Voluntary Stewardship Program
Joint Statewide Advisory Committee & Technical Panel
In-Person Meeting
Wednesday, February 1, 2017
9:00am – 4:00pm

Facilitator – Bill Eller, VSP Coordinator, WSCC

JOINT STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND TECHNICAL PANEL MEETING

Attendees in Lacey:  Brian Cochrane, WSCC; Lauren Driscoll, ECY; John Small, Anchor QEA; Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA; Kelly McLain, WSDA; Barbara Adkins; Jerry Willis; Sarah Sandstrom; Tess Brandon; Kelly Rupp; John Stuhlmiller (SAC); Commissioner Wes McCart, Stevens County (SAC); Matt Muller, WDFW; Brandon Roozen (SAC); Allen Rashaw; Alicia McClendon, WSCC; Ron Shultz, WSCC; Mike Nordin, GHCD/PCD; Megan Martin-Aust, PCD; Tim Crose, Pacific County; John Kliem, GH/Lewis County; Marcus Reaves, WDFW.

Webinar:  John Small; Kristine Nevitt; Megan Martin Aust; Todd Kimball; Kara Symonds; Joanna Cowles; Nora Schlenker; Eric Johnson; Meagan Bailey; Andy Dunau; Eric Pentico; Megan Stewart; Angie Freeman Shephard; Don Brigham; Kim Lyonnais; Kevin Scribner; Lauren Driscoll; Angie Hubbard; Charissa Waters; Mark Nielson; Michelle Cooke; Lynn Deitrick; Marie Lotz; Harold Crose; Duane Bartels; Graham Simon; Michael See; Vivian Erickson; Brian Cochrane

9:10 am:  VSP Program Status – Bill Eller / Ron Shultz
- Regional meeting review – reviewed the presentations presented.
- Thurston / Chelan formal TP review upcoming - coming next month.
- Other issues

Ron Shultz - VSP budget - VSP may be Ok funding wise. Counties can talk about VSP funding and the implications of that. Ron Shultz has a flow chart he presented on how funding for planning and funding for implementation works. Where funding will come from – Commission for staffing the infrastructure to get the funding from local, state, and federal voluntary incentive programs.

Commissioner McCart - work group decides how the $ will be spent?

Ron Shultz – the county will decide, based on the work plan developed by the work group.

Ron Shultz – question about the legal status of the county work groups. The Commission’s position is that for purposes of the OPMA, yes, the work groups are subject to it. Further analysis discuss the advisory nature of the work group versus a decision making group. We consider the work groups a decision making group and therefore they are subject to OPMA. Work plans have consequences to the county, so they are subject to the OPMA and would be considered a “public agency.” So, what would be the status of the work group after the work plan is approved? A different question that we are investigating and discussing.
the county re-configure the work group after plan approval? Who’s role is it to prepare the 5 year report? Can the county change the membership on the work groups?

Ron Shultz - Commerce is updating their critical areas ordinance handbook on VSP – what is the relationship between CAO and VSP – that will be there. 3 hour meeting on Monday.

Kelly McLain – lots of input at that meeting about how the non-VSP county planners needed basic VSP information because VSP is so different from CAO. Update out by June, draft out in March.

Ron Shultz – an issue came up at the regional meetings – Ecology’s Process for Process for BMP development for non-point source pollution. Required under CWA. Ecology is working on a process to develop the process to develop BMP’s. Feb 24th comment period ends.

9:30 am:  Continuation of Consultant work plan template document presentation from January 4 – Anchor QEA – Ben Floyd, John Small.  
John Small handles the presentation. Presentation based off of Grant County’s work plan – the goals, benchmarks and adaptive management. Anchor QEA is working with Whitman, Lincoln, Grant, Franklin, Adams (Douglas – providing support for). John presents the presentation – details in the presentation.

Ben Floyd asks about the benchmarks being county-wide – what the TP thinks of that.

Ron Shultz - County-wide but regional – sub-basins. Every 5 years must report on the benchmarks. Countywide might be too big of a bite – sub-basins might work better.

Kelly McLain says to know the landscape – put in context. Tracking is important. Need to be able to roll the data up to the county level. Certainly not a parcel by parcel analysis, but could be unique to each county. Discussion about irrigation efficiencies and wetlands – don’t have to provide for artificial wetlands – not a CA.

John Small says identifying that in the baseline is incredibly important. Commissioner McCart says the RCW says watershed level is the level of analysis, not sub-basin.

Ron Shultz says don’t have to do sub-basin, but using some sizeable chunk so that it can be reported.

Commissioner McCart says, how does the watershed level translate back to the county.

John Small says the RCW doesn’t use WRIA. Watershed was more of a common name for the unit of measure.

Ben Floyd says the VSP statute has flexibility in it.

Brian Cochrane says can use other units of measurement – those that go together might be relevant.
Kelly McLain says Lincoln County is using that and is a good example of that. Berk Consulting – created wetlands issue – only intentionally created wetlands are artificial. Unofficial are regulated.

Lauren Driscoll – if the wetland is induced by irrigation and if irrigation efficiencies are done, don’ need to provide for that. If going to fill in an artificial wetland, then will need to mitigate for that.

Ben Floyd – if going to work in the wetland buffer, how about that? If the wetland is a wetland during VSP, then it is considered a CA. If the wetland is artificial and otherwise comes out, then won’t be.

Brian Cochrane – are all the critical areas tied to the conservation practices?

Ben Floyd – yes.

Brian Cochrane – says be careful that there is a connection between agriculture and the environment – make sure and provide for that. Climate change will affect agriculture.

John Small says we are looking at both.

Kelly McLain says stream temperature may not be the direct affect of agriculture.

