

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
USDA Service Center Conference Room – Davenport, WA
Wednesday, June 11, 2025**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order at 9:05 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting in person or by phone were as follows: Jim Baye, Braidy Haden and Jason Echelbarger - LCCD Supervisors; Ashley Smith, FSA; Dick Erickson, NRCS; Elsa Bowen, Delaini Disher, and Dean White - LCCD staff.

A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:

- 1. Jason moved to approve the May 14, 2025 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 #12747 to #12784, along with 11 EFT's, totaling \$170,545.04. Braidy seconded. Discussion was held. Elsa noted that the Lincoln County CD logo and name decal had been applied to both of the Colorado pickup's front doors. Motion passed.*
- 3. Jim moved to submit voucher #17 for the 24-39-FH grant in the amount of \$1,093.64 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.*
- 4. Jim moved to submit voucher #20 for the Adams CD TA grant in the amount of \$154.96 to Adams CD. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*
- 5. Jim moved to submit voucher #15 for the 24-39-IE grant in the amount of \$1,514.00 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.*
- 6. Jim moved to submit voucher #9 for the CBCD ILA grant in the amount of \$0.00 to Columbia Basin CD. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*
- 7. Jim moved to submit voucher #23 for the 24-39-NR grant in the amount of \$383.20 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.*
- 8. Jim moved to submit voucher #46 for the Cluster Engineering grant in the amount of \$15,181.85 to Stevens CD. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*
- 9. Jim moved to submit voucher #9 for the 25-39-SFF grant in the amount of \$3,225.58 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.*
- 10. Jim moved to submit voucher #11 for the 25-39-IM grant in the amount of \$2,035.89 to the Conservation Commission. Jason seconded. Motion passed.*

- **11. Jim moved to submit voucher #23 for the VSP 5 grant in the amount of \$16,720.86 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **12. Jim moved to submit voucher #8 for the 25-39-PFR grant in the amount of \$30,000 to the Conservation Commission. Jason seconded. Motion passed.**
- **13. Jim moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District VISA statement for April 24, 2025 through May 23, 2025 be approved. The total amount owed was \$3,392.40. Jason seconded. Discussion was held. Elsa noted that the Tribune restaurant catering charge was for the recent Wildfire Preparedness Workshop held at Seven Bays that was facilitated by Matthew.**
- **14. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of May 15, 2025. The total amount owed was \$222.85. 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 May 31, 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.

Elsa reported that all grants expiring on June 30 except for the Direct Seed 3 grant will be fully spent by the expiration deadline. The Direct Seed 3 grant has a small amount of grant funding that will be returned to Ecology due to some grant cooperators not applying for reimbursement of the full 200 acres allowed for each cooperator. Elsa also noted that she and Carolyn Edenbo, NRCS District Conservationist for Lincoln and Adams counties, had jointly worked on and submitted a new \$200,000 task order to the Conservation Commission for CRP field check reviews starting July 1, and that another task order will be submitted for EQIP and CSP contract assistance later this year.

- **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

Washington Grown Interview Update

Delaini was filmed in a recent interview with Washington Grown staff at Audubon Lake in Reardan which took the place of the originally requested interviews with Lincoln County hops or barley growers which could not be readily found in the county. Delaini

covered Outdoor Education presentations that she has given to Lincoln County grade school students at Audubon Lake on the tree and shrub plantings implemented by the District and other outdoor education topics of interest in the county. Reardan school students attend the outdoor education presentations every year at Audubon Lake. During the interview, Washington Grown also filmed the new Lincoln County decal and logo on the front doors of the Colorado pickup. The Audubon Lake segment of Washington Grown should be shown on TV in the next several weeks.

