

**Minutes
Work Group
Spokane County Voluntary Stewardship Program
September 9, 2020
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m**

Work Group Members Present: David Boleneus, Amanda Parrish, Casey Flanagan, Jay Cronk, Doug Greenlund, Alene Lindstrand

Staff: Doug Phelps

Facilitator: Andy Dunau

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

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

VSP Membership: Andy explained that David Boleneus and Crystal Oliver terms were ending September 20. They were thanked for their service, including being on the work group that created the Spokane VSP work plan. Doug noted that Kevin Paulson and Casey Flanagan terms were also ending and have agreed to serve another term.

Doug updated the application to join the work group. The application has been distributed to various SCD mail lists and is posted on the VSP web site. Work group members were also provided the application and are encouraged to distribute to interested parties. The deadline for applying is September 17th. SCD will review applications by the end of September and make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners in October. The expectation is that two new members will join the work group by the November meeting.

Budget: Doug reviewed projected VSP budget revenue and expenses through the end of the biennium. The current projection shows approximately \$9,600 available for additional project work. Included in this projection is funding for CORE GIS to do an additional year of aerial imagery analysis. This will further ground truth information for the 5-year report and synch up timing of aerial imagery analysis with future 5-year reports.

Expenses may change based on a number of factors that could affect staff and consultant time, e.g.—receiving additional grant funding that would reduce staff expenses to VSP or additional staff or consultant time needed to complete the 5-year report. A new projection will be provided in January. If surplus revenue is still projected, options for funding additional VSP work will be considered.

State VSP Webinars: Andy, Doug and Lindsay participated in a monitoring webinar September 8th. Spokane VSP presented on the farm corridor and aerial imagery analysis. Doug and Andy reported being pleased to learn about what other projects were doing and how they were doing it. The diverse monitoring methods in work plans submitted are now playing out in implementation, often reflecting the specific circumstances and needs of an area.

DRAFT

Location: WebEx Conference Call

Page 1

A September 25th webinar will walk VSP groups through use of the 5-year report template. Doug and Andy will attend.

Project Development and Technical Assistance

Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program (FMLFPP): Doug reported that the grant made it to the third round of decision making. He responded to questions from reviewers and updated the grant accordingly. USDA expects to announce awards by the end of September.

Ecology 319 Grant: SCD is in final negotiations with Ecology on a contract for previously approved award. This is a \$1.75 million award with \$1.5 million for direct seed loan program and incentives/cost share for riparian restoration, the livestock and land program, data collection, and outreach projects. \$250,000 is for a Hangman Creek bank stabilization project. Once signed, Doug will follow-up with Amanda to further clarify grant components.

The Lands Council and SCD are working on new 319 submissions due in October. Awards for this grant cycle will be announced in 2021. The Lands Council's application includes 1 mile of riparian restoration in the Little Spokane and Hangman watersheds, installation of Beaver Dam Analogs, an engineered wetland in the Marshall drainage and a tree give away for Newman Lake. Doug will work with Walt to summarize the SCD proposal for the next meeting.

RCPP: The request for continuation of RCPP funding was declined by the USDA. SCD will apply again November 4, 2020. All existing RCPP contracts and awards will be funded through the life of the award.

Agriculture Conservation and Easement Program: Doug is continuing to work with Inland Northwest Lands Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited to identify a property and willing partners.

Technical Assistance: A bank stabilization project on the Spokane River in Spokane Valley was recently completed by SCD, a livestock crossing on the southern border of the county was recently completed by the landowner with SCD oversight; a livestock heavy use area project on Rattler Run Creek is in the design process; and a technical assistance visit for a landowner on Hangman Creek is being scheduled. Doug noted that two of these projects were entirely landowner funded and one was funded using a cost-share agreement.

Monitoring

Edge of Field Monitoring: Doug presented a PowerPoint summarizing some preliminary results from the SCD Edge of Field Monitoring study. This is a paired watershed study in the Hangman Creek watershed. Of similar watershed size, one farm is using conventional tillage practices while the other has implemented no-till practices. A monitoring station that measures water flow, sediment and water quality (nitrate, total phosphorus, etc.) was installed at each farm. The sediment load that accumulated behind the dam at the conventionally tilled field was roughly 2,700 lbs., while the sediment load behind the dam at the no-till field was roughly 17 lbs. This and other results will be shared in a report that will be completed this fall. The group asked that the report be distributed to them when released.

GIS Mapping: Lindsay is working on updates and a report will be given at next meeting.

Aerial Imagery: Due to technical issues, DNR was asked to rerun data for 2011. Doug will be meeting with the consultant to determine if this successfully addresses the issues. Resolving 2011 data issues are needed in order to run 2017 compare analysis.

Disenrollment: A key assumption in Table 8 conservation practice calculations relates to disenrollment, the number of installed practices that are no longer maintained. The disenrollment percentage for heavy use areas may be high because it's unlikely installation of this practice would be removed. Staff will be visiting heavy use projects before the end of 2020 to determine if an adjustment should be made. The work plan disenrollment assumption will be used for the upcoming 5-year report.

Outreach

Amanda shared with the group signage noting the names of streams and waterways at bridge crossings in the Hangman watershed. This is a passive awareness campaign to help people better understand and appreciate the interconnectedness of surface waters in the watershed. The Lands Council has worked with Ecology and Department of Transportation on this 319 grant project. Installation is expected in the spring of 2021.

The Lands Council is also working with the University of Idaho to conduct listening sessions with farmers this winter. The goal is to better understand their priorities, interests and ways to communicate with them.

Doug announced that there were two new members to the South Spokane Farm Corridor group, bringing the total number of farms participating up to 18.

Action Items and Closing:

Administration:

- Complete selection and appointment of two work group members.

Project Development:

- Summarize 319 grant requests and add to Conservation Project Development List.
- Continue ACEP outreach.
- Continue technical assistance and identifying new project opportunities.

Outreach:

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

Monitoring:

- Complete Table 8 updates.
- Complete GIS mapping updates.

- Continue aerial imagery work.
- Continue inputting stewardship plans.

Next Meeting

The next VSP meeting will be November 18th. This will be the third rather than second Wednesday of the month due to Veterans day. Whether it is held in person or via WebEx video conference will be based on status of phased reopening.