

# Walla Walla County Conservation District

## May 10th 2021 Board Meeting

Date: May 10th, 2021 Time: 5:00 p.m. Place: WW Regional Airport

**Presiding Officer:** Jeff Schulke

**Supervisors Present:** Ed Chvatal, Jim Kent, Associate Annie Byerley

**Supervisor Absent:** Pat McConnell, Todd Kimball

**Other Agencies:** Allisa Carlson, SCC; Lindsey Williams, WWCC; Tracy Hanger NRCS

**Also present:** Renee Hadley, Audrey Ahmann, Joanna Cowles Cleveland, Jeff Klundt, Lynda Oosterhuis, Lorna Emerich, Cat Garza, all WWCCD.

**Members of the Public:** Alyson Buckley, Rick Jones, Larry Hooker, Marguerite Daltoso

***The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Jeff Schulke***

**Minutes:** The Board reviewed the April minutes. **Motion by Ed Chvatal and second by Jim Kent to approve the minutes as presented, motion passed.**

**Financial Report:** The board reviewed the May Financial Report. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Ed Chvatal to approve the May financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** Checks included 14102 to 14120, total all accounts: \$175,802.14

**As of this date May 10<sup>th</sup> 2021 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the May financial report and further described as follows: Checks 14102 to 14120, total all accounts \$175,802.14**

The meeting opened with special recognition of Ed Chvatal (21 years) and Todd Kimball (15 years) who are leaving the board. Both were recognized for the outstanding dedicated service they provided to the district and the ag community it serves.

### **New Business:**

1. **NRCS Update:** Hanger spoke of a new program through NRCS that is a hybrid of CSP and EQIP targeting irrigation, groundwater improvements, and irrigation efficiency. Rules are being developed. Hadley did a lot of work in getting the WW Watershed prioritized. EQIP signups are done; CSP is closed and will be ranked soon. CSP had many applications so about half will be funded. During Hanger's leave the acting District Conservationist will be Caroline out of the Pasco office.

2. **Review of the Annual Financial Report:** Ahmann explained the report to board members. Hadley performed an audit of the report. Ahmann explained the figures and that the information in the report will be uploaded to the State Auditors Office by the May 31st deadline. After discussion and further review, **Ed Chvatal moved and Jim Kent seconded to approve the 2020 Annual Financial Report as presented, motion passed.**
3. **Review, discussion CREP maintenance costs:** Cowles Cleveland requested the board to reconsider the Walla Walla per-acre cap on maintenance, which is lower than the state cap. She explained that tracking the lower cap and the state cap was redundant, and the SCC CREP manager Brian Cochrane felt that WW CREP participants should be treated like all other landowners in the state. She also assured the board that maintenance now has oversight at both the local and the state level, with Cochrane approving maintenance funds as needed per contract per growing season instead of granting the district a pool of funds to draw from each biennium. This change allows staff to use the state tracking system instead of needing to track it in-house as well. (Staff need to use the state system to request funds regardless.) **After discussion, Ed Chvatal moved and Jim Kent seconded that the local Walla Walla cap be removed in favor of the state maintenance cap, motion passed.**
4. **Add addendum to Implementation Grant:** Hadley explained that the district has been requested to assist in soil sampling work with \$7,000.00 of funds from the state Department of Agriculture. After discussion, **Jim Kent moved and Ed Chvatal seconded to approve the soil sampling addendum as presented, motion passed.**
5. **Annual Plan of Work:** The draft Annual Plan of Work was sent to the board in advance of the meeting. Hadley reviewed the planned work, and noted that 500,000 was added to the budget (as compared to the recently approved 2021 budget) since the 5 RCO grants are now virtually certain to be approved and the work they fund are included in the Annual Plan of Work. <sup>1</sup> After discussion, **Ed Chvatal moved and Jim Kent seconded to approve the FY 22 Annual Plan of Work as presented, motion passed.**