Washington Grown gave Delaini 300 copies of The World Needs Washington activity book for grade school students which includes names, photos and fun facts on the varied agricultural crops produced across the state which include fruits, vegetables, grains, spices, flowers, and dairy products. The activity workbook also includes fun games, coloring pages, jokes, puzzles, and a page of crop stickers for the school kids to enjoy while learning about agriculture across the state. Some of the activity books will be made available to hand out at the District booth at Lincoln County fair in August.

Washington Grown has invited Delaini to join staff at upcoming visits starting this fall in schools across Lincoln County. Delaini will start contacting teachers across the county to help with the coordination of the Washington Grown presentations to the school kids at participating schools.

Cost Share Action

Copies of the June 11 Cost Share Action sheet were distributed for review and approval. The requests for cost share payment were from projects implemented with funding from the 24-39-FH, 25-39-FR, 24-39-NR, CD Funds, VSP – 5, and 24-39-IE grants for a grand total of \$558,359.28.

17. Braidy moved to approve the Cost Share Action spreadsheet for the June 11, 2025 Board Meeting as presented. Jason seconded. Motion passed.

Direct Seed 3 Grant Outreach

Delaini recently ordered and received 100 copies of the No-Till & Cover Crops Handbook produced by No-Till Farmer and Cover Crop Strategies that is filled with large glossy colored photos and diagrams on no till and cover crop information, tips and strategies for success. The handbooks were purchased with funding from the Direct Seed 3 grant and will be sent to the current 14 producers in Lincoln County and 3 producers in Adams County that have contracts with the Direct Seed 3 grant for their information and use. Delaini will also send a survey on the Direct Seed 3 grant program for the producers to complete and return to the office.

PNDSA Conference

Delaini attended the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association at Colton on June 9 & 10. Presentations were given on the first day, followed by a field trip the next day. Joel Williams, a soil scientist from Australia gave a presentation on Plant Nutrition, Foliar Feeding & Sap Analysis. Delaini will send the PDF's of Joel's presentation to Board and staff members. Other presentations included a presentation on virtual fencing and the continuing issues of high costs for the livestock collars with GPS sensors and with collar battery replacement.

Soil Sampling

Delaini will begin limited soil sampling this week with funding from the Conservation Commission. Samples will be collected from 3 fields each for two producers and will be analyzed for soil chemistry, but no bulk density samples will be taken as was done with the WaSHI soil health sampling in recent years.

Mid-Columbia Basin Drought Plan Update

Brean has continued to give presentations on the Mid-Columbia Basin Drought Plan at various meetings. Elsa noted that the presentation was well received at the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition Stakeholders meeting in the Moses Lake City Council Chambers on May 15. Brean has also given the Drought Plan presentation at the Lake Roosevelt Forum at Memorial Hall in Davenport on May 21 and on the first day of the (Lower) Crab Creek Summit at the Wanapum Heritage Center in Mattawa on June 3.

Wildfire Preparedness Update

Matthew worked with the Farm Bureau to facilitate a free Wildfire Preparedness Workshop at the Seven Bays Community Center on Wednesday, May 21 from 6:00 to 7:30 PM. The workshop went well but there was more food left over from the catered meal than expected that may have been due to some participants not being aware that a meal was going to be served at the workshop.

There have been more reports recently of local house owners in the forested part of the county losing their insurance coverage due to the potential wildfire danger, and especially if no wildfire assessment has been done. Jim asked if the local insurance companies have their own home wildfire assessment to be done by the home owners that they insure in the forested areas of the county. Elsa noted the wildfire assessments that Matthew are doing are considered as an educational tool to help inform local homeowners of the potential wildfire hazards at their house and that the District can not be held liable by the insurance companies for the assessments that Matthew conducts as part of the Wildfire Preparedness grant.

Conservation Commission Master Contract

Elsa announced that the new Master Contract with the Conservation Commission for the 2026 – 2028 Biennium needs to be signed by the Board in order to receive new grant funding from the Commission. The Signature Authority form has been updated.

18. Jim moved to approve the signing of the Master Contract with the Conservation Commission for the new 2026 – 2028 Biennium. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.

