Voluntary Stewardship Program  
Joint Technical Panel & Statewide Advisory Committee Meeting  
Friday, May 25, 2018  
8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Facilitator – Bill Eller, VSP Coordinator, WSCC

Attendees in Lacey: Brian Cochrane, Lauren Driscoll, Kelly McLain, Keith Folkerts, Alicia McClendon; John Stuhlmiller, Lisa Grueter, Neil Aaland, Brad Murphy, Hillary Heard

Webinar: Britt Dudek, Ben Floyd, Josh Jensen, Scott Kuhta, Steven Woodley, Michael Kaputa, Lisa Grueter, Evan Sheffels, Ron Wesen

8:00 am: Opening Comments, Introductions, Session Objective & Agenda

8:05 am: VSP Program update (if any) – Bill Eller, Ron Shultz, WSCC
  ▪ Next meetings –
    ▫ June 19 – Mason & Garfield – 2nd review & vote; Columbia, Okanogan, Grays Harbor, [Cowlitz] – 1st review
    ▫ July 27 – Columbia, Okanogan, Grays Harbor, [Cowlitz] – 2nd review & vote; Adams, Lewis, [Pend Oreille], – 1st review
    ▫ Aug 24 - Adams, Lewis, [Pend Oreille] – 2nd review & vote; Ferry – 1st Review

Bill Eller introduces this topic. A meeting date in November – November 9th was chosen. Bill will send out an Outlook meeting and set up the webinar.

8:15 am: SAC VSP update and issues
  ▪ Chelan County discussion - the Technical Panel’s role in VSP implementation – Neil Aaland, Lisa Grueter; Mike Kaputa will join by phone.

Neil Aaland introduces this topic. Brad Murphy from Thurston has some similar issues. Implementation issues. Lisa Grueter begins presentation. Bitt Dudek is the chair of the Chelan County VSP work group.

Neil Aaland says getting Ag producer participation on the work group has been difficult.
Lisa Grueter says the county and the conservation district share implementation duties. Working on making those more specific.

Hillary Heard says implementation will be joint with the county and the conservation district with projects in the future.

Lisa Grueter continues with the presentation. Talks about guiding principles for funding projects. Also talks about meeting with WDFW to talk about imagery analysis. WDFW HRCD focused on tree canopy. There are some issues with using it for VSP – see PowerPoint. The work group is still searching for repeatable monitoring options, at an affordable cost, with enough detail. The work group has been having meetings, and we’ve talked with UW labs, other consultants, and Stevens County with the aerial imagery they use.

Kelly McLain asks about Stevens County.

Lisa Grueter says Stevens County explained their whole process to the work group. They have also talked with the University of Oregon.

Hillary Heard talks about trying to find the best imagery sources that show both positive and negative change.

Lisa Grueter says that Britt Dudek talked about Douglas County and their Habitat Conservation Plan.

Britt Dudek talks about protecting and enhancing and meeting the spirit of the statute. We wanted to monitor our riparian areas that would give us a plus and minus – how the riparian area was changing. Example in the PowerPoint of tree removal. At the conservation district, we used proprietary software during the habitat conservation plan development. Talks about Google Earth Engine as a software choice to use that would help with monitoring. It is affordable, repeatable, and not a lot of human interpretation.

Brian Cochrane talks about the imagery analysis and how it is a representation of what is on the ground. Accuracy assessment and error – given the accuracy of the model in this environment, is that acceptable and how much change in my error rates am I willing to accept. At the watershed scale, is the model sufficiently accurate?
Lisa Grueter says we have done that at the watershed scale. What we have not seen is at the edge of the riparian area.

Brian Cochrane says we have done some work in the Puget Sound – can use no-veg layer in the WDFW HRCD to give you a footprint of the bed and banks of the river. That edge forms the riparian zone. That gives you a start on the understanding of the riparian section.

Lisa Grueter says we are using the WDFW stuff to help inform. Stemilt and Squilchuck basin haven’t had much review with other monitoring efforts. Port GIS has a scope of work for semi-arid areas.

Brian Cochrane says there is some techniques using pixel smoothing levels that will develop a ratio that will help to establish an index of texture between the smoothings. That might be a tool to use. Also, NAIP is restricted to peak of summer. If you want to look at quality of weeds, might need a sensor with a more rich temporal schedule. Is the question about weeds? Then need to look at the unique phrenology of weeds.

Lisa Grueter says we are looking at NAIP versus Sentinel. We are exploring what to do there. We are adding NDVI. $13,000 for the scope and one day training session with county staff.

Brian Cochrane asks about the VSP budget.

Lisa Grueter says $220,000 is what the county got.

Brian Cochrane asks what fraction of the VSP budget is Chelan County’s monitoring.

Lisa Grueter doesn’t have that figure. The county staff time to input the data into the Cloud would have to be added.

Kelly McLain says that the costs will be higher to begin the monitoring to get the structure in place.

