

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

June 16, 2025

Summary of Motions

Motion: Doug Rushton moved to approve the presented agenda with the addition of a “Reimbursement Waiver” and “administrative leave” during the Treasurer’s Report. Second by Heather Smith. Motion carried.

Motion: Alan Chapman moved to approve the May meeting minutes as presented. Second by Jeff Schibel. Motion carried.

Motion: Jeff Schibel moved to accept the May financial report. Second by Cindy Reed. Motion carried.

Motion: Mark Craven moved to extend a month’s administrative leave to Executive Director Tom Salzer, with full pay and benefits continued during his leave. Second by Doug Rushton. Motion carried.

Motion: Cindy Reed moved to authorize a waiver to Heather Smith to submit her May 2025 reimbursement outside the 30-day window as required by policy. Second Bruce McDonald. Motion carried with an abstention by Heather Smith.

Motion: Bruce McDonald moved to adopt the resolution authorizing WACD investment in the Local Government Investment Pool. Second by Heather Smith. Motion carried.

Motion: Cindy Reed moved to authorize the President and Treasurer to sign the Authorization to Open Bank Account resolution. Second by Mark Craven. Motion carried.

Motion: Mark Craven moved to add \$500 to the FY26 budget for the purpose of contributing to the Lynn Brown Memorial Scholarship. Second by John McLean. Motion carried with an abstention by Doug Rushton.

Motion: Jeff Schibel moved to approve the recommended changes to the policy book on the WACD executive committee’s authorized authority. Second by Cindy Reed. Motion carried.

Motion: Cindy Reed moved to approve the recommended changes to the Shared Travel Reimbursement Policy. Second by Jeff Schibel. Motion carried.

Motion: Jeff Schibel moved to adopt the FY2026 budget with the COLA option. Second by Cindy Reed. Motion carried.

Motion: Bruce McDonald moved to set aside up to \$500 per area director for travel reimbursement to attend their area’s board meetings. Second by Heather Smith. Motion carried.

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

WACD Plant Materials Center – Bow, WA

Remote Connection through Zoom

June 16, 2025

Board Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Amy McKay, President (Whitman CD)
Jeff Schibel, Vice President (Lincoln County CD)
Mark Craven, Treasurer (Snohomish CD)
Doug Rushton, National Director (Thurston CD)
Mike Mumford, Past President (Pend Oreille CD)
Alan Chapman, Northwest Area Director (Whatcom CD)
David Vliet, Northwest Area Director (Kitsap CD)
Heather Smith, Southwest Area Director (Grays Harbor CD)
Bruce McDonald, Southwest Area Director (Lewis CD)
John Preston, North Central Area Director (Columbia Basin CD)
John McLean, North Central Area Director (Foster Creek CD)
Cindy Reed, South Central Area Director (North Yakima CD)
Craig Nelson, Washington Association of District Employees (Okanogan CD)
Sarah Moorehead, Washington Association of District Employees (Thurston CD)

Others Present

Heather Wendt, WACD Deputy Director
Jim Brown, WACD Director of Nursery Operations
John Knox, WACD Assistant Nursery Manager
Ryan Baye, WACD Director of Legislative & Membership Services
Lori McLaughlin, WACD Financial Accounting & HR Administrator
Loren Meagher, Eastern Klickitat & Central Klickitat CDs District Manager
Larry Davis, Whatcom CD Associate Supervisor
Jan Thomas, CTD Training Program Manager
Helen Preston, Grant County resident

President Amy McKay called the meeting to order at 8:31. Ryan Baye conducted a roll call of the members and guests present in-person and online. Doug Rushton moved to approve the presented agenda with the addition of a “Reimbursement Waiver” and “Administrative Leave” during the Treasurer’s Report. Second by Heather Smith. Motion carried. Craig Nelson introduced himself as one of the two new WADE Co-Presidents elected at the WADE conference the previous week. He and Sarah Moorehead would share the role, as it

was the easiest way to cover the position without making it a burden on any one individual district employee.

Public Comment

Loren Meagher, on behalf of Eastern Klickitat and Central Klickitat Conservation Districts, expressed concern about the decision-making authority of the Conservation Commission being pushed away from CDs and towards Olympia, by both Commissioners and SCC staff. His districts wanted to see conservation districts maintain their locally led ethos and not become advisory, toothless entities.

Meeting Minutes

Alan Chapman moved to approve the May meeting minutes as presented. Second by Jeff Schibel. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Mark Craven reported on the May financial report, highlighting the aged receivables, the Year to Date incomes and expenses, the performance of the Edward Jones account, and the expected net loss in the Executive office. Jeff Schibel moved to accept the May financial report. Second by Cindy Reed. Motion carried.

