



Walla Walla County Conservation District
January 2026 Board Meeting

Date: January 12, 2026

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Place: In person and via Zoom at USDA

Presiding Officer: Jim Kent, Chair

Supervisors Present: Matt Williams, Rhonda Gothberg, Don Schwerin

Supervisors absent: Jesse McCaw

Other Agencies: Tami Stubbs, SCC; Bryce Krueger, NRCS

Also present: Annie Byerley, Jenny Freer, Joanna Cowles-Cleveland (via zoom), Jake Mantela, Alison Crowley (via zoom)

Members of the Public: None

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Jim Kent.

Kent invited the public to comment. There were none.

Minutes: The Board reviewed the December 8th board meeting minutes. **Motion by Rhonda Gothberg and second by Matt Williams to approve the December 8 board minutes as presented, no discussion, motion passed.**

Financial Reports: The board reviewed the December Financial Reports. **Motion by Matt Williams and second by Rhonda Gothberg to pay the bills, motion passed.**

As of this date January 12th 2026 the Board reviewed the December financial reports with no further discussion: Checks 15284 to 15305 and 10 EFTs, revenues \$160,614.96 and expenses \$270,446.81; total of bank accounts \$285,819.55.

(Total Matches Springbrook)

New Business:

- 1. Partner Updates: Kruger, NRCS;** Application window closes on January 15th. A deferred letter was out to enrollees, NRCS is available to answer questions. The Snake River Team has 25% of Washington States contracts. **Stubbs, SCC;** Elections voter list for WWCCD is ahead of the due date. The Governors proposed supplemental budget has \$676,000 being cut; the SCC is holding off making decisions until the budget is final. None of the proposed packages from the SCC were moved forward during this legislative session. WACD has postcards that can be sent out to landowners so they may fill it out and send to legislators in support of the conservation districts. There is a meeting on February 9th to work on decision packages for the next biennium. Patrick Bell has been appointed director of FSA.

Byerley shared on behalf of WSU-Ext that an educational class will be held on February 11 with pesticide credits; registration is available online.

2. **Summary of Fall 2025 AG Burn permit:** **Byerley** shared that there were 47 field burn permits in fall for a total of 23,145 acres burned with 5 refund requests of 771 acres. There were 25 spot burn permits for the year of 2025.
3. **Annual Review of WWCCD services provided:** **Crowley** shared that there were 28 WWCCD community events in 2025. WWCCD education programs had reached 1312 students through 4 programs. More outreach programs and events are being planned for 2026.
4. **Review of Year End Financials:** **Freer** shared the total revenues and expenses for the year. Also included in the presentation is the overhead expenses with a breakdown by bars numbers.
5. **Request to Approve New Applications:**
 - a. **South Fork Russel Creek Fire Riparian:** **Mantela** shared a request to apply through Ecology's Terry Husseman account for 50k. These funds would be for post fire riparian plantings.

Motion by Matt Williams and second by Don Schwerin to approve applying for funds through Terry Husseman for Fire plantings on South Fork Russel Creek, as presented: motion passed.

- b. **Coppei Creek 2.0:** **Byerley** is requesting to use Basic funding to bring out the engineer that worked on Coppei Creek Stream project for an analysis after flooding 25'. This process would then be used to apply for funding through Terry Husseman for any mitigation.

Motion by Don Schwerin and second by Matt Williams to approve applying for funding for Coppei Creek project, as presented: motion passed.

- c. **Follow the Fins Riparian Planting:** **Crowley** share that a request is being made for K-12 outreach and riparian plantings through Ecology's Terry Husseman account in the amount of 30k.

Motion by Rhonda Gothberg and second by Matt Williams to approve applying for funding for K-12 Outreach and riparian plantings, as presented: motion passed.

- d. **Design project for Yellowhawk:** **Cowles-Cleveland** would like to do a pre-application with the Department of Ecology's Floodplains by Design program for \$250k for a design on Yellowhawk. This project would be a prioritization

plan on Yellowhawk, including Reser, Russell, Caldwell, and Cottonwood Creeks. This project would be in collaboration with Kooskooskie Commons and the Walla Walla Basic Watershed Council (Oregon side).

Motion by Don Schwerin and second by Matt Williams to approve the preapplication with ECY Floodplains by Design, as presented: motion passed.

6. Request to Approve DISC training and sign contract: **Byerley** shared that the district has all participated in DISC (Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness) assessments. Byerley is requesting to have a facilitator discuss the different styles to help staff understand how to communicate better. This will come at a cost of \$2,200.

Motion by Don Schwerin and second by Rhonda Gothberg to approve the facilitation and contract for the DISC program as presented: motion passed.

7. Review 2025 WACD Meeting: **Byerley** shared the sustainable funding methods that were presented during the WACD meeting in December. The Missouri Model would provide 1/8 of 1% of taxable retain sales to go to conservation districts and parks. The second model would be tax on the sale of real property. This one is more complex to calculate based on the structure of the selling price.

8. Request to Remove G. Traynor from On-call status: **Byerley** noted that Grace Cooper has gone through her reporting periods and that G. Traynor had zero payroll since being moved to on-call status.

Motion by Don Schwerin and second by Matt Williams to approve releasing Grant Traynor from the on-call status, as presented: motion passed.

9. Review 2026 Board Meeting Dates: **Byerley** shared a list of board meeting dates for 2026. March board meeting will be returned to 5pm and October 12 is a holiday for which the board will evaluate when it gets closer as to whether to move it to a non-holiday day.

Program Updates:

A.) District Operations: **Byerley** shared a copy of the district operations report which summarizes the above grant applications along with upcoming trainings and partner meetings.

B.) Volunteers for Internal Audit of Finances: **Freer** is requesting two volunteers to complete the internal audit. Jim Kent and Don Schwerin volunteered for January 26th at 9am.

An Executive session was held at 5:33 and returned at 6:12.

Meeting adjourned without a formal motion at 6:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Jenny Freer
District Staff

 2/9/26
Gothberg
Board member

Next meeting: Monday, February 9, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.

Motions:

To approve the December 8th meeting minutes as written

Motion: Gothberg
Second: Williams
Motion passed

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

Motion: Williams
Second: Gothberg
Motion passed

To approve an application through the Dept. of Ecology for S. Fork Russell Creek Fire Planting, as presented

Motion: Williams
Second: Schwerin
Motion passed

To approve an application through the Dept. of Ecology for Coppei 2.0, as presented

Motion: Schwerin
Second: Williams
Motion passed

To approve an application through the Dept. of Ecology for Follow the Fins outreach, as presented

Motion: Gothberg
Second: Williams
Motion passed

To approve completing a pre-application through Dept. of Ecology's floodplains by design for a design project on Yellowhawk, as presented

Motion: Schwerin
Second: Williams
Motion passed

To approve WWCCD staff to have a facilitator for DISC training, as presented

Motion: Schwerin
Second: Gothberg
Motion passed

To approve releasing G. Trayon from On-call status, as presented

Motion: Schwerin
Second: Williams
Motion passed