

# Walla Walla County Conservation District

## Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> 2021 Board Meeting

Date: Dec 13th, 2021 Time: 4:00 p.m.  
Place: District Conference Room and via phone link

**Presiding Officer:** Annie Byerley

**Supervisors Present:** Jim Kent, Pat McConnell, Jeff Schulke

**Supervisor Absent:** Alyson Buckley

**Other Agencies:** Allisa Carlson, SCC

**Also present:** Renee Hadley, Audrey Ahmann, Grant Traynor, Cat Garza, Lynda Oosterhuis and Joanna Cowles Cleveland.

**Members of the Public:** Jesse McCaw

*The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Annie Byerley*

**Minutes:** The Board reviewed the November meeting minutes. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Pat McConnell to approve the November minutes as presented, motion passed.**

**Financial Reports:** The board reviewed the December Financial Report. **Motion by Pat McConnell and second by Jim Kent to approve the December financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** December report included checks 14251 to 14276, total all accounts: \$409,055.79

**As of this date Dec. 13th 2021 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the December financial report and further described as follows: Checks 14251 to 14276, total all accounts \$409,055.79**

### **New Business:**

- 1. Partner Updates:** Hadley reported that WSU Extension has filled the Master Gardner vacancy. Dave Maiden (Weed Board) plans to attend the next board meeting to discuss weed issues. In response to board questions, Hadley said landowners who acquired larger parcels (20-acre range) are struggling to control weeds, resulting in formal complaints to the Weed Board. Hadley agreed to contact Asotin CD as they are working with their local weed board on the same issue. The WW Watershed Management Partnership closed with a positive fund balance and may transfer the funds to the district without strings. There was no NRCS update. **Allisa Carlson** of SCC invited supervisors and staff to listen in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of interviews for the SCC Executive Director position. This will be followed by a survey to allow public comment. A supplemental budget request was sent out for comment. Larry Cochran

will continue as the representative for Eastern WA and was elected Vice-Chair. Finally, policy for the Irrigation Efficiency program is being updated and folks are invited to comment.

2. **2022 Election, Appointment, and annual meeting:** Garza presented the election resolution. If adopted the resolution will be printed in the local paper. Polls will be open at the annual meeting from 8 to noon. **Jeff Schulke moved and Jim Kent seconded to adopt the 2022 Election Resolution 2021-3 as presented, motion passed.** Traynor said Tim Paulitz of WSU has agreed to present his research on soil health and wheat biomass at our annual meeting. The board suggested checking the list of speakers from the recent Pacific NW Direct Seed association meeting. It was suggested that Doug Walsh, WSU entomologist, possibly speak about alkali bees.
3. **Nominations to fill vacancy:** Pat McConnel's resignation from the board leaves his elected position vacant. Garza explained the new procedures for appointing a replacement. These include publishing a resolution describing the process. **Jeff Schulke moved and Jim Kent seconded to adopt the Mid-Term Appointment Resolution 2021-4 as presented, motion passed.**
4. **CREP hold-down rates:** Cowles Cleveland presented proposed increases to the CREP maintenance hold down rates. She spoke to CREP contractors and looked up additional numbers. The new rates are based on inflation and labor rate increases. The new rates do not change the overall per-acre cap. In response to board questions, Cowles Cleveland said the contractors are willing to continue CREP work at these rates. **Jeff Schulke moved and Jim Kent seconded to approve the new CREP hold down rates as presented starting Jan.1 2022, motion passed.** In further discussion, Cowles Cleveland said FSA rates are so low that landowners have to pay additional costs. Also, FSA will no longer cost share work needed to bring contracts back into compliance following re-enrollment; SCC is following suit. This may result in some projects dropping from the program. Cowles Cleveland noted usually landowners resume farming on formerly grassed buffers but do not remove the trees.
5. **New CREP project:** Cowles Cleveland presented a new CREP project for approval: 20.5 acres on the Touchet near LeMar road. The project will be matched to a second DOE false indigo removal project. **Jeff Schulke moved and Jim Kent seconded to approve the project, motion passed.**
6. **WACD Annual Meeting:** Hadley said there were 8 sessions over a 3-week period. The 3 resolutions put forth by the SE Area all passed. The Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committee recommendations were passed as presented.

