

**Agenda**  
**Work Group**  
**Spokane County Voluntary Stewardship Program**  
**July 18th, 2018**  
**5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

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

**Staff:** Lindsay Chutas, Seth Flanders

**Facilitator:** Andy Dunau

**Welcome, Minutes and Announcements:** Andy Dunau welcomed participants to the meeting. Draft June minutes were discussed. Amanda corrected that she had attended the work group’s last meeting but that it was not reflected on the minutes. With that change, Robyn made a motion to accept the minutes and Casey seconded. The motion passed.

A motion was made to extend member terms, which would have expired at the beginning of the state technical team review process. Terms would be extended until the state approves the Spokane County VSP work plan. Robyn motioned and Doug seconded. The motion passed.

After insertion of edits from this work group meeting, a full draft of the work plan and appendices will be shared with the local technical team and work group. Comments and edits will be addressed during the August work group meeting. There will be a final public meeting for comment and county commissioner briefing before the work group completes a final review of the work plan in September. Per Washington State Conservation Commission, the work group is asked to recommend sending the work plan to the state technical team, not approve the plan. The state technical team has requested receipt of the work plan by the end of September.

**Section Reviews**

**Ag viability:** Judy explained that she wished to incorporate a new table for benchmarks, goals and measurements for ag viability. This would be in addition to the benchmarks and goals for each of the critical areas. Judy sees this as a way to put ag viability on “equal footing” with critical area protection. In reading the state legislation, Judy pointed out that benchmarks and goals for ag viability could be added although not required in the plan.

The benchmark suggested was no net loss of farm land with the goal of assuring land is kept in agriculture long term. In the event farm land continues to decline, an adaptive management trigger would be for the county to introduce new or additional efforts to prevent loss of farm land.

Andy asked each member to share their position and thoughts on Judy’s proposal. Some expressed concern that the proposition of suggesting to landowners that their land should stay in ag was a direct violation of property rights. Further, a no net loss goal could trigger promotion of policy that could result in a farmer not being able to sell their land for the highest value possible in the market place.

This could also negatively affect retirement options for farmers. The staff also pointed out that creating an individual table for ag viability as a benchmark was redundant because a) there is an entire section of the plan devoted to ag viability, and b) Table 8 and related conservation practices are specifically designed to promote ag viability.

The matter was eventually tabled. Andy asked that if Judy or other work member wished to continue to pursue the matter, a specific motion with related benchmark and goal(s) for the group to consider be developed. As with other reviews being requested, such a request should be provided to staff to add to agenda a week before the meeting.

**Section 3.3** was reviewed and edits noted for incorporation into the work plan.

**Table 8** is based on entering over 1,000 conservation practices in Spokane County into a conservation practice database. The data base functions as the information collection center to provide measurable benchmarks for VSP. The practices identified in benchmarks and goals for each critical area are identified in Table 8 and prioritized for future development of stewardship plans. They also align with SCD and Lands Council programs that provide voluntary incentives for producers to adopt. As long as the amount of practices that are assumed to be removed are smaller (disenrollment) than the amount of practices being installed over a 5-year period, the 2011 baseline for protection of critical areas is being met. If the installed practices do not meet or exceed the assumed removal of projects, then that triggers action to be taken and targeted incentives to begin increasing that practice. All of the practices in Table 8 are aligned with NRCS practice codes and support ag viability.

David asked to have a thorough explanation of Table 8 in the workplan and close to the table itself. This is done in section 3, section 4 and in footnotes to Table 8. Formatting changes to Table 8 were suggested and will be incorporated.

**Section 4.0** was reviewed and edits noted for incorporation into the work plan.

**Section 7** Lindsay shared that the aerial imagery was coming along and that improvements to the process were being made as necessary.

**Section 2.3** David passed out his assessment on the volume of water available through the Spokane Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer, and how it relates to the GMA. Andy was concerned that David's conclusions, which were based on a presentation by Spokane County, are different than what he has heard from the county. David was asked to propose new wording for the work plan based on his assessment. Staff will then send to the county for review and input.

### **Additional Business, Action Items, and Closing**

Doug motioned to have the August meeting pushed back a week to August 22 at 6 p.m. Amanda seconded, and the motion passed.