Facilitator – Bill Eller, VSP Coordinator, WSCC

**Attendees in Lacey:** Lauren Driscoll, Kelly McLain, Keith Folkerts, Jillian Fishburn; John Stuhlmiller, Walt Edelen, Seth Flanders, Lindsay Chutas

**Webinar:** Barbara Adkins, Andy Duanu, Lloyd Odell, Brandon Roozen, Steven Woodley, Ben Floyd, John Small, Scott Kuhta, Jennifer Thomas

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

8:05 am: **SAC VSP update and issues**

- Quarterly reports – Thurston, San Juan, Spokane late
  - Retainage question – all counties expect to use full allocation
- **VSP regional meetings** –
  - Dec 4 Chehalis –
    - San Juan County
    - Pacific County
  - Dec 11 Moses Lake –
    - Stevens County
    - Garfield County
- VSP and New Agriculture – still working on that issue – legislative fix
- Next (last?) meeting on a work plan:
  - November 9, 2018 – Spokane – 2nd review & vote

Bill Eller addresses these agenda items. Says that the VSP quarterly reports were due October 10 and that Thurston, San Juan, and Spokane were late. Thurston has been chronically late, San Juan a few times, and Spokane likely because they just submitted their work plan. Each county contract with the Commission has a clause wherein the Commission retains 10% of the available reimbursement amount until closer to the end of the biennia. This is so that we can determine if a county will spend all the allocated funds or not, and if not, we can reallocate those funds to other counties. All counties were asked about this in this quarterly report. All counties except Lewis responded that they would use all the available funds. Lewis just transitioned from the consultant to the CD as the technical service provider, so after follow-up conversation with them, we expect them to also use all the allocated funds.
The VSP regional meetings are coming up on December 4 in Chehalis and December 11 in Moses Lake. We have lined up San Juan County and Pacific County for Dec 4, and Stevens County, Garfield County and Whatcom County (CD staff from Whatcom to talk about VSP outreach efforts) for December 11th. The agenda item related to VSP and New Agriculture is a typo – we are not seeking a legislative fix for that, but a WAC chapter will be written to address this issue of VSP and New Agriculture. We will also be working on a WAC chapter for the 2 and 5 year reporting requirements. We might also be pursuing a legislative fix related to VSP ISP confidentiality.

Kelly McLain asks if the agencies will get input into the New Agriculture WAC before it is submitted to the Code Revisers Office.

Bill Eller said that our next meeting is November 9, 2018 – Spokane – 2nd review & vote and we may want to move that meeting so the work group has more time to respond to our written comments, which he proposed to have provided to the work group by November 2, but there would be more discussion on this agenda item later in the meeting.

8:15 am:    Continue formal review of the Ferry County work plan and take a vote if needed.

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 second review meeting we’ve been able to have. First was September 28, 2018. 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 the September 28th 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 on October 18th. That brings us to now, the second review meeting on this work plan.

Bill Eller introduced this topic. He presented the agency comment form for the County’s work plan. Each element of RCW 36.70A.720 (1) (a-l) that needed further discussion was discussed. Each element reviewed based on the changes the work group made to the work plan and supporting documents. Edits made to agency comments document.
I count 5 areas (Elements B, D, K, L and a general comment). 5 areas covered and the comments supplied by the Ferry County work group. After further review, all Technical Panel members were ok with the changes, edits and information supplied in response to our written comments.

**Formal vote on approval of Ferry County VSP work plan by Technical Panel. Unanimous approval of work plan. Brian Cochrane absent.**

**8:45 am:** Continue formal review of the Spokane County work plan and take a vote if needed.

Bill Eller introduced this topic. Review where we are. Submitted October 1, 2018. Have until December 30, 2018 to finish the Technical Panel review. This is the first review meeting we’ve been able to have. November 9th is the second meeting set for this work plan. Doesn’t give us a lot of time to get written comments in so that the work group can have time to meet, if they want, to craft responses or make amendments.

Walt Edelen, Seth Flanders, Lindsay Chutas begin the presentation.

Walt Edelen begins presentation. Highlights agricultural viability issues, farmland conversion. Lindsay Chutas did the mapping for the work group and plan. Plan broken out into 5 different watersheds. Palouse soils are considered geological hazards. Tribal representative presented for almost all work group meetings.

Kelly McLain – please add more about the tribal engagement process in the work group.

Lauren Driscoll – work group members – making sure in the plan who were agricultural producers – document in the plan.

Walt Edelen continues with the presentation.

Bill Eller asks about specific numbers for Element C, participation.

Walt Edelen – We don’t have actual numbers of participants, looking to get data on producers through the individual stewardship plans and other metrics to extrapolate the level of participation.
Lauren Driscoll – are their targets for checklists or individual stewardship plans?


Seth Flanders continues presentation – Table 8. Disenrollment rate based off of Whitman and Stevens County plans and BMP’s implemented. 20% safety factor.

Lauren Driscoll – will the conservation database also track disenrollment?

Seth Flanders – yes, we are guessing on the estimate of disenrollment, and we hope to meet those with new practices implemented.

Lindsay Chutas – we should be able to meet the goal with actual new practices implemented.

Keith Folkerts – is any of this mapped into specific places?

Seth Flanders – we have them tied to the 5 watersheds, but we don’t specific information – we have general information by watershed.

Kelly McLain – you should be able to drill down to see if you are meeting your disenrollment rate.

Seth Flanders – yes.

Walt Edelen – we have a grant in with Ecology to find out exactly what practices exist in the Hangman watershed. Walt continues the presentation.

Bill Eller asks about number for outreach (Element D) and technical assistance goals – no numbers tied to the activities listed in Figure 10, Section 7, page 2, for example.

Walt Edelen says the biennial outreach plan would be put together with actual numbers to make sure they will reach their outreach and tech assistance goals.

Kelly McLain – ok to base outreach goals on a plan to be developed later, but it is important to explain how you have met those goals in the first year. Put an
explanation in the plan that discusses the structure of the biennial outreach plan to meet the goals of the work plan.

Walt Edelen continues with Element E. Should have a lot on the credit side since a lot of BMP’s have been implemented since 2011. Table 4.6 in handout. Conservation district in charge. Indicator source data – comparative GIS mapping and aerial photography.

Lauren Driscoll – Table 4.6 in the handout - adaptive management actions, thought I would see something that talks about specific actions that will be taken, rather than just “increase participation”.

Lindsay Chutas - takes over presentation. How to monitor change, especially for habitat areas. We know WDFW has HRCD, but our group focused on a locally-based solution – vegetative changes over time. We came up with our own system to monitor positive and negative change. Example of how vegetation change will be done – positive versus negative. 100 foot buffer in example.

[General discussion about the example]

Lauren Driscoll – adaptive management – once you see the change on the landscape, you will determine if agriculture was responsible for that change.

Lindsay Chutas – ok with that.

Keith Folkerts – what kind of errors of commission and omission, and how do you figure those.

Lindsay Chutas – shadows will be a big source of our errors. Shadows can show increase or decrease. Plant growth rate also. We have a lot of willing landowners to do ground truthing on this. Ground-truthing will be a big part of this. We also don’t have big leaves.

Keith Folkerts – have you evaluated error rates?

Lindsay Chutas – no, we have not evaluated error rates. That could be a Pandora’s Box.
Keith Folkerts – in HRCD, we’ve been working on error rates – omission and commission, so that they could be known.

Lindsay Chutas – that makes sense. We are still calibrating for our local analysis.

Kelly McLain – do you have the steps for this written out in the plan?

Lindsay Chutas – we could add that to the plan.

Kelly McLain – we’ve had other plans where they set it out step-by-step how the process goes, ground-truthing and omission and commission will be handled – a handbook for the next person on how to do this work.

Lauren Driscoll – Section 7.2 – flesh that out a little more.

Keith Folkerts – 100 feet – is that the standard?

Lindsay Chutas – not really discussed in the plan.

