

## Washington Association of Conservation Districts

### Summary of September Board Actions

- **Motion:** Doug Rushton moved to adopt the draft agenda with the additional item of “Shared Leave” under the WACD Policy Manual agenda Item. Second by John Preston. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** John McLean moved to adopt the June meeting minutes. Second by Mary Collins. Motion carried with abstentions by David Vliet and Barbara Bailey.
- **Motion:** Jeff Schibel moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report. Second by Barbara Bailey. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** John Preston moved to approve a \$699 budget modification for the subscription to a grants database service. Second by Mary Collins. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Alan Chapman moved to approve the engagement letter between WACD and CSD Attorneys at Law. Second by Jack Clark. Motion carried on a voice vote.
- **Motion:** Barbara Bailey moved to adopt the policy manual reformatting. Second by John Preston. Motion carried with an abstention by David Vliet.
- **Motion:** Alan Chapman moved to continue staff research on options for insurance coverage for spouse and dependents. Second by Cindy Pierce. Motion carried.

## Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Remote Connection through Zoom

September 18, 2023

Board Meeting Minutes

### Members Remotely Present

Mike Mumford, President (Pend Oreille CD)

Amy McKay, Vice President (Whitman CD)

Doug Rushton, National Director (Thurston CD)

Jeanette Dorner, Past President (Pierce CD)

Alan Chapman, Northwest Area Director (Whatcom CD)

David Vliet, Northwest Area Director (Kitsap CD)

Lisa Zaborac, Southwest Area Director (Grays Harbor CD)

Jerry Kolke, Southwest Area Director (Clark CD)

John Preston, North Central Area Director (Columbia Basin CD)

John McLean, North Central Area Director (Foster Creek CD)

Jack Clark, South Central Area Director (Benton CD)

Jeff Schibel, Northeast Area Director (Lincoln County CD)

Mary Collins, Southeast Area Director (Palouse CD)  
Cindy Pierce, WADE President (Skagit CD)

Others Remotely Present

Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director  
Ryan Baye, WACD Legislative & Membership Director  
Heather Wendt, WACD Director of Development & Engagement  
Jim Brown, WACD Director of Nursery Operations  
Michael Crowder, Supervisor (Benton CD)  
Brandy Reed, District Manager (Whatcom CD)  
Javier Lopez, Supervisor (South Yakima CD)  
Ryan Williams, Executive Director (Cascadia CD)  
Seth Woolson, CSD Attorneys at Law  
Larry Davis, Associate Supervisor (Whatcom CD)  
Craig Nelson, District Manager (Okanogan CD)  
Kirk Robinson, Interim Executive Director (WSSC)  
Becca Hebron, District Manager (Foster Creek CD)  
Jon Wyss, State Executive Director (Farm Service Agency)

Meeting called to order at 6:01. Ryan Baye conducted a roll call to confirm a quorum was present. Mike Mumford asked for the addition of a shared leave program under the Policy Manual Agenda Item. Doug Rushton moved to adopt the draft agenda with the additional item of "Shared Leave" under the WACD Policy Manual agenda Item. Second by John Preston. Motion carried.

**Farm Services Agency**

Jon Wyss spoke to CREP issues in Washington State. He admitted this was an agency error and should have been caught in 2003, 2008, 2013, or 2018. He provided details of two potential options, either ending the disputed contracts or modification, but that neither included asking contract holders to return funds. He gave several examples of contracts that should not have been allowed. He ended with thanks to CDs and WSSC for their assistance. He answered questions about ramifications and potential repercussions for the contracts issues.

**Area Focus**

Becca Hebron volunteered to share first, starting on her reflections as the first year as manager. She reported Foster Creek CD has \$1.2 M in cost share projects in their district and are in the process of hiring more staff. She provided details to the district's Ecology grants, virtual fencing program, wildlife fencing projects, WSSRI, and VSP. John McLean added to her presentation with details of Camp Sagebrush.

Craig Nelson spoke about Okanogan CD's water bank program and finalizing the purchase of their first water right. He also explained their habitat, wildfire, and education programs. He answered several questions about the district's water bank program.

Ryan Williams presented for Cascadia CD, sharing the experience of hosting the July Commission meeting. He highlighted the district's water reduction program, prescribed fire project, beaver dam analog installations, riparian plantings, and their kids in the stream/forest/snow. He also spoke about their upcoming office move.

### **Adopting Previous Meeting Minutes**

John McLean moved to adopt the June meeting minutes. Second by Mary Collins. Motion carried with abstentions by David Vliet and Barbara Bailey. Alan Chapman asked that draft minutes be made available in a more timely manner.

### **Partner Reports**

Kirk Robinson, as WSCC Interim Executive Director, shared a few items of interest including Executive Director updates, drought funding program guidelines, the decision to eliminate quarterly VSP report requirements, legislative decision packages, and that his last day would be Thursday, September 21<sup>st</sup>.

Doug shared information about NACD's Next Generation Leadership Institute, how they were looking for breakout session ideas at the San Diego Annual conference in 2024, and the date for an upcoming federal legislative briefing session.

