



Walla Walla County Conservation District  
February 2026 Board Meeting

Date: February 9, 2026

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Place: In person and via Zoom at USDA

**Presiding Officer:** Don Schwerin, Vice Chair

**Supervisors Present:** Jesse McCaw (via Zoom), Rhonda Gothberg

**Supervisors absent:** Jim Kent, Matt Williams

**Other Agencies:** Bryce Krueger, NRCS, Jennie Weathered, Dept. of Ecology (zoom)

**Also present:** Annie Byerley, Jenny Freer, Joanna Cowles-Cleveland (via zoom), Jake Mantela, Grace Cooper

**Members of the Public:** None

***The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by Don Schwerin.***

Schwerin invited the public to comment. There were none.

**Minutes:** The Board reviewed the January 12<sup>th</sup> board meeting minutes. **Motion by Rhonda Gothberg and second by Jesse McCaw to approve the January 12 board minutes as presented, no discussion, motion passed.**

**Financial Reports:** The board reviewed the January Financial Reports. **Motion by Rhonda Gothberg and second by Jesse McCaw to pay the bills, motion passed.**

**As of this date February 9th 2026 the Board reviewed the January financial reports with no further discussion: Checks 15306 to 15324 and 9 EFTs, revenues \$190,536.93 and expenses \$216,966.95; total of bank accounts \$272,729.58.**

**(Total Matches Springbrook)**

**New Business:**

- 1. Partner Updates: Kruger, NRCS;** Applications are being ranked now for CSP and EQIP. There are currently funds available for some grazing BMPs. RPP funding is ongoing but the ranking system is being evaluated for EQIP; CSP is fine for now. **Weathered, ECY;** is hoping to attend field trip in March to review the Burn project. The focus is currently on erosion for watershed evaluations. **Byerley** shared on behalf of WSU-Ext that an educational class will be held on February 11 with pesticide credits; registration is available online. Byerley also shared on behalf of the SCC that election bill HSB2499 is 95% believed to be squashed at this point.

**2. Request to Approve New Projects:**

- a. **DNR Funds for Pass through to District 4: Byerley** shared DNR has approved pass through funds for Walla Walla Fire District 4 to continue the thinning of local forests. This project is funded with \$21,500 and must be spent by June 30, 2026.

**Motion by Jesse McCaw and second by Rhonda Gothberg to approve the DNR project, as presented: motion passed.**

- b. **Soil Sampling from SCC: Byerley** shared that the SCC has awarded \$500 for soil sampling. Last year we received \$1,000 that was spent on MySoil kits that were handed out at outreach events. We would like to utilize these current funds in the same manner.

**Motion by Rhonda Gothberg and second by Jesse McCaw to approve the soil sampling project, as presented: motion passed.**

- c. **Washington Native Plant Society Project: Byerley** shared on behalf of Crowley that WWCCD would like to apply for funding through WA Native Plant Society for \$800 that would pay for stems to be utilized throughout the county.

**Motion by Jesse McCaw and second by Rhonda Gothberg to approve the WA Native Plant Society Project, as presented: motion passed.**

- d. **Resolutions to Approve Snake River Salmon Recovery Projects: Byerley** shared that we have for resolutions for applying for projects through RCO's Snake River Salmon Recovery program. Walla Walla River Mile 20 for design, Lower Mill Creek PALs to be placed in the side channels, and two Touchet 33 applications (one for targeted investments and one for restoration).

**Motion by Jesse McCaw and second by Rhonda Gothberg to approve four resolutions for RCO Snake River Salmon Recovery projects: motion passed.**

3. **Request to Approve VSP Operating funds adjustment: Freer** shared that at the December board meeting, Cooper had received approval for Compass Geospatial, a monitoring software program. The operating budget for VSP needs to move \$5k from trainings and meetings to goods and services to be able to pay for this program.

**Motion by Rhonda Gothberg and second by Jesse McCaw to approve moving 5k from training and meetings to the goods and services line, as presented: motion passed.**

- 4. Request to Approve Blanket Meal Authorization Forms:** Freer shared that new requirements are needed on our light refreshments and meal authorization forms. These forms now need to have who is requesting the funds, what is the date of the meeting, and an approval line. The previously approved maximum dollar amounts per meal remains the same.

**Motion by Rhonda Gothberg and second by Jesse McCaw to approve the new meal and light refreshments forms, as presented: motion passed.**

- 5. Request to Approve Light Refreshments Policy:** Freer shared that we do have a meal policy and while light refreshments could fall under this policy, we thought it would be clearer to specifically have a light refreshments policy to add to our current meal policy. Light refreshments policy: Light refreshments enhance engagement, foster goodwill and can diffuse tensions among participants and members of the public attending meetings. The board of supervisors has approved light refreshments to be served at meetings with cost limits.

**Motion by Jesse McCaw and second by Rhonda Gothberg to approve adding the noted light refreshment policy to WWCCDs internal procedure manual, as presented: motion passed.**

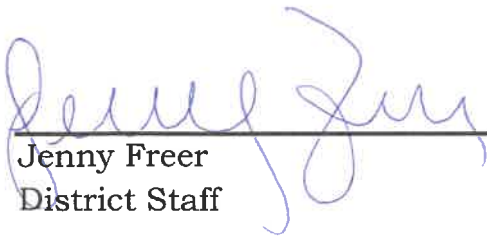
- 6. 2025 year in review- Cooper and Mantela** shared with the board their accomplishments for 2025 and what projects they were proud of.
- 7. South Fork Russell Creek Project Deep Dive: Mantela** gave a presentation of the South Fork Russell Creek project that came about due to a wildfire that had impacted four landowners that we are working with to protect the soil.

#### **Program Updates:**

- A.) District Operations: Byerley** shared a copy of the district operations report which summarizes the above projects along with upcoming trainings and partner meetings.
- B.) FYI Lower Mill Creek Construction Postponed: Byerley** shared that Lower Mill Creek was one of three projects that were supposed to go to construction this summer is now being delayed by one year. This postponement saves money but doing three phases at one time reducing mobilization costs.
- C.) Field Trip March 9<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon: Byerley** is offering a field trip of the South Fork Russell Creek project for board members and guest to view the work that has been implemented.

**Meeting adjourned without a formal motion at 5:30 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,



Jenny Freer  
District Staff



Board member

**Next meeting: Monday, March 9, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.**

**Motions:**

To approve the January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes as written

Motion: Gothberg  
Second: McCaw  
Motion passed

To review the January Financial Reports and approve paying the bills, as presented

Motion: Gothberg  
Second: McCaw  
Motion passed

To approve the DNR thinning project, as presented

Motion: McCaw  
Second: Gothberg  
Motion passed

To approve the Soil Sampling project, as presented

Motion: Gothberg  
Second: McCaw  
Motion passed

To approve the WA Native Plant Society project, as presented

Motion: McCaw  
Second: Gothberg  
Motion passed

To approve four resolutions for projects through Snake River Salmon Recovery program, as presented

Motion: McCaw  
Second: Gothberg  
Motion passed

To approve moving of VSP Operating funds from training/meetings to Goods and Services, as presented

Motion: Gothberg  
Second: McCaw  
Motion passed

To approve Light Refreshment Forms, as presented

Motion: Gothberg  
Second: McCaw  
Motion passed

To approve Light Refreshment Policy, as presented

Motion: McCaw  
Second: Gothberg  
Motion passed