**Program Updates:** Oosterhuis reported they are hand-watering to ensure the success of plantings under the WSARE grant and that the vineyard owners have added some drip-lines. Insect identification has started. She noted that WSARE grants usually go to universities so it speaks well for WWCCD to have received one, plus this improves our relationship with vineyards. **Cowles Cleveland** reported that the field checks for CRP this year are for 2022 renewals. Producers have ample time to consider the status reviews and NRCS conservation plans so can make informed decisions on reenrolling. Staff are reviewing 11,000 acres which is more manageable than the 80,000 acres reviewed last year. On another note, due to delay in receiving the design, RCO staff have confirmed an extension on the Cottonwood project is feasible. **Hadley** thanked Lindsey Williams for joining the local VSP work group and reported there is still a vacancy on the VSP Work Group. The SCC has encouraged this group to meet more often (VSP was on an as-needed, annual meeting status). The VSP 5-Year report was submitted and the 2-Year

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<sup>1</sup> Note: the Annual Plan of Work covers the state fiscal year timeline; the 2021 budget is on the calendar year basis.

report will be completed in August. Comments on the 5-Year report included that they would like different monitoring and she hopes guidance will be provided. Because of delays in the design, RCO Russell may also be extended. The National Water Quality Initiative will commence later in the summer. We did not hire a project manager; instead we will work with a consultant and seek an entry level employee.

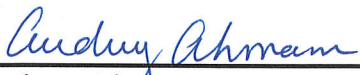
### Joint Agency Meetings


1. **Snake River Salmon Recovery Board.** Cowles Cleveland reported that after all applications were reviewed, all are eligible for funding as there are funds to cover them. The State Review panel will be examining the applications next. The Bi-State Flow study is looking at data gaps on plans for a Pine Creek Reservoir. The proposed site has been moved downstream to an area with fewer seismic faults.
2. **2050 Plan:** Hadley reported the draft 2050 Plan was released today. The Plan details what area implementation groups are doing, their capacity, and priorities. Hadley then reviewed Technology for Trade and showed the board how new drones are able to provide more detailed moisture analysis, even down to the moisture per row.
3. **Partnership:** Annie Byerley reported that there is one more meeting as the Partnership winds down. Judith Johnson and some community members including Hadley drafted a paper with suggestions for a new organization structure. This will be forwarded to the Dept. of Ecology for consideration.
4. **Others:** Hadley reported that Jon Culp (Irrigation Efficiency, SCC) is seeking comments on how the drought is affecting producers. Board members reported irrigation began a month early, yield is down, and winter wheat is heading out on shorter plants which will impact yield. The Blue Mountain Land Trust has funds for easements but some budget uncertainty. The Snake River Local Work Group (NRCS) set some local priorities including plant productivity and range/pasture land. Some other local priorities align with state priorities which already have a funding bucket.

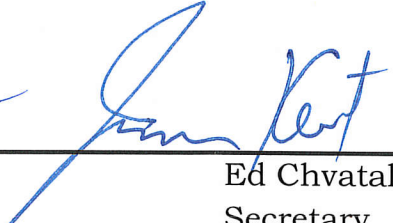
**Public Comments:** Regional Manager Carlson (SCC) gave an SCC update. The operating budget looks good; 2 million was added in TA funds which will boost the Implementation grant. The budget includes 3 million in wild fire recovery that is NOT limited to a specific fire. The NRI budget is the same, allowing cost share for district priorities. Technical Assistance funding for CREP was lowered but we expect the Walla Walla program to be funded. VSP was fully funded.

Hadley presented some photos and maps of the 5 RCO project sites

Respectfully submitted,

  
Audrey Ahmann  
Assistant Manager, Finance

  
Jeff Schulke  
Chair

  
Ed Chvatal  
Secretary



Next meeting: June 14, 2021 at **5:00** p.m.

Motions:

To approve the April minutes as written,	Motion: Chvatal Second: Kent Motion passed
To approve the May financial report,	Motion: Kent Second: Chvatal Motion passed
To approve the 2020 Annual Financial Report as presented	Motion: Chvatal Second: Kent Motion passed
That the local Walla Walla cap be removed in favor of the state maintenance cap,	Motion: Chvatal Second: Kent Motion passed
To approve the soil sampling addendum as presented,	Motion: Kent Second: Chvatal Motion passed
To approve the FY 22 Annual Plan of Work as presented,	Motion: Kent Second: Chvatal Motion passed