

**Spokane County VSP
Work Group Meeting
Minutes
March 21st, 2018**

Work Group Members Present: David Boleneus, Brent Burger, Judy Crowder, Doug Greenlund, Robyn Meenach, Kevin Paulson, Amanda Perish, Crystal Oliver

Staff: Walt Edelen and Seth Flanders

Facilitator: Andy Dunau

Guest: Scott Kuhta, Kelly McLain

Welcome, Minutes and Announcements: Andy welcomed everyone and began introductions around room to introduce workgroup members, staff, and guests. Robyn motioned to approve February minutes, Judy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- The Department of Commerce is updating its Critical Areas Assistance Handbook, which was last updated in 2007. Along with Department of Ecology and WDFW, they are conducting a series of workshops around the state on monitoring and adaptive management of critical areas ordinance implementation in early 2018. The workshops will provide tools for building local and state monitoring and adaptive management processes for critical areas permit implementation and effectiveness. A workshop on the East Side of WA, Moses Lake, will be held April 25, 9:00-3:00pm at Big Bend Community College. The workshop is free, but registration is requested.
- H2O Breakfast is on May 9th 7:15-9:15am at the Historic Davenport Hotel. Sandra Postel, the author of “Replenish” and founder of The Global Water Policy Project, is the keynote speaker.
- Walt shared that the SCD annual tree sale is April 6th, 8 am - 5 pm and April 7th 9 am - 1pm. While no more sales are available, a surplus sale will be going on at that time here at the district.
- Annual Willow Warrior weekend is on April 27th and 28th. It is a volunteer opportunity for people to paddle down Hangman Creek to plant willows as a means to reduce stream bank erosion. Space is limited so RSVP quickly.
- The Spokane Riverkeeper settled a federal lawsuit in which Riverkeeper challenged the Environmental Protection Agency’s (“EPA”) approval of Washington Department of Ecology’s Hangman Creek TMDL. Highlights of the settlement include Ecology conducting a Hangman Creek Riparian and In-Stream Assessment, including prioritizing the water quality/site condition improvement work and monitoring effectiveness of BMP implementation; GIS analysis and ground truthing to support the assessment; a bioassessment study to determine baseline conditions; assigning a half-time person to this effort; contacting a minimum of 10 livestock and 10 tillage landowners with problem sites; consultation with the conservation district to offer technical assistance and support implementation of BMPs; extensive reporting and tracking of activities; education and outreach;

SCD will host a community workshop at the Fairfield Community Center on April 12 from 6-8pm to inform landowners of the MOA and assistance available. Wheat growers and Farm Bureau will help alert producers of the meeting.

- Lands Council is hiring a Community Outreach Coordinator. This is a new position and a unique opportunity to get hired into a position at the Lands Council. Contact Amanda Parish for more information.
- At the April SCD Board meeting, John Covert from DOE will give a presentation on the relationship between the Spokane Aquifer and River systems.

Outreach: Cheryl Nagle will be a keynote speaker at the Small Farm Conference in the Fall and other outreach opportunities will be made as necessary.

Work Plan Review

Judy suggested one addition change to Section 1.0 that the group approved.

Edits to Section 2.0 will be shown as track changes and sent to group.

Edits to Section 3.0 will be shown as track changes and sent to group. This includes reformatting of tables showing critical area intersections with agriculture.

Section 5.0, Technical Assistance, Outreach and Stewardship Plan, will be drafted next and reviewed at the next meeting.

Seth is continuing to populate the data base showing conservation practices installed since 2011. Once complete, summary information will be added to Section 3.0 and used to further review other parts of the workplan narrative. The critical path is to determine if conservation practices to date align with benchmarks and goals, and objectives for technical assistance, outreach and stewardship.

Updates and Additional Business

There was continued discussion regarding how VSP stewardship plans authorized by legislation conforms with confidentiality required by farm plans, conservation plans and similar types of tools. The Conservation Commission issued a policy advisory on this topic in August 2017. (Visit: <http://scc.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/VSP-SAC-Policy-Advisory-01-17.Aug-2017.pdf>)

Per the advisory, “Individual stewardship plans are not VSP work plans, but a separate tool authorized in the VSP statute (RCW Chapter 36.70A) that work groups could use to achieve the goals of the VSP work plan.”

Kelly will provide Andy some examples of how other approved VSP plans have addressed this situation. Andy will review with SCD and bring draft stewardship plan checklist back to group as part of Section 5.0 review.

Action Items and Closing

Next workgroup meeting is April 18th, 6-8pm at the Spokane Conservation District.