**Old Business:** Traynor presented draft program parameters for a commodity buffer program, approved by the VSP Work Group. He mentioned the stem density of 30 per square foot and a height minimum of 4" at the end of the season (it was noted this requirement would not apply in the establishment year). Burning would be allowed and the payment formulas are included. The VSP work group did not limit the program; participation is determined on a case by case basis. There is no preference for producers using low-disturbance tillage though this might be a factor if deciding between two

otherwise equal projects. Field edges will be prioritized according to proximity to roads that make field management difficult, critical area(s) impacted, and steepness of slope. Areas that are a good fit for CREP but where the landowner opposes CREP will not be eligible. Proposed projects will be approved by the VSP Work Group first then by the District Board. **Jim Kent moved and Jeff Schulke seconded to approve the Commodity Buffer Program parameters as presented, motion passed.**

**Public Comments:** There were none.

### **Program Updates:**

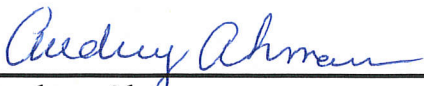
**Oosterhuis** informed the board that the WWU student group Engineers Without Borders is working on making improvements to the design and function of irrigation meters for the region. There is no time limit; this is a long-term project. They are seeking dysfunctional meters to help their investigation. Under the WSARE grant, she is helping Woodward Canyon vineyard establish sheep fescue to outcompete weeds in the project area. **Cowles Cleveland** reported on the work done to replant riparian areas on the Touchet as part of the false indigo removal project. Approval to convert the Cottonwood project to design only is in the works. **Hadley**, referring to Crowley's report, said modeling for the National Water Quality Initiative is almost complete. An RFQ is going out for the Mill Creek project. Crowley is working with Benton CD to restart the Wheat Week for local public schools. She did similar work for Palouse CD and is excited to resume it here. The program will be a virtual option for home-schooled kids in the area. The board expressed support for the program. **Hadley** gave more details on the proposed changes to the Irrigation Efficiency program which may lead to numerous small projects. They will reconsider the requirement prioritizing salmon habitat. Oosterhuis is assigned to this program. In response to questions, Hadley said the Upper Gardena Ditch is too large a project for the IrrEff program and would require multiple funding sources or a specific line item budget request. She also reported good progress being made by the engineering firms on various projects.

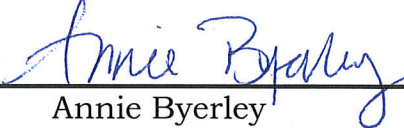
### **Joint Agency Meetings**


1. **Snake River Salmon Recovery Board:** No report.
2. **2050 Plan:** See Partner Updates.
3. **Others:** Byerley reported on work done by the DEI committee. She joined the committee as she thought it would be interesting and wanted to help districts be better able to represent diverse communities. An example given was the development of translation services for districts.

With no further business on the agenda, the meeting adjourned without a formal motion.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Audrey Ahmann  
Assistant Manager, Finance

  
Annie Byerley  
Chair

  
Jim Kent  
Secretary

Next meeting: January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at **4:00 p.m.**

Motions:

To approve the November minutes as written,

Motion: Kent  
Second: McConnell  
Motion passed

To approve the October financial report,

Motion: McConnell  
Second: Kent  
Motion passed

To adopt the 2022 Election and Appointment Resolution 2022-3 as presented,

Motion: Schulke  
Second: Kent  
Motion passed

To adopt the 2021-04 Mid-Term Appointment Resolution as presented,

Motion: Schulke  
Second: Kent  
Motion passed

To approve the new CREP hold down rates starting January 2022 as presented,

Motion: Schulke  
Second: Kent  
Motion passed

To approve the 20.5 acres CREP project near LeMar Rd,

Motion: Schulke  
Second: Kent  
Motion passed

To approve the Commodity Buffer Program parameters as presented,

Motion: Kent  
Second: Schulke  
Motion passed