Voluntary Stewardship Program
Joint Technical Panel & Statewide Advisory Committee
Meeting
Friday, January 26, 2018
8:00 am – 3:00 pm

Facilitator – Bill Eller, VSP Coordinator, WSCC

Attendees in Lacey: Brian Cochrane, WSCC (TP); Lauren Driscoll, ECY (TP); Kelly McLain, WSDA (TP); Matt Mueller, WDFW (TP); Alicia McClendon; John Stuhlmiller (SAC), Evan Sheffels; John Kliem, Jane Hewitt, Terry Willis, Alice Shawyer, Owen Shaftner, Dan Wood, Jim Getchman, Darrell Haglund

Webinar: Barbara Adkins; Renee Hadley; Wes McCart; Ron Wesen; Scott Kuhta

8:15 am: SAC VSP update and issues
  ▪ VSP regional meetings – after action report

Bill Eller brought up this topic. Reviewed notes he made during the regional meetings:
Regional meeting notes:
  ▪ Lots of support for a Commission effort at PR for VSP – articles in media, social media, TV, radio, etc. The Commission effort should also encompass outreach to the Legislature on VSP, what it is, why it is important for counties, funding needs, effectiveness, etc.
  ▪ Perhaps move some Technical Panel meetings to Spokane or the east side?
  ▪ Expand Technical Panel practice pointers to give as much guidance as possible if the informal review process is closed down.
  ▪ Keep having the Technical Panel meetings as webinars.
  ▪ More guidance on incorporating other plans into the VSP work plan – put in practice pointers if not there already.
  ▪ Perhaps have some guidance on how work groups could be internally structured – voting, succession planning, etc.
  ▪ Need VSP 101 training for new VSP County work group members due to turnover – perhaps modeled on how the Commission currently trains new CD supervisors.
  ▪ More outreach by the Commission at conferences (planners, county, ag) and other community events.
  ▪ If Conservation Districts are the administrators of VSP after the work plan has been adopted, or a CD is the designated technical assistance providers in the work plan, perhaps have an ongoing agenda item during the CD board meeting for VSP (updates on monitoring, work done, budget, reporting, outreach, education, etc).

John Stuhlmiller brought up adding another policy advisory to the two the Statewide Advisory Committee has already created to address implementation. It would address the roles / duties of the
three entities most involved in VSP implementation – county, county work group and the technical service provider.

General discussion ensues. The policy advisory could address things like how often a work group should meet, project management concepts, and the internal organization of a work group (if there is a chair of the work group, what are their duties? Rules for meetings, regular meeting times, work group succession planning, meetings that work around agricultural producers’ schedules).

- **VSP budget**
  Bill Eller presented this topic. No new information on the operating budget. We’ll be starting that process this fall. The capital budget just passed – no real effect on the VSP budget.

- Remaining counties – schedule to submit work plans to Technical Panel
- VSP quarterly reports – 2nd missed report this FY: Adams, Chelan, Cowlitz, Ferry, Mason, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Thurston. First miss – Stevens

Bill Eller presented this topic. Discussed the counties that have missed their quarterly reporting requirement since the inception of the new WSCC-County contract. Described the process by which the Commission contracted with the counties to fill out the quarterly VSP report as a deliverable under the contract and what happens when those deadlines are missed.

Commissioner McCart suggested that the county commissioners receive an email when the deadline is missed.

John Stuhlmiller suggested that the Commission establish an email reminder for each of the 27 counties for the quarterly reports.

Bill Eller explained that the Commission offered to assist counties who had difficulty setting reminders with setting reminders.

A general discussion about the quarter reports ensues. Questions were brought up and answered (can the on-line reports be saved in the middle of filling them out (yes), can anyone fill out the report on behalf of the county (yes)).

Bill Eller will bring the reminder concept to the Commission for further analysis.

- **VSP Newsletter – quarterly?**
  Bill Eller brought up the possibility of moving the monthly VSP newsletter to quarterly.

John Stuhlmiller suggested that if this were to happen, there should be notice to the readership before it happens.

- **VSP practice pointers**
  Bill Eller brought this topic up as part of the regional VSP meeting discussion. The practice pointers were reviewed.

- **Other**

  8:45 am:  
  Next meetings – start times at 8 am -
  - Feb 9 – Franklin – vote; Lewis & Cowlitz – informal review
  - Feb 23 – Kittitas, Benton, Cowlitz (?) – first review
  - Mar 16 – Lincoln, Mason (?) & Douglas – first review
  - Mar 30 – Kittitas, Benton & Cowlitz - vote; Lincoln & Mason – first review
  - Apr 13 – Mason informal?
  - Apr 27 – Lincoln, Grays Harbor & Mason - vote; Lewis & Adams – first review
  - May 11 – open
  - May 25 – Lewis & Adams - vote, Garfield & Asotin – first review
Bill Eller brings this topic up. Explains that these meeting dates are estimates only, to illustrate the potential upcoming meetings. Presented the draft of the Gant chart that shows when each work group has informed the Commission they would most likely be submitting their work plan and when their deadlines for submittal are.

