

Andrew noted that in order for CD's to continue to use ArcGIS Pro beyond April 22, CD's will have obtain their own Creator Licenses at **\$700 per year** for each user from ESRI, or will have to obtain their own ArcGIS OnLine agreement for **\$2,660 per year**

for 5 Creator Licenses. Whatcom County CD will no longer be able to serve as the ArcGIS Pro license administrator for any other CD after April 22 except for Whatcom CD.

Lincoln County CD currently has Elsa, Elayne, Dean, and a fourth CD staff member listed on the current statewide list from Andrew Phay for permitted ArcGIS Pro users. Nobody is currently using ArcGIS Pro much if any at all. Dean commented that he took the original ArcGIS Pro training up at Spokane CD back in 2018, but was so disgusted by the apparent lack of helpful and effective 10.5.1 to ArcGIS Pro transition guides for the very different ArcGIS Pro software compared to the older ESRI ArcGIS 10.5.1 software that he had become at least somewhat used to using and is still using to make basic maps for rainfall and well level monitoring, that he decided not to spend the large amount of time needed to learn the new ArcGIS Pro and be much more productive in the meantime by continuing to use the 10.5.1 ArcGIS software.

Now Dean is in a bit of an uncertain position with continuing to use ArcGIS to edit or create new GIS maps because his current Dell desktop should really be given a clean Windows 11 install to some fix some other networking problems, according to support from Gigamedics in Ritzville. However, because there is no guarantee that the 10.5.1 software and license could be guaranteed to successfully reinstall on the Dell desktop with a clean installation of Windows 11, Gigamedics is now recommending that the Dell desktop should just remain on Windows 10 to ensure that ArcGIS 10.5.1 will keep on working for the time being. Dean will have to get back in touch with Gigamedics in the near future to further discuss the possible options.

No actions on the ArcGIS Pro issue were taken by the Board at this time.

### **NRCS Report**

There was no NRCS Report. Carolyn Edenbo, who was here in the Davenport office, had no pressing updates to share with the Board but was available to meet with Board members after the meeting as requested.

### **County Commissioners Report**

There was no County Commissioners Report.

### **FSA Report**

Ashely did not have any new updates but noted that the annual ARC/PLS signup period is currently open and producers must choose either ARC or PLS by April 15. Due to the Davenport office staff now down 2 employees, producers are highly encouraged to sign up soon and not wait until the deadline. Ashley is seeking to run ads as soon as possible in spring to refill the 2 open positions in the office.

### **Miscellaneous**

Delaini reported that Rick Perleberg, an Ag Instructor and FFA Advisor at Reardan High School, has requested that the Reardan FFA debate teams be able to give debate presentations on livestock grazing and on riparian setback mandates at the March Board meeting.

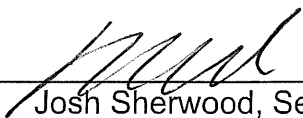
### **Request for Public Comment**



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

Chairman Jeff Schibel adjourned the meeting at 10.55 AM. The next scheduled Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 12. The annual Internal Audit with Mike facilitating was held following the adjournment of the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Josh Sherwood, Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 19 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the January 14, 2025 minutes as amended.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #12633 to #12661, along with 67 EFT's, totaling \$82,348.34.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher #13 for the 24-39-FH grant in the amount of \$1,469.52 to the Conservation Commission.
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- 12. M/S/P to submit voucher #11 for the Direct Seed 3 grant in the amount of \$83,691.63 to DOE. submit voucher #4 for the 25-39-PFR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission.
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