

**Minutes
Work Group
Spokane County Voluntary Stewardship Program
October 9, 2019
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

Work Group Members Present: Casey Flanagan, Doug Greenlund, David Boleneus, Chad Atkins

Staff: Doug Phelps

Facilitator: Andy Dunau

Handouts: September Minutes, Agenda, Draft Comprehensive Plan Letter, Hangman Creek Newsletter article, VSP Budget Report

Welcome, Introductions, Minutes and Announcements: Andy welcomed everyone to the meeting. Minutes from the September meeting were not reviewed due to the lack of quorum present. They will be reviewed at the November meeting instead.

Comprehensive Plan Letter

Lindsay and Doug drafted letter providing VSP comment on Draft Spokane County Comprehensive Plan updates related to zoning reclassifications affecting agricultural lands. The group reviewed the draft letter that explained VSP's interest given its legislative charge and interest in agricultural viability. The letter specifically asked for clarification regarding the number of acres being reclassified as no longer agriculture, and how many of those acres are currently in agricultural production.

After the group made edits, it was agreed that Doug and Lindsay would provide updated letter to Andy no later than Tuesday. Andy will forward to the group, which will get changes back to Andy by October 21st. Staff will then incorporate any final edits and send to County.

Story Mapping

Doug gave a quick update on story mapping status. There is still one change the developer needs to complete and then it is expected to go live. Doug is committed to adding projects to the story map and then conducting walk through with work group at the next meeting.

Outreach

Thanks to introduction from Alene, Doug will be presenting VSP to Spokane Cattlemen the beginning of November. Walt and Doug will also be presenting the two-year progress report to the BOCC on October 22nd.

Doug has also spoken with various agrichemical companies. Those grower meetings are all in January and February. The idea of Doug speaking at these meetings was generally well-received by the companies. Doug will be working over the next couple of months to schedule.

Advertising and an article about VSP were discussed. Advertising is not currently seen as the most effective approach. A draft article will be reviewed at the November meeting for possible placement in publications such as Wheat Life.

Andy suggested an overarching theme for all outreach: that ag viability and stewardship can coexist, and there are resources available to help with that. Staff also distributed a VSP article sent out via SRF eNews that focused on the RM 17 project.

Doug announced that he submitted a draft of the rack card to SCD's marketing company. A proof will be reviewed at next meeting.

Doug will also start the process of visiting past projects as part of monitoring and as a way to identify potential new projects.

There was conceptual discussion about the difference between outreach and implementation projects for "big" vs. "small" ag. SCD is currently working on renewal of RCPP funding. If successful, that is likely to mostly address outreach and project needs for large farms.

Smaller farms would most likely benefit from VSP outreach, technical assistance and development of stewardship plans. To the extent stewardship plans and proposed projects can be identified, a focused effort can be made to identify funding to support them.

Chad discussed that through Ecology and SCD efforts, several projects are being identified in the Hangman Creek watershed. He's hopeful VSP can reach out to farmers in the north, e.g.—Dragoon Creek.

The group would like an update on Hangman Creek and RCPP projects at the November meeting.

Budget

A VSP budget report was distributed and reviewed by the group. Expenses for payroll are running ahead of straight-line quarterly burn rate due to time needed for implementation start-up and development of the two-year progress report. To help reduce this expense, Doug explained that Walt and Lindsay would limit their time on VSP by reducing attendance at meetings and other activities. Budget reports will occur approximately quarterly.

The group also noted, as it has in the past, that VSP relies on finding additional funding sources for project implementation. Casey underscored that this makes developing stewardship plans and shovel-ready projects a priority. Staff can then get creative with grant writing after projects have been found.

Chad mentioned that Hangman 319 grant applications are due October 15th. Chad is looking forward to receiving an application from SCD.

Aerial Imagery

Andy spoke about Lindsay's continued efforts to work with the county on obtaining the aerial imagery data. If Spokane County is not willing to pay for the \$6,000 annual data subscription, VSP could offer to split the cost with them one time. This would enable VSP to properly provide monitoring needed for the 5-year report.

Action Items and Closing:

Staff will see if Walt can give updates on Hangman Creek projects, RCPP, 319 other grants/projects in progress, including project development for lands adjacent to the RM 17 project on Hangman Creek. Chad also offered to share a list of other projects currently in development with Ecology.

The group will receive a Jones project update in January or February.

The next meeting was set for November 13, 2019. There will be no December meeting. Andy thanked everyone for coming. There were no further comments and the meeting adjourned.