

Minutes
Work Group
Spokane County Voluntary Stewardship Program
November 18, 2020
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m

Work Group Members Present: Bill Browning, Jay Cronk, Casey Flanagan, Alene Lindstrand, Ty Meyer, Kevin Paulson, Adam Powell, Methea Sapp

Staff: Doug Phelps

Facilitator: Andy Dunau

Guest: Levi Keesecker

Welcome and Administration: The meeting convened via WebEx video conference.

Workgroup Membership: Doug welcomed three new VSP work group members: Bill Browning, Adam Powell and Methea Sapp. Each provided some background on their interests and expertise. The rest of the workgroup introduced themselves and welcomed them to the group. Doug reported he previously held a WebEx meeting with new members to introduce them more fully to VSP and workgroup activities.

Minutes: Casey made a motion to approve the July minutes. Alene seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Letter to Spokane County Planning Department: Doug reported the Director of Spokane County Planning had not responded to the letter stating concerns that VSP was not notified of updates being considered to the comprehensive plan. The importance of VSP inclusion, particularly as it relates to agricultural zoning, was discussed. This includes Spokane Farmland Preservation Group work Doug is engaged in. The group asked Doug to follow up with the Spokane County Planning Department.

5-Year Report Template Walk Through: As discussed at previous meetings, the 5-year report required by the Washington State Conservation Commission is due April 22nd. The Commission created a Microsoft Access based template for reporting. Doug and Andy participated in a webinar training, then Doug, Andy and Lindsay did an initial walk-through to strategize the best way to complete.

Doug walked the workgroup through the template. With Levi being the technical liaison with the Commission, the intricacies and challenges to complete were discussed. As Spokane is late in the cycle of reports to be submitted, Levi will be able to share tips and strategies based on the experiences of others. Doug and Andy are confident in the data Spokane needs to compile for submission.

As such, the focus of activity for the next couple of months will be completing data collection and entering information into the template. Results of this effort will be the focus of the next

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Location: WebEx Conference Call

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VSP meeting. Doug asked that, beginning in January, members be prepared to participate in monthly meetings until the 5-year report is complete and submitted. Ideally, staff would like to complete the report before April.

Project Development and Technical Assistance

Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program (FMLFPP): Doug announced award of this \$53,390 VSP inspired two-year grant from USDA. The SCD will provide support and promotion to develop a Spokane Valley Farm Corridor that will function in much the same way as the South Spokane Farm Corridor. Organizing interested farmers, web site development and offering business and marketing related workshops are all part of the mix.

Ecology 319 Grant: SCD's contract with Ecology for 2020 319 grant awards is complete. A summary of projects and funding allocations was distributed.

RCPP Submission: The RCPP has been an ongoing program within the Greater Spokane Watershed since 2016. Much of the emphasis has been sediment reduction programs that provide producers incentives to implement conservation tillage practices and buffers.

The program is ending in 2021 and the SCD is completing an application for another award. Changes from the previous application include narrowing the focus to Spokane County rather than the bi-state Greater Spokane Watershed; providing technical assistance and incentives for bio-farming, e.g.—reducing the use of synthetic fertilizers and increasing the use of cover crops; and identifying four fish passage projects to implement. \$4 million over 5 years is being requested with \$5 million of match identified.

Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP): SCD continues to seek a project that would be eligible for ACEP funding available through RCPP. The Inland Northwest Land Conservancy met with the SCD to consider development of a project that would include securing property that could also be used as an agricultural teaching site. The Pilcher property continues to be explored with the Farmland Preservation Group. Methea suggested working with the Morning Starr Boys Ranch to avoid the Glenrose property becoming a Sports Plex.

Changes to Conservation Project and Development List: Doug continues to update the list with new information. He also walked the group through revisions to layout and content to become more user friendly. The workgroup supports these changes.

Monitoring

Edge of Field Monitoring: A complete report is expected by January and will be shared with the workgroup for review.

Conservation Project Data Base: Doug is close to completing 2020 updates. Table 8 summary will be sent to group before next meeting.

GIS Mapping: Lindsay is completing. Summary information will be sent to group before the next meeting.

Aerial Imagery: The technical issues appear to be resolved. A report is expected by the end of the year.

Action Items and Closing:

Administration:

- Update budget and expense report based on quarterly report due to state at the end of December.

5-Year Report

- Continue development.

Outreach:

- Continue to add projects to Conservation Map.
- Continue development of articles and seek opportunities for presentations.

Monitoring:

- Continue to update Development List
- Complete Table 8 updates.
- Complete GIS mapping updates.
- Complete aerial imagery report
- Continue inputting stewardship plans.

Next Meeting

The next VSP meeting will be January 13th.