Ben Floyd says that the work plan will be adequate but also something that can be bought for $270k for the fiscal years.

Kelly McLain says will the work plan identify those practices that will be implemented, but won’t achieve you goal in five years?

John Small says yes, we will track those. Indicators will be useful, but a 5 or 10 year scale may cause delay in practice implementation.

John Small says that is why surrogates for practices must be chosen.

Ben Floyd agrees and says the CPPE scoring will show that.

Kelly McLain says the science behind NRCS’s CPPE scoring shows how the scoring system was developed. The technical service provider would evaluate that.

Ben Floyd asks how much documentation does the TP need of the science behind CPPE in the work plan.

Brian Cochrane says someone five years from now many not have the understanding that the TP has now, so you need to provide for that in the work plan.

Kelly McLain says the work plan needs to be different for a work plan that the technical provider uses to interact with farmers versus the complete plan with a technical appendix.
John Small says not every practice is in CPPE. Kelly McLain says some counties work with NRCS more than others – CPPE may not work for all counties.

Ben Floyd says that some mapping and other data collection efforts may be mostly listed in the appendix of the work plan.

10:30 am:  **Break**

10:45 am:  Continuation of Consultant work plan template document presentation – Anchor QEA
Continued presentation by John Small. General discussion on adaptive management in VSP. VSP reporting and monitoring is different than GMA monitoring and reporting. Lots of interaction and discussion between the presenters and the Technical Panel members.

12:00 pm:  **Lunch (on own)**

1:00 pm:  VSP and Shorelines document review – Zach Meyer  
Zach Meyer is not available today. Bill Eller presents this topic. The document was updated with the changes mentioned at the November meeting. Any further comment, or else this will be finalized and released.

1:30 pm:  VSP TP & SAC Decision-making Framework document – Bill Eller  
Public comment period. Ron Shultz talks about it. Could catch lack of public participation.

John Stuhlmiller says should be statewide process on local plan – work plan process already has public comment process. Comment on plans. Mistake for Technical Panel to take public comment – can’t limit the comments to locals or county only.

Ron Shultz – hypothetical of if a work group doesn’t hold meetings, how can we capture that if they don’t mention it?

John Stuhlmiller says the Technical Panel would know based on its own knowledge.

Brian Cochrane says what does the TP do with that information (that the public input process was deficient)?

John Stuhlmiller says each TP member could poll or otherwise ask their own staff.

1:45 pm:  Pacific County informal presentation to the Technical Panel – Pacific County – Kelly Rupp  
Kelly Rupp and Pacific County personnel present their draft work plan to the TP.

Lauren Driscoll asks about completion of Individual Stewardship Plan (ISP).

Sarah Sandstrom - Completion of the ISP will be recorded by the work group for trend recording purposes. Need to maintain linkages between the benchmarks, goals and monitoring.
Ron Shultz – Pacific’s plan seems water-quality heavy. Goal of the TP is to meet that, within 10 years, are you meeting the goals of the work plan. Function and values of the critical areas is what Pacific’s plan is focusing on, not just the five critical areas.

Mike Nordin says agricultural forces in Pacific County make not focusing on water quantity and quality difficult.

John Stuhlmiller says Pacific County’s plan presentation didn’t focus on Ag Viability – make sure it is addressed.

We think we will properly address Ag Viability in the work plan.

Mike Nordin says the goals for VSP success are high because the Ag community in Pacific County is so small – most of the producers are already working with them.

Lauren Driscoll asks about the benchmark and scoring.

There are 13 different benchmarks. A negative trend (significantly lower than zero for the index score) would result in adaptive management. Does the index score idea and multiple performance matrix resonate with the TP? Yes.

Sarah Sandstrom - Pacific County isn’t using as much NRCS practices due to our unique Agriculture in the county.

Brian Cochrane says the validation of the effect the science has on the CA needs to be evaluated so you know if your benchmarks are effective.

Brian Cochrane says the monitoring needs to be focused on what Ag is doing that might affect the CA, not what is affecting the CA.

Sarah Sandstrom – Amy Windrope presented last week on monitoring – the fence-iness of the fence. We look at the ISP measure to tell us if the ISP is working.

Brian Cochrane says the “why” of the benchmark is important.

Kelly McLain says Pacific County is unique because every Ag producer is connected to a wild area.

Ron Shultz says the indicator must be related to the CA, or there must be some connection to the CA.

General discussion about 2011 baseline and how VSP can’t require more protection than that.

Sarah Sandstrom – adaptive management steps are described at a programmatic level, rather than specific. Is that OK?
Brian Cochrane – monitoring needs a threshold and what you are trying to accomplish.

Sarah Sandstrom – we have the threshold at the benchmark scale, but if you don’t meet the threshold, then we will trigger the adaptive management at the programmatic level.

Brian Cochrane says to tie the threshold to the adaptive management action.

Sarah Sandstrom – no adaptive management threshold for indicators – can’t fail because of those.

Brian Cochrane says will CA’s be protected – that is the question the TP must answer. Conflicting questions – protecting CA’s and then having specific benchmarks tied to adaptive management triggers.

Lauren Driscoll says performance measures – looked at every 2 years to see if they are maintained?

Yes.

General discussion on fencing hypothetical and how it relates to the performance metrics. Pacific County thinks they will have a full plan done by May 2017.

2:30 pm: Break

3:45 pm: Thurston/Chelan Formal TP review scheduling; future meeting topics & actions; next meeting

Ron Shultz – update on SAC membership – enviros want to participate, but have not yet. Ron Shultz will contact Gov’s office. For County position – there are two names under consideration. Should have a choice and on board at the next meeting. Doodle poll for TP and SAC members – when they can meet next.

4:00 pm: Adjourn