



Kittitas County Conservation District

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Voluntary Stewardship Program

Watershed Group Meeting

Hal Holmes Community Center, 209 N Ruby St, Ellensburg
10:00 AM Thursday, January 18, 2018

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: *Anna Lael, John Small, Nora Schlenker, Terry Clark, Brian Cortese, Kevin Eslinger, Jack Clerf, Lila Hanson, Karen Poulsen, Dale Rusho, Bambi Miller, Justin Bezold, John Marvin, Mitch Long, Arden Thomas, Heather Kosaka, Sherry Swanson, Rose Shriner, Karen Hodges, Kat Satnik, Jennifer Nelson, Lindsey Ozbolt, Jeff Brunson and Mark Moore*

- I. **Welcome** – Anna welcomed the attendees to the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Watershed Group Meeting.
 - a. Introductions were completed.
 - b. A review of the meeting agenda was completed.
 - c. Anna reported that there hasn't been any changes to the Watershed Group members.
 - d. Review of the December 18, 2017 meeting minutes will be completed at the end of meeting.
- II. Kittitas County Critical Area Ordinance Update
 - a. Lindsey Ozbolt from the Kittitas County Community Development Services was added to the agenda and provided an update on the County's Critical Area Ordinance (CAO). The CAO update began in 2012 with the Shoreline Master Program. The Technical and Citizen Advisory Committees completed review of the latest draft in 2014. Shorelines was finalized first and approved by the Department of Ecology in February 2016. The CAO update was given an extension to be completed by June 30, 2019. A new consultant has been hired by the County to work on the CAO update. There will be an Advisory Committee meeting on January 24th, which is open to the public, to review the latest red-lined version of the document. There is a CAO page on the County's website as well as a link to be included in the CAO email list-serve. VSP will be included in the CAO update and the next draft will provide more detail. Anna and Nora let

the group know that the November 2014 CAO draft was included in the VSP Plan Appendices.

III. **Anchor QEA Presentation** ([click here for link](#))

- a. John reviewed the goals for the meeting.
 - i. Follow up from the December 18th meeting.
 - ii. Follow up on Comments received on the VSP Plan.
 - 1. Stewardship Practices Description
 - 2. Enhancement Benchmark
 - iii. Updated Critical Areas Maps and Data
 - iv. Next Steps
- b. John gave a recap on the previous Watershed Group meetings in November and December.
 - i. November's meeting looked at the 3 key tools - goals, benchmarks and indicators.
 - ii. December's meeting reviewed the three community areas – Kittitas Valley, Shrub-Steppe upland and Forested upland.
 - iii. At the December meeting, implementation was also discussed.
 - 1. Reviewed that the Watershed Group will continue to oversee VSP implementation once the Work Plan is approved.
 - 2. The Group brainstormed outreach activities.
 - 3. Discussion of the reporting requirements and timeline.
 - 4. Discussed potential budget and how VSP implementation is dependent upon funding.
 - 5. The Group reviewed the self-assessment checklist.
- c. Follow up on comments received
 - i. Section 5 received 16 comments.
 - ii. No comments needed further discussion; responses to the comments are in the comment table.
 - iii. Anna received comments in person about the following:
 - 1. CPPE scores on IWM and Habitat. Kittitas's CPPE was inadvertently based off of Franklin County's CPPE scores. The Franklin Conservation District modified certain practices scoring in there CPPE. Kittitas's CPPE will be changed back to the National scoring. Anna mentioned the only change she would consider to our CPPE scores would be for the Structure for Water Control to ensure the score accounts for the inclusion of fish screens.
 - 2. There was some confusion about what the Stewardship Practice grouping meant and what purpose it served.