Keith Folkerts – 100 feet is the minimum, depending on the water quality concerns.

Lindsay Chutas – height isn’t really the concern, its volume.

Walt Edelen – continues presentation – Element F. Individual stewardship plans. Implementation work group – changed name of the work group. Relationship and trust with conservation district personnel and landowners and producers is important.

Lauren Driscoll – when you do the individual stewardship program, will you also do ground truthing?

Walt Edelen – yes. We will look at the entire operation and make suggestions. Continues presentation. Discusses Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Commodity buffer program run by Spokane Conservation District – rates tied to the adjacent crop. 50 miles of stream in two years of program existence.

Kelly McLain – what is the percentage of those who are haying the buffer?

Seth Flanders – a lot of people want to stick with grass and not yet put in woodies. No real takers yet, but people are talking about it.
Walt Edelen – funding for the commodity buffer program will be the challenge in the future. There are great benefits to the commodity buffer versus nothing. Ecology wants to fund the program, but they want a little bit more. Continues with presentation – Element H. Element I (i).

Lauren Driscoll – Element I (i) is separate from Element I(ii) – need to have both.

Kelly McLain – Stevens has a plan that talks about how they will establish that during implementation. Participation will be based on the first year analysis done. In I(i) you need to establish how you will get the participation you need to meet the goals and benchmarks of the work plan.

Walt Edelen – there will be annual effectiveness monitoring. Edge of field monitoring. Adaptive management – same as Whitman plan. Assisting state agencies with monitoring. We will coordinate with everybody. We have long term staff.

Lauren Driscoll – it would be helpful to add a sentence that talks about satisfying other reporting requirements.

Kelly McLain – Add to end of Section 7.5.

Walt Edelen – looking forward to implementation of the work plan. Completes presentation.

Lauren Driscoll – asks about Table 4.3. Performance indicator – changes to net intersection of critical aquifer recharge areas – could look at county groundwater data for increases in contaminants associated with agriculture. The area of the critical aquifer recharge area won’t change, but it will be changes to that.

Kelly McLain – DOH sentry database and the county health department – a change in contaminants tied to agriculture. To see a change there would show that the practices applied on the landscape might not be happening where they need to be.

Lindsay Chutas – critical aquifer recharge areas will be covered by the CAO.

Kelly McLain – if critical aquifer recharge areas are being treated by the county regs and not VSP, you’ll want to say that in the plan. If the CAO covers the critical aquifer recharge areas, then make sure that is explicit in the plan.
[General discussion about farm inputs and soil testing examples]

If going to use the regulatory backstop of the CAO for critical aquifer recharge areas taken critical aquifer recharge areas out of the plan.

Lauren Driscoll – Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 – mapping on the critical aquifer recharge areas – typo. Also, Table 4.6, first benchmark – aerial mapping and fish and wildlife conservation areas – net loss of vegetative cover, maybe?

Kelly McLain – you’ve heard most of my comments – tribal engagement process – more detail. More detail about participation goals during the first year or two, once implementation starts. Also, tell us how the work group participants were the right group of people to be on the work group – a good representative group for Spokane County.

Lauren Driscoll agrees.

Kelly McLain – would like to see the GIS process detailed in 7.2 or an appendix. Also, the critical area recharge area comments we’ve already provided. Changes in the 303(d) list and if there is a cross-walk there – include that.

Keith Folkerts – eagles de-listed – make sure those are not listed in the plan. Appendix F, page 10. Standards for aerial imagery. How to figure out omission and commission rates, if no standards. We have a standard for HRCD, if could meet or exceed that, great, if not, describe the standard. Standard disclaimer – if non-VSP funds used, don’t use those toward your enhancement. Ecology – Hangman Creek settlement shouldn’t affect that.

Lauren Driscoll – Section 2, creating an off-set development fund to protect farmland conversions – fabulous idea.

Bill Eller says that on November 2, 2018 – written Technical Panel comments due. Will be sent out to the work group.

Technical Panel agrees to cancel the November 9th meeting and reset to November 30th, same time, same location.
10:20 am: Adjourn