Voluntary Stewardship Program
Joint Technical Panel & Statewide Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 10, 2019
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Facilitator – Bill Eller, VSP Coordinator, WSCC

Attendees in Lacey: Lauren Driscoll, Keith Folkerts, Mary Huff, Scott Kuhta, Jon Incaninich, Charissa Waters, Ron Shultz, Kelly McLain, Neil Aaland, Lisa Grueter, John Stuhlmiller, Brian Cochrane, Alicia McClendon, Commissioner Wes McCart, Commissioner Ron Wesen

Webinar: Commissioner Ron Wesen, Scott Kuhta; Barbara Adkins; Mike Cushman; Britt Dudek; Renee Hadley; Natalie Osowski; Hannah Pygott; Graham Simon; Jennifer Zipse; Meagan Bailey; Elsa Bowen; Tom English; Andy Huddleston; Mike Kaputa; Valerie Vissia; Anthony Waldrop; Steven Woodley; Brandon Roozen, Lisa Grueter, John Stuhlmiller, Charissa Waters

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

9:05 am: VSP Program update (if any) – Bill Eller, Ron Shultz, WSCC

9:10 am: SAC VSP update and issues
  ▪ Ron Shultz status
  Ron Shultz was present and gave an update on the status of the VSP budget request for FY 19-21. He indicated that it appears that we’ll have the same level of funding as in prior years (i.e. approximately $220,000 per county, for the biennia). The $1.5M request to assist six non-VSP counties with their “VSP-like” programs was not funded. The final budget figures come out later this month.

  ▪ VSP & New Agriculture – guidance document
  Bill Eller presented this topic. Explained how the Commission and the TP and SAC have been looking at this topic and the Policy Advisory #04-19 for the past 18 months. At the last Joint SAC/Technical Panel meeting it was decided to try to resolve this issue at this meeting.

The members hold a general discuss about the definition of agricultural activities under the VSP statute and moving forward with the Policy Advisory. After further discussion and debate, the SAC and Technical Panel members agree to release the
Policy Advisory #04-19 with after removing the reference to new, existing, or old agriculture and to add an additions bullet point to encourage a discussion at the county level with the VSP local work group and other relevant stakeholders in considering a conversion from non-agricultural use to agricultural use.

Motion made to approve Policy Advisory #04-19 by John Stuhlmiller, seconded by Kelly McLain. Unanimous approval.

- VSP & 2 year / 5 year reports – draft WAC chapter – status
  Bill Eller presents and update on this topic. He explains that Policy Advisory #05-18 is the only writing that the Commission currently has that addresses this topic, other than statutory requirements. Explains that we have a draft WAC chapter that is being reviewed internally by the Commission, but isn’t ready for release yet and there is no timeline for when it might be ready.

- SB 5259
  This bill didn’t make it out of committee, so it was not discussed.

- Next joint meeting
  - Wednesday, May 29 (proposed)
  Bill Eller brought up the proposed next meeting date. The Technical Panel and Statewide Advisory Committee agreed that Wednesday, May 29, from 9 am – 12 noon would work best, and that would allow Thurston County time to make their presentation on what they have so far for their 2 year and 5 year report.

9:40 am: Presentation by Chelan County on their 2 year and 5 year reporting – Neil Aaland, Lisa Grueter

Lisa Grueter begins the presentation. Neil Aaland and Britt Dudek also provide opening comments. Chelan County has two questions or issues for the Technical Panel. The first is what is the threshold for change? The second is there is uneven availability of basin-wide information – no comprehensive database.

Technical Panel members want to know what the variability is around sampling, as a significant amount would establish the minimum.
Loren Driscoll points out that what Chelan County is asking is, at what point do you act on change? If it is significant at the watershed scale, then is that when adaptive management must occur?

A general discussion takes place about riparian areas, how wide they are, and what the standard of change detection is.

Ron Shultz points out that the real question is if you are meeting your goals and objectives in the work plan?

John Stuhlmiller says the question is what is going on and what is agriculture’s role in it? Is it helping or not helping? Are you meeting your goals?

Keith Folkerts says WDFW has some better information coming and, and they can get that to WDFW.

John Stuhlmiller points out that the VSP system hasn’t yet had an opportunity to succeed or fail yet. We are monitoring and the 2 year report and this early 5 year report is a chance to check-in.

Commissioner McCart points out that adaptive management is really just fine-tuning the plan.

Commissioner Wesen asks if there is something to look at or not look at yet?

Mary Huff says the report is a public document and these issues could be put in it.

Keith Folkerts says that a net gain in the riparian area should be explained in the report. A definition should be provided. Need to explain the quality of that area, not so much as the area of riparian area.

Those present have a general discussion of cover in riparian areas.

Britt Dudek says the Chelan report will have a description of the challenges faced, the plan framework, and a report on changing technology.

The members of the SAC and Technical Panel explain that the first 5 year report is unique since a full five years has not passed before the review and evaluation requirement in the statute. That should be noted in the reports.
Members affirm that if they have any further comments, they will provide those to Chelan County and that Chelan County should submit their report to the Commission before their July due date.

Bill Eller explains that the submittal to the Commission of the 2 year and 5 year report would be similar to how the VSP work plans were previously submitted by the counties.

Thurston County agrees to present what they have so far related to their 2 year and 5 year reports at the next meeting in May 29th from 9 am – 12 pm.