Voluntary Stewardship Program
Joint Technical Panel & Statewide Advisory Committee Meeting
Friday, September 28, 2018
8:00 am – 10:30 am

Facilitator – Bill Eller, VSP Coordinator, WSCC

Attendees in Lacey: Lauren Driscoll, Kelly McLain, Keith Folkerts, Alicia McClendon; John Stuhlmiller, John Small, Ron Shultz

Webinar: Barbara Adkins, Brian Cochrane, Ben Floyd, Wes McCart, Lloyd Odell, Steven Woodley, Charissa Waters, Ron Wesen

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

8:05 am: VSP Program update (if any) – Bill Eller, Ron Shultz, WSCC

Ron Shultz talked about the VSP budget. 12 counties are not doing VSP. The Commission’s budget package, if funded, would create a grant program for six of those. WSCC’s budget ask also builds capacity for conservation districts which work closely with VSP. Also looking to fund other programs at the Commission that support voluntary conservation work. $30 million non-shellfish projects ready to go. Included in the VSP budget ask is the WDFW HRCD funding request.

Kelly McLain – WSDA has VSP budget asks – partner with conservation districts to do monitoring; also money for dairy manure application training.

Ron Shultz – we recently had an inquiry from the legislature – confidentiality of VSP plans. Legislative fix might be better than the policy advisory on this topic. Ron Shultz will talk with that Legislator [Mary Dye, R-Pomeroy]. Self-assessment also is tied together with this issue. There is a second issue we are working on – new agriculture and VSP – the subject of policy advisory 04-18. We are thinking of bringing together the agencies (WDFW, ECY, WSDA), including Commerce, to work on that issue. Another issue involves the 5 year reporting requirement under the statute – Thurston and Chelan – evaluation of their 5 year reporting requirement – will have a WAC rule that will apply. This involves [RCW 36.70A.720 (1)] (A-L) with detail, and then some evaluation of sufficiency.
Kelly McLain – the number is less important than if you are meeting the requirements.

Ron Shultz – more significant decision because of the fail out option.

John Stuhlmiller – need to make sure the SAC process is in there. Adaptive management check-in. Make sure that is addressed in the process.

Ron Shultz – the process needs to say that adaptive management is allowed and part of the system. Not arbitrary.

Commissioner McCart – my trepidation with this conversation, are you sure you want to do rule making?

Ron Shultz – rulemaking is my general thought at this point. Will need to refer to the attorney general to determine if the rule is needed or the guidance.

John Stuhlmiller – lets think about what the right choices are.

Keith Folkerts – there may be formal and informal aspects to the procedure.

8:30 am: SAC VSP update and issues
- Regional meeting – draft agenda
- TP member presentations
- Other presentations

Bill Eller introduced this topic. December 4 and 11 were target dates chosen. VSP Tech Panel members would be involved in some presentations, as well as Commission staff. Agenda still being decided.
- Quarterly reports – Oct 10th.
  - Retainage

The quarterly report is due October 10th. A notice will go out in the VSP newsletter as a reminder. A question about retainage under the Commission’s contract with each county has been included in order for the counties to inform the Commission if they believe they will need access to all $220,000 available in the budget.
- Remaining counties – schedule to submit
  - Oct 26 – Spokane & Ferry – 2nd review & vote
  - Other
9:00 am: Begin formal review of Ferry County VSP work plan

Bill Eller introduced this topic. Review where we are. Submitted September 4, 2018. Have until December 3, 2018 to finish the Technical Panel review. This is the first review meeting we’ve been able to have. The 2nd will be October 26, 2018. After this meeting, agencies will need to submit their written comments to me so that I can package them and send them to the work group for consideration. We should shoot for October 6th to have comments to me. Then I can get them to the work group ASAP after that. Then they can meet, as most want to, and have any work plan edits in before the October 26th meeting.

John Small introduces presentation.

Lloyd Odell – takes over the presentation. 82% of county owned by tribes or USFS/BLM/DNR. 18% of land in Ferry County is privately owned. 8-36 inches of precipitation. 5 watersheds - Kettle, Lake Roosevelt and Sanpoil. Most critical areas and agricultural lands in the river valleys, so lot of interface between the two.