Cooperator Labor Rate Resolution 25-02

Elsa announced that the cooperator labor rate for grant money from the Conservation Commission needed to be reviewed and approved by the Board for the new Biennium. The maximum hourly rate currently allowed by the State of Washington is \$25 per hour. Braidy noted that he has heard some complaints from some local grant cooperators that the current and maximum allowed labor rate of \$25 per hour for cooperators to provide their own labor and equipment to complete a grant project is not high enough.

19. Jim moved to maintain the current maximum cooperator labor rate of \$25 per hour for Cooperator Labor Rate Resolution 25-02 effective July 1, 2025 and valid

for 24 months, and that minors 17 years old or younger be paid at the established minimum wage rate per hour in Washington. Braidy seconded. There was no further discussion. Motion passed.

Cost Share Rate Resolution 25-03

Elsa announced that the cost share rate for grant money from the Conservation Commission needed to be reviewed and approved by the Board for the new Biennium. The current cost share rate is 75% for grant funding from the Conservation Commission with a limit of \$100,000 to each cooperator per year. The Commission will raise the yearly maximum limit of cost share funding allowed to each cooperator to \$150,000 for the new 2026 – 2028 Biennium. An initial suggestion was to leave the cost share rate at 75% because it seemed to be working well. Braidy suggested raising the cost share rate to 80% to help cover increased costs from inflation that cooperators face now when implementing conservation projects on their land. Jason cautioned that raising the cost share rate by 5% would probably reduce the number of cooperators and cost share projects that could be funded during the new biennium.

20. Braidy moved to approve raising the cost share rate for all grant funding from the Conservation Commission to 80% for Cost Share Rate Resolution 25-03 effective July 1, 2025 and valid for 24 months. Jim seconded. There was no further discussion. Motion passed.

VSP Update

Elsa noted that for past bienniums, the Lincoln County Commissioners have approved the allocation of the \$240,000 for VSP funding received from the Conservation Commission to be transferred to Lincoln County CD to administer and facilitate VSP funding and VSP funded conservation projects on the ground in the county. Additional VSP funding from the Conservation Commission for the new 2026 – 2028 Biennium is also available for covering monitoring and travel costs.

Copies of a draft VSP Budget for the new biennium were distributed for review and approval by the Board. Jeff commented that one complaint that he has heard from farmers in the county is that there isn't enough funding from the VSP grant money that will be allocated for funding projects on the ground. The draft VSP budget showed that \$40,000 for VSP Cost Share and \$20,000 for Cultural Resources Review cost share had been allocated for funding projects on the ground for a total of \$60,000. It was noted that there is another pot of money available from the Conservation Commission to help fund VSP projects on the ground, but this money is prioritized for fish habitat/salmon habitat projects and Lincoln County does not have any designated salmon habitat bearing streams.

Elsa noted that if the Board approves the draft VSP Budget as presented, the VSP Work Group and County Commissioners still need to approve the draft VSP Budget in order for the total \$287,000 in requested funding to be available for the District to administer and facilitate VSP funding and VSP funded conservation projects on the ground in the county.

21. Jim moved to approve the draft VSP Budget as presented. Jason seconded. There was no further discussion. Motion passed.

Draft Cost Share Ranking Sheet

Hard copies of the draft one-page Cost Share Application Ranking Tool that was developed by Elayne were distributed. The Ranking Tool has one column with 10 ranking questions, a middle column for ranking points (Yes = 1 and No = 0), and a third column for Project Comments for each of the ranking questions as needed. Elsa noted that Elayne would be filling in the Ranking Tool sheets for all grant applications (except VSP applications) that are received and then rank all the projects from the highest points to the lowest points before a final list of grant applications is presented to the Board for final approval. VSP grant applications already have a VSP project ranking sheet to evaluate VSP project applications.

