

**Spokane County VSP
Work Group Meeting
Minutes
June 21, 2017**

Work Group Members Present: David Boleneus, Brent Burger, Judy Crowder, Casey Flanagan, Doug Greenlund, Robyn Meenach, Ty Meyer, Crystal Oliver, Kevin Paulson

Staff: Seth Flanders, Lindsay Chutas

Facilitator: Andy Dunau

Welcome, Minutes and Announcements: Andy Dunau welcomed participants to the meeting. May minutes were discussed. Doug made a motion to approve and Robyn seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The group agreed to move the monthly VSP meeting date to the third Tuesday of each month starting August 15th. Brent Burger had not arrived at the meeting when this decision was made.

WDFW July HRCO Presentation for eastern Washington

A representative from WDFD will come to Eastern Washington to give a presentation on High Resolution Change Detection (HRCO). This entails combining publicly available satellite imagery with a software package to show watershed changes from one period to another. The question is whether this technology can effectively support the monitoring needs of the VSP work plan. Thus far, Chelan and Thurston counties have chosen to use HRCO as part of their work plan.

The meeting is scheduled for:

Location: Airway Heights Eduris building [changed after meeting to WDFW offices]

Time: Normal workgroup time of 6-8pm

Date: Third Wednesday, 19th of July

Who: VSP workgroup members from eastern Washington, multiple counties attending

Discussion included the following:

- Using HRCO is optional. The presentation with questions and answers is to allow the workgroup to understand HRCO. Subsequent workgroup meetings will be used to determine whether it becomes part of the work plan.
- Some see satellite imagery as beneficial to better understanding watershed progress and challenges.
- Some are concerned that satellite imagery is an invasion of privacy and/or can be used to trigger enforcement actions.
- What, if any, safeguards are available to avoid parcel data being distributed for enforcement, e.g.—MOU with WDFW or only using HRCO at a scale that doesn't show parcel level information.

- How SCD or Lands Council collect data as part of putting a project in, e.g.—documenting work is complete and land owners voluntarily providing access for additional monitoring (e.g.—drone technology or field monitoring).
- SCD commented that collection of data can yield very positive outcomes to validate best practices or predicted outcomes, thus providing additional support for voluntary incentive programs like RCPP and commodity buffers.
- At least one person felt that there are a lot of studies in various areas already being done or complete, and this should be sufficient to meet VSP needs. Others felt that available studies do not provide sufficient watershed scale analysis; the various studies have different protocols and focal points that would be difficult to normalize; and that it could accidentally focus attention on lands and farms that are already being studied, resulting in an additional burden on these landowners compared to those not in a study area.
- SCD expressed long term needs for monitoring data that is repeatable, e.g.—updated GIS mapping or satellite imagery. There is concern about where the resources would come from to repeat studies that are being relied on to establish baseline information.
- There is also concern that some studies focus on the “worst areas,” thus providing an inconclusive or biased view of county wide conditions.

Mapping, Critical Area Intersect and Benchmarks Progress Report:

Lindsay has been meeting with agency staff. She reiterated initial consensus that county staff believe the existing regulatory backstop is sufficient to meet aquifer recharge and frequently flooded critical area needs. The documentation supporting this view will be compiled as part of work plan development.

Initial meetings with WDFW are beginning to identify priority species and areas such as old growth forest, bald eagle nests, shrub step, and corridor maintenance as the focus for benchmarks and goals. Lindsay and Karin will continue to work on this over the summer and then match it up with monitoring alternatives.

The staff recommendation is to complete work on the first three critical areas with the work group. Wetland and geological hazards will then follow.

Beyond monitoring, the other critical item that has to be integrated is how ag viability objectives are supported.

Review of Agricultural Viability Options

The work group continued review of elements of what to include as ag viability objectives. Andy will make edits for further review. See attached for committee track changes and comments.

Additional Business

There was no additional business to review.

Closing and Action Items: Follow-up and action items include:

- Andy will draft and distribute June minutes.
- Andy will distribute updated ag viability objectives document.
- Lindsay will continue meetings to develop benchmarks and refine mapping.
- Staff will follow-up with NRCS to identify CRP acres in Spokane County.
- Andy will follow-up with WDFW on July HRCD presentation.
- Seth will continue summarizing related plans.
- SCD will develop a strategy for a staff person to possibly be an ag viability liaison.
- SCD will begin to research with county opportunities to amend Conservation Futures Funding options and develop an off-set development fund.