

Adams Conservation District
118 East Main Ave., Ritzville, WA 99169
Board Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2020

Attending via Zoom: Curtis Hennings; Rob Dewald; Ron Hennings; Cara Hulce; Guest: Mike Baden, WSCC

The meeting was called to order by Curtis Hennings at 7:36 pm.

Reports from Guests/Partner Agencies/Manager:

- Mike Baden, WSCC

- COVID-19: The Commission is committed to sharing information with districts as they learn information in this ever-changing environment. They regularly update their website, communicate directly with districts, and plan to continue to hold Friday Community calls as needed. With Cara working from home and Pat only in the office a few hours a week the district is in good shape safety-wise, but the district will continue to monitor activities as we move through the various phases of reopening and adjust coronavirus safety plans accordingly.
- State Budget: Commission has received further instructions regarding agency budget reductions from the Office of Financial Management. As expected, the state faces a significant revenue challenge due to the COVID-19 crisis. Agencies have been instructed to prepare for 15% reductions for the next fiscal year at this point. The Commission is working on the plan to comply with these directions. These reductions are directed at our operating budget allocation – capital funds (NRI) are not included at this time. The agency has been doing their best to prepare for this news as reductions were anticipated and have identified potential savings measures that would minimize impacts with the main goal of no reductions to district implementation grants or core operations. They will make sure to communicate with districts moving forward. There is the possibility of a potential special legislative session, as well as the potential for future budget cuts. At the Commission meeting the Commission authorized allocation of the first six months of the implementation grant. This is a conservative approach that will hopefully result in the allocation of the remainder of the funds as the budget picture becomes clearer and would hopefully prevent having to pull back funds already allocated should further budget action be required.
- Local Work Group: We talked about the statewide local work group survey that was hosted by the Commission for NRCS. This helped to gather local work group member's and participant's input on priority resource concerns and land uses. This data will inform the discussion at the local work group follow-up webinar that is scheduled for next Thursday the 28th at 1:00 PM.
- Annual Plan, Annual Financial Report, and Long Range Plan: The Long Range Plan, Annual Plan, and Annual Financial Report were all approved for submittal during the meeting. Mike requested we send the Long Range Plan and Annual Plan to commission@scc.wa.gov and copy him.
- Grant Status: Cara mentioned that the district would be returning the Orca/Salmon funds. Mike knows there were several projects planned that all ended up falling through

for one legitimate reason or another and this last one has left us with too short of a time before June 30th to get another one completed. This does set up the potential to pick up one of these, or a different one, in the next fiscal year to be able to utilize those funds. The Hennings watering project (NRI funding) will be moving forward soon. The remainder of the NRI funds that are allocated to the Schell project do not expire until June 30, 2021.

- Elections and Appointments: Commission certified elections and approved board appointments at the Commission meeting yesterday – congratulation Curtis and Michael!
 - Cow Creek: Mike's interested to hear from Tina about the preliminary permit issued by ECY that has been issue to continue with the project studies on Cow Creek and ideas for moving forward with that work.
 - Groundwater Meeting: Commission held a meeting on Wednesday with NRCS to discuss the farm bill programs that fit into the Source Water Protection Priority area that State NRCS designated and includes Adams, Lincoln, Grant, Franklin, Benton, Walla Walla, and Whitman counties. There was good information about the various programs and how they fit into the groundwater picture in the basin.
- **Rich Edlund, NRCS** (brief attached)
- **Cara Hulce, Manager**
- Ducks Unlimited has finished another year of water monitoring on Cow Creek. The district needs to be thinking about how to cover expenses for another year of monitoring.
 - No news from WDFW regarding ILA for Rattlesnake Flat mitigation project.
 - Hennings watering facility cost-share agreement ready for approval.

Minutes: Rob moved to approve the meeting minutes for March 19, 2020. Ron seconded the motion; motion passed.

Financial Reports: Ron moved to approve the financial report, as approved by Michael, for March 2020 showing end balances of \$116,581.09 (money market) and \$116,572.52 (checking), and to approve checks numbered 14084 – 14088 and all ACH/EFT transactions from March 20th – April 16th. Total deductions \$4,026.10 and liability \$799.93. Rob seconded the motion; motion passed.

Ron moved to approve the financial report, as approved by Michael, for April 2020 showing end balances of \$116,585.87 (money market) and \$112,905.18 (checking), and to approve checks numbered 14089 – 14095 and all ACH/EFT transactions from April 17th – May 21st. Total deductions \$12,598.60 and liability \$871.03. Rob seconded the motion; motion passed.

Old Business:

- District Signage: Curtis found out we'll need landowner consent and the sign needs to be off the right-of-way (fence) in the pasture, as predicted. Cara's waiting to hear back from Commission whether the sign expense can be covered by IM funding and from John Rankin about making the sign.

- Salmon Recovery Funding: Since projects fell through and there's only a little over a month left in the grant, Cara told the board she planned on returning the funding, board agreed. Potential projects for using this funding next year were mentioned.

New Business:

- Long Range Plan: No comments from the public on the district's Long Range Plan were received.

Rob moved to approve the Long Range Plan. Ron seconded the motion; motion passed.

- Hennings cost-share: The board reviewed Hans Hennings's cost-share application for assistance installing a livestock watering facility. Curtis abstained from discussion since he's related to the applicant. Project will be funded under NRI grant.

Rob moved to approve Hennings's cost-share application for assistance with a livestock watering facility. Ron seconded the motion; motion passed.

- Annual Financial Report: The board reviewed the district's annual financial report for 2019.

Ron moved to approve the Annual Financial Report. Rob seconded the motion; motion passed.

- Annual Work Plan: The board reviewed the district's annual work plan for FY 2021.

Ron moved to approve the Annual Work Plan for FY 2021. Rob seconded the motion; motion passed.

- Conservation Innovation Grant proposal - FLOURISH: The board discussed a grant proposal from Palouse CD, which was focused on providing incentives to adopt cover cropping, interseeding cover crops, and the use of livestock, to gather data and develop a regionally-specific, producer-led soil health partnership. While the board supported the idea, there was concern with the lack of detail about cropping scenarios and how data would be collected/analyzed. The board wondered if WSU was being consulted or partnered with since they were already doing this sort of research. Since operators would be using this data to make decisions about their livelihood, the design and execution of the project needs to be better defined before the district can obligate funding and promote it to our landowners. Cara will follow up with PCD.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 pm by Curtis Hennings.

Minutes approved by: _____ Date: _____

Minutes prepared by: _____ Date: _____

The next regular meeting is scheduled for June 18th via Zoom at the regularly scheduled time of 7:30 pm.



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Adams Conservation District

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service **Report**

May 21, 2020

Despite NRCS having most staff working from home the USDA programs are rolling out as if deadlines can be met and conservation practices can still be done while following protection guidelines. Each office has one person from each agency at the office daily.

The **General CRP** signup results from Farm Services Agency show nearly a 95% acceptance rate of applications. There will be a field visit to verify the vegetative cover present or what is needed to install needed cover, then a plan written.

Renewals of **Conservation Stewardship Program** contracts allowed allowing contracts from 2014, 2015, and 2016 to choose Renewal options immediately, or defer to the future. The new CSP ("**CSP Classic**") signup has a lot of applications and the signup cutoff is May 29.

The **EQIP signup** was processed into ranked applications in the new system. The selection for funding is on a practice-by-practice basis, which is new. We expect as much local-priority funds to be obligated as in prior years.

Rich Edlund
NRCS