The general consensus of the Board was to approve the draft Cost Share Ranking Sheet as presented but that the Ranking Sheet still needed to be left open to more ideas and suggestions from Board members in the future.

Draft Priority Projects for New Biennium 2026 – 2028 List

Hardcopies of the draft Priority Projects for New Biennium 2026 – 2028 List were distributed. Grant application projects and the requesting cooperators were ranked by Elayne and listed in order of the highest priority to the lowest priority for Irrigation Efficiency Grant (IEGP) funding, NRI/VSP/CD grant funding, Sustainable Farms and Fields (SFF) grant funding, and Adams Conservation District Funds/VSP grant funding.

In general, grant cooperators can only receive \$150,000 total in grant funding from the Conservation Commission per year, but the District can request an exemption for up to \$400,000 for irrigation efficiency grants and an exemption for other individual grant funded projects. The highest cost grant request is an Irrigation Efficiency grant to cost share the purchase of 3 irrigation pivots for \$400,000.

Braidy asked if there was grant funding for producers to purchase a direct seed drill which can also cost in the several hundreds of thousands of dollars range. Elsa noted that SFF funding might be used to purchase a direct seed drill.

22. Jim moved to approve the Draft Priority Projects for New Biennium 2026 – 2028 List as presented. Jason seconded. There was no further discussion. Motion passed.

Interlocal Agreement with Adams CD

Elsa reported that Adams CD had requested an interlocal agreement with Lincoln County CD to provide technical assistance with the implementation of the Luke McRae livestock watering facility project in Adams County. Adams CD only has one employee, the District Manager, who works entirely from home and has agreed to reimburse Lincoln County CD \$3,500 for the technical assistance needed to install the McRae watering facility.

23. Jason moved to approve the Interlocal Agreement with Adams CD to provide the technical assistance needed to implement the Luke McRae livestock watering facility in Adams County and be reimbursed \$3,500 for District staff time and expenses. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.

WACD Update

Several copies of the 6 page Working Together for Conservation handout from WACD for the current fiscal year were passed around to Board members to review. The handout covered the highlights of WACD activities for supporting CD's across the state

which included Elevating Engagement (lobbying), Partnering for Progress, Growing for Good, Your Voice Matters, and Looking Ahead topics. The handout also included a Supplemental Dues section at the end that encourages all CD's to consider donating additional funding beyond the annual standard WACD dues of \$3,888.89 again for the upcoming fiscal year to help fund additional WACD efforts to create a Forest Health and Wildfire Recovery Campaign, Toolkit (Messaging, One-Pagers, Social Media Posts), and a Statewide BMP Tracking Tool. The suggested additional donation amounts ranged from \$500 to \$4,000. Jeff noted that these additional funding requests are more feasible for large population CD's with larger budgets but might be worth pursuing if the District had a high priority resource concern that was covered by one of the above three categories. Elsa suggested that paying the standard \$3,888.89 WACD dues for the next fiscal year should be enough for right now.

Jeff noted that he would be attending the Conservation Commission monthly meeting in Leavenworth tomorrow. The annual WACD meeting and nursery tour will be held at the PMC nursery in Bow next Monday and Tuesday, June 16 & 17. A dedication will be held in honor of Lynn Brown's efforts to establish the PMC nursery. WACD is still seeking a second NE Area representative to serve on the WACD Board to represent the 5 county NE Area.

Conservation Commission Update

There was no Conservation Commission Report.

County Commissioners Report

There was no County Commissioners Report.

FSA Report

Ashley reported that the new CRP signup ended last Friday, June 6. About 40 – 50 applications for CRP contracts were received. Spring planting acreage reporting is continuing and staff are working toward the goal of being finished with reporting by the end of June. The signup deadline for ECAP (Emergency Crop Assistance Program) is August 15. The hiring freeze is still in place and so the 2 open staff positions in the Davenport office can't be advertised or filled for the immediate future.