Mark Craven spoke to the board, wanting to offer a month of administrative leave with pay to Executive Director Tom Salzer to allow him to spend additional time with his wife after her recent medical scare without burning through all his saved paid time off. Mark Craven moved to extend a month's administrative leave to Executive Director Tom Salzer, with full pay and benefits continued during his leave. Second by Doug Rushton. The board discussed the length of Tom's leave period, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and Tom's previous foregoing of salary increases. Motion carried.

Ryan Baye brought forward a request to grant a waiver to WACD's policy to limit travel reimbursement requests to 30 days. Heather Smith had attended south west conservation district meetings in her role as Area Director but had not realized she was eligible for reimbursement. Cindy Reed moved to authorize a waiver to Heather Smith to submit her May 2025 reimbursement outside the 30-day window as required by policy. Second Bruce McDonald. Motion carried with an abstention by Heather Smith.

Heather Wendt presented a resolution for the board's consideration to invest in the Local Government Investment Pool. Bruce McDonald moved to adopt the resolution authorizing WACD investment in the Local Government Investment Pool. Second by Heather Smith. The board members asked about the fee schedule, the rate of return, and WACD's internal controls. Motion carried.

Heather Wendt also presented to the board a proposal to close and re-open WACD's account with Banner Bank without the positive pay feature. She reiterated the concerns shared at the May meeting where WACD employees were having trouble depositing checks.

Cindy Reed moved to authorize the President and Treasurer to sign the Authorization to Open Bank Account resolution. Second by Mark Craven. Motion carried

Jim Brown talked with the board about supporting a scholarship being set up by Lynn Brown's family after passing. Mark Craven moved to add \$500 to the FY26 budget for the purpose of contributing to the Lynn Brown Memorial Scholarship. Second by John McLean. Motion carried with an abstention by Doug Rushton.

WACD Operations

Jim Brown reported on the operations of the nursery sharing details about: the PMC financials, sales orders, new species at the PMC, summer work schedule, and his upcoming retirement. John Knox added information about his presentation at the WADE Conference and articles he wrote for the Department of Natural Resources and Washington State University. Jim Brown answered additional questions about immigration enforcement operations in the Skagit Valley, variable frequency drives on the current well system, and the impact of Department of Ecology's drought declaration.

Ryan Baye facilitated a conversation amongst board members on the structure of the "area focus" agenda item and how the board wanted to hear from member-districts about their operations, concerns, and successes. The discussion included questions about the role of the area directors, the difference in issues between Eastern and Western Washington districts, hearing from supervisors versus hearing from district staff, and whether it was better to hear about pressing issues versus general operations. WACD staff committed to making adjustments to the agenda format for the remainder of the year to see what might work best.

15 minute recess

WACD Policies

Ryan Baye put forward some changes to the policies on the WACD Executive Committee's explicit authorities, to update the language to reflect current practices. Jeff Schibel moved to approve the recommended changes to the policy book on the WACD executive committee's authorized authority. Second by Cindy Reed. Motion carried.

Heather Wendt presented recommended changes to Shared Travel Reimbursement policy, to clarify authorized expenses. Cindy Reed moved to approve the recommended changes to the Shared Travel Reimbursement Policy. Second by Jeff Schibel. Motion carried.

All District Meeting Recap

Heather Wendt detailed the all-district meeting in Leavenworth, the Commission's time in the morning and WACD's time in the afternoon. Board members offered suggestions to improve next year's meeting and potential topics to present.

2026 Legislative Priorities

Ryan Baye facilitated a discussion amongst the board on potential 2026 legislative priorities for the Association, the topics of which included conservation district elections, supplemental funding requests, and what topics from the current work on the Commission's policy manual might need to be approved by the legislature.

Lunch Recess until 1:05

FY2026 Budget

Heather Wendt presented a draft budget, and the underlying financial assumptions, to the Board of Directors. Jeff Schibel moved to adopt the FY2026 budget with the COLA option. Second by Cindy Reed. The board members asked questions about changes made to line-items, the impact of WACD operations on staff, WACD's dues structure and history, and the proposed Cost of Living Adjustment. Motion carried

Engaging with the Board

Ryan Baye asked board members for input on how to keep them updated during the summer break in July and August, and last year's practice of a monthly written report.

WACD Travel

Amy McKay spoke with the board on travel expenses, what should be prioritized, NACD travel costs, and encouraging travel for the area directors. There was a discussion on when WACD should send people to attend meetings and the value from that travel. Bruce McDonald moved to set aside up to \$500 per area director for travel reimbursement to attend their area's board meetings. Second by Heather Smith. Motion carried.

Announcements

Jim Brown gave details on the tour of the nursery after the board meeting.

Heather Wendt provided information on the evening dinner and the strategic planning meeting on Tuesday.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35.