Cindy Pierce complimented her new Vice President Chevelle Yeckel's work on preparing for the 2024 WADE Conference.

Larry Davis reported that the Washington Conservation Society's Environmental Education Mini-Grant Applications are now open. The application deadline is November 1st. The board will select the next Conservation Futures Scholarship recipient at their September 28th meeting.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Ryan Baye presented, on Dave Fenn's behalf, the August 31<sup>st</sup> Financial report. He also provided details on the End of the Year Financial Report, since it was the first meeting of the board since June 30<sup>th</sup>. Tom Salzer broke down the list of dues paying members. Jeff Schibel moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Second by Barbara Bailey. Motion carried. Ryan Baye asked the board members present if there was interest in seeing proposals for WACD branded apparel, with a response in the negative. Heather Wendt presented a proposal to subscribe to a grants database service and provide information to relevant member-districts, rather than asking each CD to subscribe. She outlined three potential models, recommending the "Honda Civic" option as it best combined affordability and functionality. John Preston moved to approve a \$699 budget modification for the subscription to a grants database service. Second by Mary Collins. Motion carried.

### **PMC Report**

Jim Brown presented an update to the operations of the Plant Materials Center. He outlined their recent fumigation work, the nursery's orders to date, the expected success of this year's harvest, and how they recently hosted a tree farm tour. He answered a question about a change in their return policy, explaining how their cancellation date had been later than other

nurseries but a recent customer had abused that leniency and left them with \$70,000 worth of plants after placing identical orders with multiple nurseries to ensure they got the plants they wanted.

### **Legal Retainer**

Tom Salzer presented Seth Woolson with CSD Attorneys at Law as his recommended general counsel for WACD, based on a recommendation by Vicky Carter at Spokane CD, and the desire to provide free or reduced cost access to legal counsel for member-districts. Seth spoke about his background and some of the details covered in the engagement letter. Alan Chapman asked what amount of funding would be set aside for WACD vs CDs. Tom Salzer's goal was that all of it would be set aside for CDs and hopefully WACD wouldn't need to use any of the amount. Alan Chapman moved to approve the engagement letter between WACD and CSD Attorneys at Law. Second by Jack Clark. Motion carried on a voice vote.

### **Policy Manual Updates**

Heather Wendt had worked on reformatting the policy manual as one of her first projects and wanted to present a cleaner version for future use. She emphasized there weren't any changes to the policy manual, solely a reformatting. Barbara Bailey moved to adopt the policy manual reformatting. Second by John Preston. Motion carried with an abstention by David Vliet.

Tom Salzer presented the different options that had been explored regarding WACD providing health coverage to dependents and spouses. He asked for more time to review options for dependent coverage. Alan Chapman moved to continue staff research on options for insurance coverage for spouses and dependents. Second by Cindy Pierce. Motion carried.

Mike Mumford brought up the topic of adopting a shared leave policy for WACD staff in the future, that it was being discussed in his local district and felt it would be appropriate for WACD to have one too.

### **NACD Regional Conference**

Doug Rushton asked the Board to consider hosting a future regional conference for NACD. That there was an opportunity to host the Pacific/Southwest regional meeting in 2024, 2026, or 2028. There was a general consensus to ask Alaska and Idaho to host the next two conferences, with Washington a potential host in 2028.

### **Correspondence from South Yakima CD**

Tom Salzer shared a copy of an email from South Yakima CD's manager informing the board that they would not be paying dues this year. In conversations with district staff, the district's identified concerns about WACD not doing enough regarding dairy technical assistance, sustainable funding for districts, and the outcome of adopted WACD resolutions. Javier Lopez provided additional comments, that in his opinion WACD doesn't want to rock the boat and seems to work for the Conservation Commission rather than their member-districts. Follow-up comments from board members focused on continuing the conversation with SYCD.

### **WACD Area Meeting**

Ryan Baye provided details about the area meeting hosts and dates, some of the resolutions that were to be discussed, and which Area Directors were up for election this year.

### **WACD Annual Conference**

Ryan Baye relayed some initial decisions regarding the Annual Conference and asked for feedback on a couple of unanswered questions regarding what topics would be of most interest to member-districts. He also provided an update on the search for 2024/2025 conference venues, how the most viable venues were in Spokane. There was conversation about potentially shifting the WACD Conference to a weekend date.

### **Dairy Federation Correspondence**

Tom Salzer shared copies of two draft letters with the Board of Directors from the Dairy Federation asking for WACD to support. One was in support of a dairy-focused RCPP application which Tom was included to sign, subject to objections from board members. The second letter was to be directed to Governor Jay Inslee asking for the state to satisfy the outstanding funds due to the FSA contract holders who were set to lose contractual amounts. There was a public comment from Javier Lopez that WACD should sign the letter and help to make the contract-holders whole. There was conversation about the FSA appeals process, whether there was a reputation risk for contracts that were obviously not for the benefit of riparian habitat, if this was the best use of state funding, the repercussions to conservation districts' reputations, and determining the total loss of funding for the landowners. Tom Salzer determined that in the absence of a majority opinion, or a motion, by the Board of Directors that he would not sign on to the second letter.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00.