NRCS Report

Dick reported that the Davenport office has been notified that funding for 3 more EQIP contracts had become available and that staff has been working to complete and obligate the contracts with IRA funding before IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) funding may be permanently removed from funding EQIP and CSP contracts in the near future. All 4 NRCS staff members in the office have also been assigned CRP field checks to complete.

Miscellaneous

Dean reported that he had attended the recent online Ag Burn Task Force meeting on June 4. Ecology will be replacing the old paper form application and the newer online BPA (Burn Permit Application) programs with a new online BPS (Burn Permit System) that will be similar to BPA but will address issues found in BPA and will create 1 ag burn application system to replace the 2 concurrent ag burn application systems.

Ecology is also working on the draft rule approval for flame cap kilns. Flame cap kilns are basically metal rings placed on a flat soil surface and with an open top that are used to burn tree and shrub trimmings and other plant residues while producing less to much less smoke than an open pile burn. The bottom of the flame cap burn must be sealed so that air can only access the burn from the top flame cap kiln, and only small amounts of plant residues need to be continuously added to burn residues in the kiln and so at least one person must be attending the kiln at all times. Flame cap kilns are not being approved for biochar production but a biochar equivalent product is produced in the bottom of a flame cap kiln.

Dean also handed out hard copies of the wells being monitored in the NE Well Level grant in the northeast portion of Lincoln County that showed the rise in the well water levels for the April 2025 measurements compared to the November 2024 measurements. Almost all of the wells showed at least a 0.1 to 10 feet rise in well water level for April 2025, but 5 wells in the Davenport area and the Rock Creek/Hwy 231 area showed well level rises of 12.6 ft. to as much as 96.8 feet, and these rises in well level are assumed to be related to the apparent quick aquifer recharge from the large runoff event in late February 2025.

Braidy announced that the Pacific Northwest Canola Association has scheduled a tour in Lincoln County at the Wilke Farm on Wednesday, June 18 starting at 4 PM.

Delaini noted that she had submitted an application to attend the next Ag Forestry class but will not be notified until July if she has been accepted to the next class.

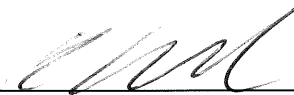
Request for Public Comment

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

Chairman Jeff Schibel adjourned the meeting at 11:30 AM

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting is Wednesday, July 9. This will be the last meeting for summer with no meetings scheduled for August and September due to harvest and seeding. The next Board meeting in fall is scheduled for October 8th.

Respectfully submitted,



Josh Sherwood, Secretary



Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 23 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the May 14, 2025 minutes as presented.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #12747 to #12784, along with 11 EFT's, totaling \$170,545.04.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher #17 for the 24-39-FH grant in the amount of \$1,093.64 to the Conservation Commission.
- 4. M/S/P to submit voucher #20 for the Adams CD TA grant in the amount of \$154.96 to Adams CD.
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- 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 spreadsheet for the June 11, 2025 Board Meeting as presented.
- 18. M/S/P to approve the signing of the Master Contract with the Conservation Commission for the new 2026 – 2028 Biennium.
- 19. M/S/P to maintain the current maximum cooperator labor rate of \$25 per hour for Cooperator Labor Rate Resolution 25-02 effective July 1, 2025 and valid for 24 months, and that minors 17 years old or younger be paid at the established minimum wage rate per hour in Washington.
- 20. M/S/P to approve raising the cost share rate for all grant funding from the Conservation Commission to 80% for Cost Share Rate Resolution 25-03 effective July 1, 2025 and valid for 24 months.
- 21. M/S/P to approve the draft VSP Budget as presented.
- 22. M/S/P to approve the Draft Priority Projects for New Biennium 2026 – 2028 List as presented.
- 23. M/S/P to approve the Interlocal Agreement with Adams CD to provide the technical assistance needed to implement the Luke McRae livestock watering facility in Adams County and be reimbursed \$3,500 for District staff time and expenses.