



## Kittitas County Conservation District

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### Voluntary Stewardship Program

## Watershed Group Meeting

Heritage Center at Kittitas County Event Center, 901 E 7<sup>th</sup> Ave, Ellensburg  
1:00 PM Wednesday, July 19, 2017

## Meeting Minutes

**Attendees:** *Anna Lael, Jim Huckabay, Mitch Long, Kevin Eslinger, Mark Charlton, Jennifer Nelson, John Marvin, Sherry Swanson, Lance Downing, Rose Shriner, Bambi Miller, Mark Crowley, Arden Thomas, Jeff Brunson, Karen Poulsen, Chelsea Benner, Karen Hodges, Jack Clerf, Terry Clark, Heather Kosaka, Lila Hanson, John Small*

- I. **Welcome** – Jim Huckabay, VSP Facilitator, welcomed the attendees to the meeting of the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Watershed Group.
  - a. Introductions were completed.
  - b. Anna reviewed the agenda and meeting objectives. There will be a guest speaker, John Small of Anchor QEA, who has been a consultant for other counties working on VSP.
  - c. Plans have been completed and approved for Grant and Chelan and submitted for Whitman County.
- II. **Membership, Participation Agreements and Roles**
  - a. VSP Membership
    - i. Anna reviewed the Watershed Group membership and reported that Jill Scheffer has taken a position with the County therefore Forterra will not be participating in the Watershed Group.
    - ii. On the technical committee, Chelsea Benner will be representing the County and Heather Kosaka has taken the VSP coordinator position with the Department of Ecology.
  - b. Review of Past Meeting Minutes
    - i. The Group reviewed the 3/14/17 watershed group meeting minutes and the 3/29 technical committee minutes. Minutes were accepted as presented.
  - c. Outreach Update

- i. The KCCD website is not currently up to date, but will be shortly as Anna is working on it.
- ii. The KCCD newsletter went out this month and included information on VSP. It was mailed to residents at all rural routes in the County.

**III. Guest Speaker John Small, Anchor QEA**

- a. John provided an update on Work Plans from other Counties. Thurston, Chelan, Skagit and Grant Counties have been approved. The State Technical Review Panel is reviewing Whitman and Pacific Counties.
- b. Anchor QEA is currently working with Lincoln, Adams and Franklin Counties on their VSP Work Plans.
- c. John reviewed what the State Technical Panel is looking for from the VSP RCW 36.70A.720:
  - i. How the watershed group was formed
  - ii. Clear and concise benchmarks
  - iii. How the Work Plan will be implemented
- d. Grant County had an idea of what could be implemented in the future years so were specific with their benchmarks, where Whitman County took a more general and conservative approach to benchmarks.
- e. John reviewed the Work Plan contents.
  - i. They have used the Rapid Watershed Assessment (RWA) for protection and enhancement goals, benchmarks and adaptive management. John suggested listing goals generally but need to be able to hit benchmarks.
- f. John discussed implementation of the Work Plan and the different approaches Counties are taking. John noted being careful with information in the Plans as related to Public Disclosure implications. It is important to determine what information the group wants to collect and what will be publicly disclosed. The group discussed further, with Anna mentioning that Farm Plans are protected from public disclosure requests. Kevin asked if the VSP data set will be open to the public and John responded, yes.

BREAK

- g. The group returned from break, with Mark Charlton asking John about questions the State Technical Review Panels has when the Plans are presented. John responded that they are looking to see if the Work Plan elements, items A - L, meet criteria. Mark Charlton mentioned the difference between Whitman and Kittitas Counties and asked due to Kittitas's unique nature, would our County face tougher scrutiny from the Review panel. John stated not necessarily and stressed the importance of documenting the County's unique characteristics.

- h. Kevin asked John what the Review Panel thought of the RWA. John said they thought it was great; it identifies specific, accurate targets. Kevin asked about the recent orchard conversions that aren't using KCCD or NRCS programs and how that information is obtained and included in the Plans. Anna said that we are using WSDA crop mapping and additional outreach to the landowners might be needed.
- i. John stated that the "Participation Matrix" is also an important part of the plan.
- j. Lila asked if Plan size matters and John said that the important piece is if the Plan will hold up in court.

**IV. Participants Forum**

- a. The group moved into the participant's forum. Arden said it would be helpful to walk through an actual farm example for each geographic area.

**V. Action Register**

- a. KCCD and County work on putting an agreement together for the new biennium.
- b. Schedule a couple of Technical Committee meeting between now and October to make sure NRCS practices are meeting our goals.
- c. Schedule a producer meeting to review practices the end of September.
- d. Next Watershed Group meeting to be held Wednesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>.

**VI. Adjourn**

- a. The meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM.