



Kittitas County Conservation District

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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 4, 2022

Meeting Minutes

In-Person Attendees: *Anna Lael, Sherry Swanson, Mark Crowley, Terry Clarke (KC Cattlemen), Mark Charlton (KC Farm Bureau), Karen Poulsen (Producer), Leslie Michaels (WSDA), Mark Moore (KCCD Board Chair), Jack Clerf (Cascade Irrigation District), Bambi Miller (Small Acreage/Organic), Jennifer Nelson (WDFW), Zack Mays, Bill Bosch and Andrew Matala (Yakama Nation).*

Zoom Meeting (Mtg ID: 881 4629 4241) Attendees: *John Marvin and Shuba Pandit (Yakama Nation), Kat Satnik (KCWP), Urban Eberhart and Kevin Eslinger (KRD), Brent Dixon and Wendy Mee (KCCD), Bill Eller (WSCC), Brian Cortese (Kittitas County Hay Gowers's Association), Matt Eslinger (KCCD Board Member) and Sean Gross (NOAA NMFS).*

[Meeting PowerPoint available here.](#)

I. Welcome

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

II. Review Meeting Minutes

The January 14, 2022 minutes were reviewed and there were no comments or concerns.

III. Watershed Group Membership

Anna reviewed the current members of the Watershed Group. She sent out membership renewal letters and has received membership confirmation. The list includes at least a couple of individuals who are no longer participating. Lila Hanson is no longer representing Dryland operators and has asked that it be conveyed that she still believes dryland (crop or pasture) needs representation. Kevin Haydon no longer works for the Washington Water Trust and has been replaced by Ethan Lockwood. Orchards haven't been represented in the Watershed Group. Anna said she would keep looking into members to fill the various positions.

IV. Financial Assistance

Anna shared and reviewed each funding source available to producers.

- a. **Cost Share Opportunities** – *Anna reported that NRCS held its first sign up for the EQIP WaterSMART initiative which is for KRD irrigated lands. NRCS has \$400,000 in applications with \$1,000,000 being allocated for the first year so NRCS might have another sign up. NRCS made changes in their cost share rate just prior to the sign up, reducing cost share on sprinklers from 75% to 50%. The cost share rate reduction and*

economy has caused producers to defer or cancel their applications. Anna is working with the NRCS State Advisory Committee and NRCS State Conservationist, Roylene Comes at Night. Jen Nelson asked if the remaining WaterSMART funds would be rolled over into next year. Anna said that she was not sure.

The new RCPP grant is still pending as the partnership agreement between NRCS and the Yakama Nation is delayed while NRCS figures out how to get funds to “water management entities”.

Anna is also looking into PL 566 funding through NRCS as it has been recently funded through latest Infrastructure Bill. This funding is for public infrastructure projects, awarded up to \$25 million. Anna has a meeting with NRCS to learn more about the program this coming Monday. Grant Conservation District has submitted an application for work on the Odessa Aquifer.

- b. Construction – Anna reported that the other category of projects with producers include those where KCCD does the construction. The Fish Barrier Removal Board grants were due yesterday and KCCD applied for two projects, one on Naneum Creek and one on Coleman Creek. The Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant cycle is coming up. KCCD has no current plans to submit, but other entities working on private lands may.*
- c. VSP Funding Assistance – KCCD continues to provide assistance to landowners working to complete planting projects.*

V. Debrief of Technical Panel and State Advisory Committee Meeting

- a. Anna discussed the meeting held on February 10th. One topic discussed was the concern with monitoring wetlands. A recent re-mapping was completed by the County which increased wetlands by over 37,000 acres from 2016 to 2022. Anna plans to have staff from WA State Conservation Commission (WSCC) and Department Ecology to come out and help review wetlands in our County. Bambi Miller asked how are the wetlands determined? Jen Nelson said that the County uses the National Wetland Inventory and the mapping is completed by models.*

VI. Monitoring Activities

- a. Fish Population Monitoring Activities – Anna introduced Zack Mays of the Yakama Nation and Sean Gross of National Marine Fisheries Service. Zack and Sean gave presentations on fish populations and monitoring activities in the Yakima Basin. Their presentations can be found here: <https://www.kccd.net/kittitas-county-watershed-group>. Zack also had Bill Bosh and Andrew Matala with the Yakama Nation attend the meeting and help answer any questions and provide additional information.*

VII. Issues for Discussion

- a. Drought Monitoring – Anna reported that KCCD is monitoring drought conditions and showed a SNOTEL Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) percent of average map. As of March 3rd, the Upper Yakima Basin is at 86% of normal SWE. KCCD received drought funding from the WSCC for the 2021 drought to assist with KRD’s stream supplementation program which runs through June 2022.*

- b. Follow up on Water Quality Monitoring for 2022 – *Anna has been working with Kat at the Kittitas County Water Purveyors (KCWP) on additional water quality monitoring. To better understand sources of sediment in Wilson Creek, it is suggested that two additional turbidity monitors with loggers be installed in Cherry Creek and the Wipple Wasteway. The KCWP have the two monitors but need two loggers. Anna asked the Watershed Group if they were ok with using VSP funds to purchase the two loggers, estimated at \$6,500. The Group had no concerns. Anna will need to have KCCD Board and WSCC approval for the purchase as well and will work to obtain those approvals.*

VIII. Review Goals and Benchmarks and Adaptive Management Needs

- a. *Anna reviewed the Watershed Plan’s 2025 goals and benchmarks and showed that we are meeting or exceeding most of the practice implementation goals. She suggested that the goals and benchmarks need to be updated and better described (e.g. structural vs Anna will work on updating numbers and report back to the Group.*

IX. Action Register

- a. *Anna will work on updating goal and benchmark numbers.*
- b. *Anna will continue working with KCWP on purchasing turbidity loggers.*
- c. *Anna will work on having WSCC, Ecology and WSDA staff out to look at wetland monitoring.*
- d. *Anna will look into having Fisheries habitat staff come to one of our next meetings.*
- e. *Next meeting is planned for July. Anna will send out details closer to July.*

X. Adjourn 12:20PM