



Kittitas County Conservation District

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Voluntary Stewardship Program

Watershed Group Meeting

KCCD Conference Room, 2211 W Dolarway Road, Ellensburg, and Virtually through Zoom
10:00 AM Friday, July 21, 2023

Meeting Minutes

In-Person Attendees: Jamey Ayling, Jen Nelson, Brent Dixon, and Anna Lael.

Zoom Meeting Attendees: John Marvin, Erin Eaton, Ethan Lockwood, Mark Charlton, and Kevin Eslinger

I. Welcome

Anna welcomed the attendees to the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Watershed Group Meeting and introductions were completed.

II. Review Meeting Minutes

February 17, 2023, minutes were reviewed and there were no comments or concerns. Anna will send it out to give the group a few days to review.

III. Watershed Group Membership

Nothing has changed, we still don't have a dryland representative. Reviewing who is on the list and may need to update folks who haven't been to meetings in a while.

IV. WSCC Contract VSP for Fiscal Years 2024 – 2025 (July 2023 to June 2025): just finish a biennium.

a. Kittitas County Contract: *Anna updated who is the new CDS point of contact and went over the new contract and budget. The budget has been bumped up to \$240,000.*

b. Kittitas County – KCCD Interlocal Agreement: *Watershed group approved.*

V. Statewide Advisory Committee (SAC) and Technical Panel (TP) May Meeting Debrief

a. *Anna updated the group on how the tech panel meeting went. One outcome that came out is we can count practices that happen on public land if the producer is leasing the ground and applying practices. Ex is the producer is doing planting along stream or grazing practices.*

b. *The tour was great.*

VI. Financial Assistance

Anna shared and reviewed each funding source available to producers.

a. Cost Share Opportunities

i. *NRCS held its sign-up for the EQIP WaterSMART still available under the KRD ground. It was a 5-year ask, and just finished year 2 and will have 3 more years.*

If producers are interested should sign up now, and not wait for the next sign-up. Money will not be able to roll over the next year if it hasn't been spent.

ii. KCCD is holding the first sign-up for the Middle Columbia Steelhead Partnership RCPP. The first sign up completed. Six applications for \$1.5 million.

1. Hopefully will have a fall sign-up in 2023.

b. *Conservation Commission Salmon Recovery Funding – The \$10 million allocated for riparian planting work ends on June 30. Able to reappropriate, there was 3.5 million from FY23*

i. May have a couple of projects that we can apply.

ii. Swauk Creek

iii. Conservation Commission salmon recovery funding – 25 million – guidelines in development.

c. *Currently funded projects are still underway with the Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group.*

d. *Sustainable Farms and Fields – Funding for FY24 is now available. Still working through previously talked about items.*

i. Funding for cover crops:

ii. Renting out GPS unit for auto-steer.

iii. No-Till Drill.

e. *Mid-Columbia Steelhead RCPP*

f. *NRCS RCPP Solicitation: New proposal due August 17.*

g. *Irrigation Efficiencies Program – New guidelines out for review.*

h. *VSP Funding Assistance: Anna is asking the group to approve the following projects to allow for applications and use for supplement funding. The VSP Watershed group approved.*

i. *Maintaining current planting and putting in the following projects in case she needs to apply for capital funding with VSP. If anyone comes across VSP-related projects that need help funding, let KCCD know.*

i. VSP contract funding

ii. Cost share or DIP

iii. Planting project maintenance

j. *VSP Capital funding potential projects*

i. Cooke Creek RM 4.25 – Fish screen and passage

- ii. *Naneum Creek RM 2.9 and 3.37 – Fish screen and passage. The 2 lowest barriers on the creek.*

VII. Monitoring

- a. *Equipment and supply purchases: Roughly \$20,000 total.*
 - i. *Pit tags arrays for Yakima nation: mostly batteries*
 - ii. *Kittitas County Water Purveyors – Surface water and groundwater monitoring.*
 - iii. *KCCD: stream flow monitoring, drone, GPS.*
- b. *Monitoring Plan Requirement (Due July 1, 2024)*
 - i. *Anna talked about the monitoring plan and guidelines. Other conservation districts are pushing back on it.*

VIII. Two-Year Report (Due August 30, 2023)

- a. *Anna reviewed the updated goals and benchmarks and the changes made (e.g structural vs management). See attached. The same format will be used as the last 2-year report and will be sent out for review and comment – on August 15th 2023. Ann is asking for approval contingent on the approval period The VSP Watershed group approved.*

IX. Round Table:

- a. **Drought Declaration:** The drought committee recommends the declaration to the Governor. Waiting on the Governor for approval
- b. Jen hosted a Naneum/Wilson Creek divide to help resolve the issue with a large group of folks. Potential for VSP funds.
- c. KCCD hasn't filled the engineer but has a new agreement with Snohomish cd
- d. Charlton – spring develops assessment for elk to relieve pressure lower on damage on landowner crop ground.
- e. KR D has elk fencing going in. Drought wells will potentially be used if declared.

X. Action Register

- a. *Anna will email for review of 2-year report.*
- b. *Next meeting scheduled – October 27th.*
- c. *Anna will send last meeting minutes out for review.*

XI. Adjourn 11:15 AM

Z Participants (7)

BD Brent Dixon (Me)

 Anna Lael (Host)

EE Erin Eaton - TU

EL Ethan Lockwood - WWT

JM John Marvin

KE Kevin Eslinger / KRD

MC Mark Charlton