3. There was concern that the enhancement goals are not aspirational enough. The goals were based on funding targets over the next 10 years. A note will be added to look for other funding options.
- d. Stewardship Practices Description
 - i. John reviewed the practices main groupings using Water Management as an example and the group of practices including IWM, sprinkler system, micro irrigation. Jen asked for a description of the IWM practice. Anna responded that it involves monitoring equipment that informs producers about soil moisture so they can more efficiently schedule irrigations. Lila asked about Water Management and ag viability. Anna said that ag viability is one of the categories for scoring on the CPPE and Water Management receives a negative score under ag viability due to cost of the system. Mark Moore commented that there is offsetting cost with sprinkler systems vs flood irrigation; production goes up with a sprinkler, but power costs increase. Mark continued, that there is less field inputs, i.e. you don't have to corrugate fields for rill irrigation and that it seems you break even with costs. Jen commented that sprinklers don't always benefit critical areas. Arden commented that CPPE might not score each individual project the same and thinks we should acknowledge which checklists are self-reported, as they might not be as reliable. Anna acknowledged that the checklists might need more detail on reporting. Anna also commented that CPPE scores do take into account different level of benefit on critical area; for example fence vs. fence with riparian buffer. John relayed to the group that there are a lot of exceptions to the rule but overall there is benefit to critical areas. There will be a lot to account for in the VSP reporting and if too specific, the reporting will be expensive and a lot work for KCCD.
 - ii. The next stewardship practice the group reviewed was Nutrient Management. Anna said that this practice creates a fertilization plan based on soil samples.
 - iii. Integrated Pest Management was discussed next. The goal of this practice identifies nuisance pests and focuses management to remedy the problem. Anna stated that this practice more applicable to orchards and vineyards. Jen asked if beavers fall into this category and the response was no they don't.
 - iv. Soil Management was the next stewardship practice discussed. This set of practices might be more focuses on dryland farming with the goal of

increasing soil fertility while minimizing soil loss from wind and water. Example practices include cover crop and mulching.

- v. Range Management was the next set of practices reviewed and includes a broad set of tools to increase range health by reducing impact of livestock. Example practices include range planting, managed grazing, stock watering facility.
 - vi. The next set of practices discussed was Habitat Management. These practices purpose is to protect and enhance upland habitats. Example practices included stream habitat improvement and management, riparian herbaceous cover, riparian forest buffer, tree/shrub establishment, and fencing.
 - vii. Stream enhancement was the last practice reviewed. The intent is to protect or enhance instream habitats such as removing barriers or preventing erosion. The example practices were streambank and shoreline protection, aquatic species passage, and structure for water control (fish screen).
- e. Enhancement Benchmarks
- i. Beyond Enhancement Benchmark
 - 1. The Group discussed enhancement benchmarks and where to set the standard. If there are set too high, this requires time and money to implement; if set too low then there is some guarantee of obtaining the goals. There were comments received that the benchmark is not aspirational enough. The group brainstormed qualitative ideas for enhancement to put in the Plan to increase/add additional enhancement if the County reaches the benchmarks. One example John gave is to use a single enhancement benchmark, but raise the bar every 2 years if they are met and there is funding to support a higher level. Some Group members were in support of adding to the benchmarks later in the process and to see how funding and the process unfolds. Others wanted to “up the ante” with regards to riparian buffers and riparian plantings benchmarks. There were comments about the enhancement benchmarks not telling the story of what potential the County has for enhancing critical areas. John encouraged members to suggest specific language they would like to see regarding enhancement benchmarks. He also stated that the State Tech Panel has been stressing the importance of ag viability with natural resource protection. The Group discussed that farms aren’t raising habitat and any potential programs to

offset cost of habitat practices on farm. Anna mentioned the Commodity Buffers Program that Spokane Conservation District is implementing.

- f. Updated Critical Areas Data and Maps
 - i. Anna told the Group that the updated PHS data came last week from WDFW. The appendix will be amended, noting the recent changes and corrections to the data. There are still some holes in the data, i.e no lamprey or sockeye data. The group discussed discrepancies in the data and how far off the PHS data the Plan should go. The existing PHS data was the data set the Group was encouraged to use. A note will be added in the Plan regarding the inadequacies in the data. The Group reviewed the data tables which included:
 - 1. Agricultural Land Cover in the community areas
 - 2. Stream agricultural intersect in stream miles
 - 3. Wetland ag intersect
 - 4. Fish Habitat ag intersect
 - 5. PHS ag intersect
 - 6. Critical Areas ag intersect
- g. Expected Next Steps
 - 1. Watershed Group review full Work Plan and Appendices
 - a. Comments due January 26th
 - b. New maps and data and updates to Section 3
 - c. Updated CPPE scores using national standards
 - d. Updated Enhancement Benchmarks for rangelands
 - 2. Public Review Period
 - a. February 9th to February 21st
 - 3. Submit the Plan to the Technical Panel March 2nd
 - a. Includes second public review period
 - 4. February Watershed Group Meeting
 - a. Vote to submit Work Plan to the Tech Panel
 - b. Next meeting date, February 15th 10:00 to 1:00 at Hal Holmes.
- h. Previous Meeting Minutes
 - i. There were no comments on the minutes.

IV. Adjourn