 **Voluntary Stewardship Program**

**Watershed Group Meeting**

**Armory, Kittitas Valley Event Center, 901 E 7th Ave, Ellensburg and Virtually through Zoom**

**10:00 AM Friday, March 26, 2021**

**Meeting Minutes**

**In-Person Attendees:** *Anna Lael, Brent Dixon, Mark Charlton, Karen Poulsen, Bambi Miller, Mark Moore, and Kevin Eslinger*

**Zoom Meeting (Mtg ID: 965 3987 0355) Attendees:** *Chelsea Benner, Bill Eller, Elizabeth Torrey, Erin* Eaton, John Marvin, Kat Satnik, Kevin Haydon, Mark Crowley, and Mitch Long

1. **Welcome –** Anna welcomed the attendees to the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Watershed Group Meeting.
   1. Introductions and a review of the meeting agenda were completed.
   2. Review of the November 6, 2020 meeting minutes was completed and there were no comments.
2. **Review VSP Grant Status**
   1. **Current Grant Status (Ends 6/30/2021):** Anna reviewed the budget.
   2. **Equipment Purchases:** Anna requested a 24” Plotter, docking station, keyboard and mouse for the VSP laptop to help assist with VSP. Watershed Group agreed to purchases.
3. **Financial Assistance:** 
   1. Anna shared and reviewed each funding source currently available to producers. This includes EQIP applications heading to contract now and the open application period for Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). The CSP signup is both through the RCPP project and through the NRCS Field Office.
   2. Anna reported on the habitat improvement projects using VSP Funding Assistance. Two projects have been completed and three more are in the planning stages.
4. **Reporting Requirements:**
   1. Anna reviewed the process from since the 5 Year Status Report was submitted on Nov 17th, 2020. She also reviewed the State Tech Panel membership and the recommendations from each on the 5 Year report:

Conservation Commission – partially agree

WDFW – disagree

Ecology – partially agree

Agriculture – partially agree

* 1. Anna reviewed the State Technical Panel Comments on the 5-Year Status Report. The Anna went through some of the concerns and how to help “connect the dots” for the Tech Panel members. She gave examples of additional information and clarifications to help them understand the direct vs indirect impacts and the management vs structural practices reported.
  2. Watershed Group members expressed concerned regarding changes in membership on the State Tech Panel and that some have not been to the area to understand what is going on the ground nor have they read the VSP plan.

They also expressed concern about potential litigation due to the negative comments from the State Tech Panel. It was also questioned whether local WDFW field staff are communicating with the State Tech Panel and vice versa.

* 1. Anna provided suggestions for additional work including utilizing a consultant to assist with data monitoring design if needed, updating the online map to include more practices, and updating the VSP webpage to better “tell the story”.

1. **Action Register**
   1. Follow Up:
      1. Anna will draft a letter with the additional information and clarifications discussion to Carol Smith.
      2. Anna will work with County on new interlocal agreement for next Biennium.
   2. Next meeting is TBD. Mark Charlton highly encourages the group to meet again in April and to meet with some of the Tech panel if they have time. Kevin concurred suggesting a meeting with WDFW and Carol Smith quickly. There was a question about who Mary Huff’s supervisor is and Bill Eller offered to find out. There was also a suggestion to contact legislators regarding VSP and how this 5 year process is going.
2. **Adjourn**