

**Minutes  
Work Group  
Spokane County Voluntary Stewardship Program  
January 15, 2020  
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m**

**Work Group Members Present:** David Boleneus, Jay Cronk, Casey Flanagan, Doug Greenlund, Alene Lindstrand, Ty Meyer (phone)

**Staff:** Doug Phelps, Walt Edelen

**Facilitator:** Andy Dunau

**Printed Handouts:** Agenda, November minutes, Rack Cards, Farm Corridor Proposal Summary

**Items Viewed on the Projector Screen:** VSP Workgroup Charter, CHS Primeland PowerPoint, Conservation Map, Chris Eckhart YouTube video, Conservation Project Implementation and Development List.

**Welcome and Administration:** Andy welcomed everyone to the meeting. Minutes from the November meeting were reviewed. Alene motioned to accept and Doug G. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Andy showed the updates he made to the workgroup charter and discussed minor changes made. There were no questions or comments. Jay moved to accept the revised charter and Alene seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Outreach

Rack cards were printed in December and distributed for member use. Doug maintains a supply at SCD and encouraged members to distribute at events/meetings they are attending.

Doug shared the PowerPoint presentation he did at the CHS Primeland grower meeting on January 14, including playing the video produced by Chris Eckhart. The group discussed the presentation and made suggestions. These included stressing the need for respect between interested parties, discussing activities related to the Hangman Settlement agreement, and explaining how videos can be used to help tell the story of producer conservation practices. There was also a discussion about how to reach younger audiences with video content. Two contacts were made at the meeting that Doug will follow up with.

The Conservation Map web site was reviewed. There have been eight entries on the map, although two users chose to not share their stewardship activities on the public web site. However, they did add contact information which the group can use to support follow up. Doug will continue to reach out to producers to assist them in adding projects to the map.

Edits to the draft article for Wheat Life are complete. Doug will contact the editor of Wheat Life to discuss placement in the magazine.

Doug also presented at the Crop Improvement Association meeting on Nov 26, 2019. Work group members were thanked for helping arrange these presentations. A key outreach objective is to continue making presentations, including follow-up activities for those interested in technical assistance and/or project development.

Andy attended the Water Quality Trading Roundtable in Seattle on Dec 16. Andy discussed what water quality trading is and interest by American Farmland Trust and others in using this tool to support conservation and water quality improvements. In 2010 Ecology considered a trading program between dischargers on the Spokane River and ag producers on Hangman Creek. Due to regulatory challenges Ecology did not move forward on this effort and, statewide, has not adopted any water quality trading programs. Andy presented the commodity buffer program to roundtable participants as an innovative practice that started with local leadership, gained Ecology regulatory support over time and has been successfully piloted. Walt commented it's now being considered statewide.

The work group indicated its support for tracking development of water quality trading and other innovations that may benefit meeting VSP objectives.

Items to be discussed at the next meetings include upcoming outreach events at Ag Expo on Feb 5 and the Ag Link grower meeting Feb 24; outreach partnerships with Ty and Amanda, and group review of an RCPP article being written by Andy.

### Project Development

Prior to the meeting, Andy emailed the group the Farm Corridor Pilot Project Proposal in full. A one-page summary was handed out at the meeting. A one-year, \$50,000 grant request was submitted to establish three farm corridors to bolster urban farm-to-community connections. This includes workshops, farm tours, meetings, community events, signage, web site and social media. Outreach and technical assistance will result in supporting ag viability needs of producers as well as water and soil conservation practices supported by VSP.

Doug noted that because the opportunity for grant development and submission occurred between VSP meetings, the group was not requested to provide input. The work group thanked Doug for his initiative and reached consensus that the grant meets VSP objectives and can be incorporated into VSP implementation activities. SCD expects to learn whether the funding request is approved by the end of January.

The Conservation Project Implementation and Development List was reviewed with the group. This list is a detailed running tally of potential and active projects. Doug is completing entry of projects. The work group will review in detail at the next meeting.

Walt reported that SCD submitted two 319/Centennial grants and that the Department of Ecology is scheduled to release a draft list of approved projects Friday January 17th. In addition, the SCD is working with Spokane County and WRIA 55 on three habitat projects on the Little Spokane River. Lastly, the SCD is working with the WA State Conservation Commission to receive base funding for counties implementing commodity buffer programs.

SCD was made aware that the Spokane County Assessor plans to purchase the countywide aerial imagery that VSP needs for its reporting purposes.

### **Next Meeting Action Items**

#### Outreach:

- Continue reaching out to producers to assist with populating Conservation Map web site.
- Contact Wheat Life re publication of article.
- Report on Ag Expo and Ag Link February presentations.
- Review RCPP article
- Status of outreach partnerships with Ty and Amanda

#### Technical Assistance and Project Development:

- Review Conservation Project Implementation and Development List, including status of:
  - Farm Corridor Pilot Project
  - 319/Centennial Grants
  - WRIA 55 Habitat Projects
  - Commodity Buffer State Funding Request
  - New Opportunities

#### Monitoring:

- Status and timing of when Spokane County will acquire aerial imagery.

#### Legislation/Regulation updates:

- Commodity Buffer Base Funding Request
- Development of Sustainable Farm and Field Legislation

### **Next Meeting and Closing**

There will be no meeting in February. The next meeting will be March 11, 2020. Andy thanked everyone for coming.

There were no further comments and the meeting adjourned.