

Voluntary Stewardship Program - Technical Panel

Tuesday, April 26, 2016

9am – 4:30pm

Facilitator – Bill Eller, VSP Coordinator, WSCC

Meeting Logistics:

In person meeting: Lacey Community Center, 6729 Pacific Avenue SE, Lacey, WA 98503 Lacey, WA. Here is a link for [directions](#). Lunch will be provided.

9:00 am: Opening Comments, Introductions, Session Objective & Agenda

9:10 am: VSP Program Status

i. County contracts and work groups update

25 of 27 completed. Expect the last two this week. Might be a good idea to get on state American Planning Association (APA) agenda. We should compile a list of agency staff contacts per county.

ii. Commission VSP web site update

Presented and reviewed. The web page needs to be updated, especially with the work group meeting dates and times. Kelly says she has provided maps for Yakima, Kittitas, Columbia, Garfield and Grant counties, and WSDA can do more. She will get us the information to put in the newsletter.

iii. Information needs

State agencies are getting requests from various VSP work groups on whether or not their Shorelands management plans need to be amended, what to do about shellfish and timberlands, and how to define the viability of agriculture (AG). It will be difficult to define the viability of AG with over 300 different crops in WA. The Commission should move the VSP Q&A document to the front page of its web page. There should be a separate section in the VSP Q&A for GMA and SEPA questions. Tom will work on that. There should be an agency update in the VSP monthly newsletter. TP members agree to write up a one paragraph explanation of their agency's involvement with VSP for the May VSP newsletter.

iv. Other issues

None addressed.

10:00 am: VSP FY 17-19 program budget update

Ron discussed the budget. The Commission will be submitting a VSP budget decision package for FY 17-19. He anticipates ~\$9M for the biennium (\$150k per county, per FY = \$8.1M). Commission and agency (including Commerce) costs will increase that number. This will be presented at the May Commission meeting, but likely won't be addressed by the Commission until the July meeting or at a special meeting in August. We will need agency funding needs (budgets) by the next TP meeting. Those should include FY 17-19 and VSP monitoring.

A discussion of VSP monitoring ensues. Discussion of how much, who funds it, efficient v. inefficient. If benchmarks can be created that a programmatic, that would create efficiencies

and mean less costly monitoring. The TP discusses if the TP should suggest some or otherwise promote some.

WSDA is working on some tracking metrics for AG viability. The Commission's OFP might also have some input. What are the agencies already monitoring? RCW 36.70A.720(i)(i)-(iii) list what is needed to be monitored. It must be done by watershed, not by individual landowner. .720(i)(iii) – the effects on critical areas and AG viability are relevant to the benchmarks. How to establish measurable benchmarks? Tom says VSP is different than GMA – VSP is voluntary (don't have to participate) and VSP has an adequacy/sufficiency test – the TP must do the review for the 10 year time period. What are the measurable benchmarks that are workable? How to identify those? Amy presents a matrix example for how to monitor and what to monitor. Those benchmarks that are most efficiently monitored should be identified and used for work plans (WP). .720(i)(iii) has three monitoring components in it – participation, stewardship activities, and effects on CA and AG viability. Brian says we need to make sure that we get an adequate answer on how well monitoring is going in those three areas. More discussion of programmatic matrices. Benchmarks should be tied to the adaptive management plan. What actions would that be? Perhaps there is a way to aggregate monitoring activities so that efficiencies and standardization can occur. We should bring this concept to the SAC. There might be efficiencies to be gained from counties working together across county lines. More work could be done if counties could pool resources and do interagency agreements so that more money could be spent on outreach. Counties could do implementation monitoring together.

10:15 am: Break

10:30 am: Technical Panel

- Ground rules - examples
- Decision-making process – voting, consensus, something else

Ground rules were discussed. The TP statutory provisions were reviewed. The appeal of an agency action under VSP was discussed. Most likely route would be the Administrative Procedures Act and not the Growth Management Hearings Board. RCW 36.70A.725(2) set out that the TP must do something in writing. There should be a defined process for when a work group submits a work plan to the TP for review. The Commission should provide that policy. Ground rules were amended and adopted as amended.

- How the state agencies are receiving regional input

A discussion was had around this topic. The agencies agreed to get the Commission something in writing that would outline each agency's level of involvement in VSP that could be put in the Commission's VSP newsletter – deadline Friday, April 29.

- Level of support that TP and state agencies provide to Work Groups

Discussed among other topics above and below.

- Work plan submittal timeline for evaluating the 27 plans

Discussed generally. Commission staff still working on this.

- 2010 Multi-agency GMA principals of correspondence

Discussed as part of ground rules discussion above.

12:00 pm: Lunch

12:30 pm: Informal look at the pilot counties (Chelan and Thurston) draft work plans – how the goals and benchmarks track with and relate to RCW 36.70A.720 – review and discussion.

Documents available on Thurston and Chelan County's web sites for VSP were informally reviewed by the TP. A general discussion ensued. One general issue that came up was with whether a county could approve a WP for one watershed, and not get to other watersheds waiting for WP within the 2 years 9 months deadline. The TP was concerned that counties thought that would be acceptable for the other watersheds in a completed WP. Counties should also clearly define what Ag activities are in their county and the sale of that activity that is being addressed in the WP with an eye toward answering the question "is this AG activity impacting the CAs?" The TP was encouraged by the specificity of discussion and analysis of impacted species in CA's (spotted frog) in the WPs. The TP thought that ambiguous terms in the WP needed to be clearly defined and identified. For example, NRCS practice numbers should be labeled and/or identified as such. Species of concern – if no map, then at least they should be discussed in the WP. The TP was concerned that WP's should be what the county will do to protect CA's while maintaining AG viability, not an explanation of what VSP is. Monitoring matrix should focus more specifically on AG activities. Activities that are not AG activities shouldn't be covered in the WP. Benchmarks and metrics should line up with the 2011 baseline data so that the numbers match and there are actual measurable numbers to compare. The WP's should clearly identify the scale of the WP for measuring purposes – watershed, sub-watershed, reach, etc. Metrics and benchmarks might need to be unique for each watershed. The measurement of Ag activities should be able to be clearly replicated at 5 and 10 year reporting / monitoring intervals. Ag activities should be broken down by watershed. Data sources should be the best available and should be looking to describe on a map where Ag activities are happening overlaid with CA's. Appropriate data sources should be used (generic internet searches using "AG" or "Farm" should be avoided when looking for data related to AG activities). Links to data sources should be available. All 5 CA's should be addressed in the WP in order for the WP to be complete.

3:15 pm: Set future meetings (through the end of the year) and topics, & future actions
Future meetings were set. May 24th in North Bend – joint and/or invite the SAC; 4th Tuesday of each month through 2016.

4:00 pm: Adjourned