Britt Dudek says that image analysis and ground truthing – there is no standard for a model that will tell you what your ground cover will be. NAIP we’ve looked at, but we get more layers with Sentinel and others. The consultant we are working with has a good sense of available products. Proposal from a GIS consultant.
Lisa Grueter says the agreement with the GIS consultant is going forward with the county.

Brian Cochrane asks what is the number you are looking for accurate data – commission and omission. We need to establish that number so you know what you are getting – the end product.

Keith Folkerts says omission and commission rates are both really important – is it the right amount of change or not. Having a standard for knowing what you are getting is important. Ken has worked hard on that.

Hillary Heard says we’ve worked with this consultant before.

Keith Folkerts says we’ve worked with Microsoft and Nature Conservancy and none have anything like Ken’s work for what it can due. Identify needles in a hay stack. It still takes human interpretation.

Lisa Grueter says how much in the program can we feel good about and then we'll do field review. In the process of classifying.

Brian Cochrane says that is where we need that number up front so we know how accurate the model is.

Lisa Grueter says we can provide examples of the consultant’s work. They have worked on Ag and critical areas. Returns to the PowerPoint presentation.

Neil Aaland talks about the outreach plan. Emails and local gatherings. Hillary put together a list of local organizations. Talks about specific organizations they have contacted for outreach purposes.

Lisa Grueter talks about the Entiat Watershed Action Plan and how VSP was integrated into that planning unit effort.

Neil Aaland asks Brad Murphy about Thurston and their outreach efforts.

Brad Murphy talks about Thurston County’s outreach efforts. Upgrading farm plans to VSP plans. Draft outreach plan out for comment. Handouts available already. We’ve focused on individual producers so far. We are having workshops later in the
summer with the conservation district as the main technical service provider. County staff will be updating their CAO in the next few months.

Brian Cochrane has a revised BMP database at the Commission because we rebuilt it around a model of how the conservation districts use the data. BMP project implementation. One of the things we are doing is trying to figure out how we can catch outreach in that database. Outreach is a series of events that gets you names / contacts. If we can build this in a way that is useful, we should be able to see the results of different kinds of outreach efforts.

Neil Aaland asks about counties that have approved.

John Stuhlmiller says that his experience with other counties is that other counties have benefited from the work of other counties.

Kelly McLain says we are building the program in the middle of implementing it. Plan development fatigue and understanding related to implementation issues on behalf of Ag producers – may be different from Thurston and Chelan.

John Stuhlmiller says that VSP is about a 10 year horizon of assessment and planning process.

Britt Dudek agree with John Stuhlmiller. Will continue to develop this with the Technical Panel as we go along.

Mike Kaputa on the webinar but not on audio.

Keith Folkerts says Lewis County is working with the work Ken has done with the monitoring. That kind of information should be able to us – a better riparian delineation should be shared. Maybe we could do a comparison of the Google Earth Engine to compare and contrast with other models.

Lisa Grueter says we could pick a location to focus on to do that comparison.

- Update on Policy Advisories

Bill Eller provides this update. Says one policy advisory (03-18 Roles during VSP Implementation) has been amended to reflect additional material for work group, county staff and technical provider interaction; two others were created – 04-18 (CAO and New Agriculture) and 05-18 (VSP Implementation Reporting Timeline). These
are being reviewed by Commission staff before presentation to the Statewide Advisory Committee. Will Add them to the agenda on June 19th.

John Stuhlmiller suggested that 05-18 have a table in it that clearly sets out when the biennia reports (every 2 years) are due.

- Other

9:30 am: Break

9:45 am: Continue formal review of the Asotin County work plan; take vote if needed.

Bill Eller introduced this topic. Review where we are. Submitted 3-30-18. Have until 6-28-18 to finish the Technical Panel review. This is the second review meeting we’ve been able to have. First was last month. Since then the agencies finished their comments, provided them to me, I put them into the agency comment spreadsheet, provided that to the work group. The work group took the comments during last month’s meeting and the written comments from the Technical Panel and had a work group meeting and made edits to the work plan and supporting documents. We provided those to you a few days ago. That brings us to now, the second review meeting on this work plan.

Each element of RCW 36.70A.720 (1) (a-l) that needed further discussion was discussed (Elements A, B, C, Ei, Eii, Ii, Iii, J, K & L). Each element was reviewed based on the changes the work group made to the work plan and supporting documents. The Technical Panel approved of each edit and/or change that the work group made to all the Element listed above.

Technical Panel vote taken; unanimous approval of the Asotin County VSP work plan by the Technical Panel members present (all).

11:00 am: WDFW presentation - draft PHS Riparian Ecosystems document – Tim Quinn and Keith Folkerts, WDFW

Keith Folkerts begins the PowerPoint presentation. There is a comment period which ends July 17 - collecting comments on a web page. PHS Riparian Ecosystems document. The focus of the draft is only on aquatic species, not terrestrial. WDFW has not updated terrestrial species yet.
Tim Quinn talks about the science behind the PHS Riparian Ecosystems document update, Volume 1 – the science section.

11:30 am:    Adjourn