John Small – takes over presentation. Review the submittal checklist. 15-20% of agricultural producers is the number for outreach. Could change.

Ron Shultz – how many agricultural producers are on tribal lands? Are you factoring those in as well?

Lloyd Odell – don’t have exact numbers, but guess would be 15-20% of agricultural producers are tribal members on tribal lands. The Colville’s have a strict and stringent environmental protection plan in place.

John Small – monitoring and reporting will go beyond 2026. Indicators will be monitored. Adaptive management ongoing and will be included in the 2 and 5 year status reports. PHS included, HRCD a possibility as well. Adequacy of funding language added as previously discussed. Will target 60-75% of producers in first 5 years.

Keith Folkerts – shrub steppe – one of the critical areas – how do you deal with that in the plan?

John Small – all priority habitat and species – trying to remember how much shrub steppe is in Ferry County.
Ben Floyd – shrub steppe limited and largely in the southern portion of the county. Is covered in the PHS data we have.

Lauren Driscoll – comment about the number of producers – looking for that comment.

Ben Floyd – those “hot topic” items are not in the version of the work plan that we provided, but those have been made to the plan since.

Lauren Driscoll – the work group advisory member list should be put in the front of the work plan.

Keith Folkerts – tribal participation?

John Small – tribes were invited – Colville’s, but didn’t participate.

Lloyd Odell – it was the Colville’s.

Keith Folkerts – WDFW participation?

John Small – there was some participation by WDFW regional staff.

Ron Shultz – what was the reason for the tribes to not participate?

Lloyd Odell – we sent 3 or 4 invites to the tribes and BIA. VSP wouldn’t apply to producers on tribal lands. They did ask for copies of our work plan for reference. Once the work plan is in place, we should be able to work together with them – the conservation district has a good relationship with the Tribe.

Kelly McLain – what Lloyd just said should be added to the work plan – in the first section.

Keith Folkerts - Page B-2, 2, bald eagles are no longer listed.

Bill Eller – hot topics – 6 or 7 items in presentation – will lift those out of the presentation and send separate reminder in email to Technical Panel. John Small says will also put that in the response matrix.
Lauren Driscoll – meeting the reporting requirements of the program – is that statement in there?  Page 75 or 76?

John Small – says that could be added.

Lauren Driscoll – page 34 – change in baseline – a very clear and best summary of that statement.

9:30 am:   **Begin formal review of Pend Oreille County VSP work plan**

Bill Eller introduced this topic.  Review where we are.  Submitted July 31, 2018.  Have until October 29, 2018 to finish the Technical Panel review.  This is the 2nd review meeting we’ve been able to have.  Technical Panel comments went out to the work group a few weeks ago.  We received back from the work group edits, comments and changes to the work plan on September 21.

11 areas (Elements A, B, C, E(i), E(ii), H, I(i), I(ii), I(iii), K, and L) to cover.

Lauren Driscoll – ponds reference in element E (i), listed as a conservation practice – they are a conversion, so those should be counted against, and should be addressed and offset at the county level.  Not sure how often ponds are constructed in Pend Oreille County.  Like the comment that was added.

Ben Floyd – if we acknowledge that loss could occur and must be offset at the watershed scale…

John Small - new ponds and wetlands we are talking about.

Lauren Driscoll – yes, ok.

Keith Folkerts – comment about E (i) – acceptable error rates – response #10, not sure I follow that.  Next paragraph was related to Keith’s concerns.  Error rates worked out during implementation.

Ben Floyd – yes.

Keith Folkerts – I (ii) – how did you come up with acreage of riparian agricultural lands.  How was that done – to establish existing agricultural lands?
Ben Floyd – we used PHS for riparian areas. We identified with the larger number, not just the Spokane watershed.

John Small – we used the critical area buffers in that analysis.

Bill Eller - Brian Cochrane isn’t here, but he had only one comment on Element H – to include a clearer statement, and it appears that was included.

**Formal vote on approval of Pend Oreille County VSP work plan by Technical Panel. Unanimous approval of work plan.**

**10:00 am: Adjourn**