

**Spokane County VSP
Work Group Meeting
Minutes
December 13, 2017**

Work Group Members Present: Casey Flanagan, Doug Greenlund, Robyn Meenach, Crystal Oliver, Kevin Paulson

Staff: Walt Edelen, Lindsay Chutas, and Seth Flanders

Facilitator: Andy Dunau

Guest: Scott Kuhta

I. Welcome, Minutes and Announcements: Andy Dunau welcomed participants to the meeting. Review and approval of draft November minutes were deferred due to lack of a quorum.

One change was recognized in the November minutes, “No-till” as a practice may be reworded to “conservation tillage,” thus being more inclusive of methods to reduce soil erosion and runoff.

Stevens County submitted their work plan to the state planning committee. Their plan specifically uses the NRCS Conservation Practices Physical Effects (CPPE) tool to evaluate best practices to meet critical area needs/benchmarks. Agency questions/comments included: how the baseline will be determined and its relationship to individual stewardship plans; provide more detail on how the PHS data will be used for habitat monitoring; how often monitoring data will be collected and reported; better clarity on how other plans and regulations are integrated; clarity on when adaptive management practices will kick in; and clarify what targets are cumulative vs. annual.

Once Stevens County responds to questions and the advisory board determines acceptance, the workgroup will integrate lessons learned into the Spokane plan.

II. Update on aerial imagery monitoring

Spokane County has “stitched” together what’s needed for Lindsay to do proof of concept for aerial monitoring.

III. Review of Geologic Hazards, Frequently Flooded Areas and Critical Aquifer Recharge Matrixes

Each matrix was reviewed, and changes were suggested. Andy will resend to group showing track changes. Andy asked the group to keep the following in mind.

- All matrixes will include narrative providing background and context as part of creating the work plan.

- Based on plans the state has approved, the group can revisit particular strategies, e.g. -- monitoring.
- Although the group has achieved the milestone of drafting a matrix for each critical area, no matrix has been approved by the workgroup. This will occur as part of working through the work plan.

The three matrixes being reviewed at this meeting had significant local agency input, including identification of applicable regulations. These regulations provide an important regulatory backstop to support benchmarks.

Specific revisions to be made include:

Geological Hazards:

Benchmark A:

Description: Replace “direct seed” with “conservation tillage.”

Who: Include Spokane County along with SCD

Applicable Regulations: Include weblink to Critical Area Ordinance 11.20.070, <https://www.spokanecounty.org/726/Critical-Areas-Ordinance>.

Frequently Flooded Areas:

This discussion also included Lindsay briefing group on timing, nature and purpose of Community Assistance Visits (CAVs) performed by Ecology and FEMA. A CAV is a scheduled visit to a community participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Done in conjunction with the county and Ecology, it provides a comprehensive assessment of the county’s floodplain management program and of its knowledge and understanding of the floodplain management requirements of the NFIP. The CAV also aids the community in remedying identified program deficiencies and violations. CAVs were done for Spokane County in 1990, 1992, 1995, 2000, and 2007. 2016 CAV is being finalized.

Benchmark A:

Description: Change “expand direct seed/no-till” to “expanded conservation tillage.”

Performance Metric: Insert CAVs performed by FEMA and DOE

Who: Add Spokane County

Critical Aquifer Recharge:

Protection Goal: Further wordsmithing, including retention of language that was deleted in second draft.

Benchmark A: Who: Add Spokane County

Benchmark B:

Description: Remove “side channel connectivity “

Description: Add expand “conservation tillage”

Measure 2: Description: Remove “geochemical functions”

Robyn inquired into the possible inclusion of Ag viability with these matrixes. Staff is currently recommending that ag viability have its own chapter. This will allow a more inclusive narrative and help remove redundancies in the work plan by not restating Ag viability practices that relate to multiple critical areas. The workgroup supported this approach and will reevaluate when reviewing the draft work plan.

IV. Additional Business

Potential next meeting agenda items:

1. Revisit performance measures and triggers after we hear back from Stevens County and if their plan was approved.
2. Start writing the plan and review the first chapter at next meeting

Walt asked if a stewardship plan would be as confidential as a Farm plan, and how they will relate? Andy said the Conservation Commission issued a policy advisory on that question and he would forward to group.

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

- Andy will draft and distribute December minutes.
- Lindsay will update matrixes based on group input
- Lindsay will continue to work on proof of concept for aerial imagery monitoring.
- Staff will follow-up with NRCS to identify CRP acres in Spokane County.
- 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 to support commodity buffer program.

Next meeting will be January 17th, 2018 at 6pm.