9:15 am: Conduct an informal review of the Grays Harbor county work plan

Terry Willis presents the Grays Harbor work plan work they work group has done so far. Goes over Grays Harbor county particulars. Diverse agriculture, shellfish included, just 3% of county in agriculture. Chehali and Quinault tribes invited, but not attending. No work group meetings in the summer to accommodate the agricultural members.

John Klien takes over the presentation, goes over the technical aspects of the work plan. Five benchmarks for the five critical areas. Example benchmark – wetland protection.

Matt Muller asks about each strategy listing out stewardship practices – NRCS FOTG.

Kelly McLain asks about participation goals and currently available USDA / Govt / NRCS programs.

John Klien says the work group is working on gathering that data.

Terry Willis says the work group has asked two conservation district supervisors who are work group members and they have provided data. NRCS practices are suggested, not required.

Kelly McLain says the list of NRCS practices are unique to each county. Make sure to show your work on why those practices are listed.

John Klien – the benchmark measures are still evolving – waiting on data from NRCS. Waiting on monitoring analysis from 2011. We have placeholders in the work plan right now. Will have final numbers in work plan. Benchmark to protect historic agricultural farmland summary – example stewardship activities.

Jim Getchman takes over explaining outreach overview for / during implementation.

Bill Eller asks about current outreach during planning.

John Klien says that will be in Appendix A.

Brian Cochrane says to be sure to describe how you know you are doing enough outreach – think about that.

Matt Muller brings up non-commercial small scale farms – understanding the numbers of producers.

Kelly McLain – easier to have goals if you know the numbers.

John Klien says the work group has a benchmark specific to address participants.

Darrell Haglund talks about monitoring – aerial monitoring – same as Stevens County. GHCD will be the technical service provider. Cranberry growers have unique regulations to comply with.

Kelly McLain – monitoring table – land over at 5 years – should change that to 2 or 4 years in frequency.

John Klien says we are reviewing the intervals.
Lauren Driscoll – describe in the monitoring tool the individual stewardship plans and how those will help in the monitoring.

General discussion about individual stewardship plans and rolling up data at the watershed scale and how that data will be gathered.

Brian Cochrane says to describe that to the audience.

Matt Muller – 3 things – sequential page numbers; other reporting requirements (RCW 36.70A.720(1)(l)), and other plans relied on – need a statement about that in the work plan.

Brian Cochrane – semantics around benchmarks v. goals. Slide #12 example. Goals, objectives, benchmarks. Benchmarks are measurable things, numbers. More detail or discussion in the work plan of what benchmarks will be used and why they are effective.

Lauren Driscoll – add discussion about adaptive management thresholds and then actions to be taken.

Kelly McLain – some previously approved work plan’s have examples – 120% of cover – a trigger.

Brian Cochrane – “no next loss” needs more explanation.

John Klien – Appendix B has current use properties broken out.

Brian Cochrane – connect statements in readable document to the appendices. Monitoring – explain why quarterly is meaningful.

Kelly McLain – county health report data; change in groundwater change. Monitoring change leads to adaptive management trigger.

General discussion on limitations on monitoring and who will be doing it.

Bill Eller says to include that discussion in the work plan.

John Klien – appendix B breaks down the critical areas.

John Stuhlmiller says to make sure the task related to VSP is for each critical area. The task for CARA’s is to protect agriculture’s involvement with the CARA, not all causes of CARA degradation.

John Klien asks if there is a change, how (if any) did agriculture affect that change?

Matt Muller says Pacific County used “background indicators” that will inform them that could be useful here.

Brian Cochrane says for any indicator, what is the current state of that – which streams are listed now on the 303d list?

John Klien – background information – 303d. Identified those and matched them to the agriculture properties. If some change, will ask the question why/what is the cause.

Brian Cochrane says that is a fair approach. Non-point sources and TMDL – which practices will help and should they meet a priority? Slide 27, uncomfortable with the format. VSP monitoring of critical areas – coupling it with enhancement.

John Klien – if a change occurred to a critical area due to removal of vegetation, if that happens in one area and we do a practice that provides a benefit to the critical area, we measure the effect of the practice. Then, it should have a compensatory effect in that area. Practices evaluate if you are
maintaining the critical areas at 2011 levels. If impact over here, but doing a BMP over here, does that compensate?

Brian Cochrane – that has been a challenge for counties. Do the good actions offset the bad ones? Still uncomfortable linking the monitoring to the practices. Specificity will help – the number of producers.

Darrell Haglund – still don’t know how many folks are in agriculture.

John Klien – we have a good handle on the number of commercial producers in the county. Small universe of producers.

Brian Cochrane – framework for the effort is needed so we can judge if the effort will be reasonable.

Adjourn