

**Minutes
Work Group
Spokane County Voluntary Stewardship Program
March 10, 2021
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m**

Work Group Members Present: Casey Flanagan, Alene Lindstrand, Ty Meyer, Amanda Parrish, Kevin Paulson, Adam Powell, Methea Sapp

Staff: Doug Phelps

Facilitator: Andy Dunau

Guest: Levi Keesecker

Welcome and Administration: The meeting convened via MS Teams video conference.

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

Doug News: Doug announced that he resigned his position to start an independent contracting business specializing in landscaping and irrigation services. This will be his last VSP meeting. He will complete the 5-year work plan with Walt and Lindsay administering VSP activities until a replacement is found. The work group thanked Doug for his outstanding service and wished him well as he follows new pursuits.

Options to Complete Biennium Funding: The group reviewed an updated revenue and expense projection for completion of VSP funding by June 30. The current projection is \$8,800 of unallocated funds. Staff suggested the group consider two items and reiterated openness to additional suggestions. First, SCD staff adding a diversity of projects to the Conservation Map to show the breadth of activities taking place. This can be accomplished with available VSP budgeted staff time. Second, allocation of funds to do follow-up riparian planting. In addition to SCD projects, this could include Lands Council, tribal and other projects listed in the conservation project data base. Walt will need to write an amendment for this and determine with Lindsay the best way to identify projects and staff/contractors to complete.

Casey strongly supported riparian planting, noting that follow-up activity is critical. There was work group consensus for SCD to file an amendment and proceed accordingly.

Informational Updates

WSCC Food System Support Grant Award: The Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) had a quick turnaround grant opportunity that could support SCD farm corridor development. Doug submitted and the SCD received a \$5,000 grant to build out a county wide farm corridor web site that will connect consumers to the South Spokane Farm Corridor, emerging Valley Farm Corridor, and planned North and West Plains farm corridors. The site will

also connect farmers to lands available for farming and workers interested in being an intern or laborer. The work must be complete by the end of June 2021.

Lands Council Listening Sessions: Amanda reported the sessions went well. The University of Idaho is working on a summary report that she hopes to be able to present at the April meeting.

5-Year Report Development

Doug reported he's about 80% complete with template entry. Most of the final work is around completing statistical analysis and explanations. Statistics regarding edge of field monitoring will require Doug receiving additional assistance.

Doug did a screen share showing language being used for wetlands. Explanations regarding the limitations of using National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) for comparative GIS mapping, commitment to exploring additional monitoring options in the next biennium, establishing a margin of error within which gains or losses are not considered statistically significant, and how conservation practice benchmarks were met and reviewed. This was a continuation of discussions from previous meetings, many of which are applicable across critical areas.

Before leaving, Doug will provide Andy a PDF of 5-year report. He will make this available to the work group before the next meeting. At the next meeting, the work group will be asked to vote on submission of the report. To assist, Andy is looking at options for creating a PowerPoint or some other means of presenting the key findings of the report. This is to assure work group members are comfortable with the content of the report without feeling overwhelmed by the template which, as a standalone document, makes for a lengthy, difficult read. Levi indicated other work groups are doing similar activities before voting.

Project Development and Technical Assistance

Wild Rose Prairie Community Association: Located in northern Spokane County, west of 395, their mission is "... to provide local resources and education, promote a rural lifestyle, and to empower the community." Chris Eckhart, a farmer with close ties to the SCD and engaged with VSP, is part of the association. They inquired about receiving water conservation assistance. Doug connected them with the Idaho Washington Aquifer Collaborative (IWAC), which has developed irrigation design standards.

South Spokane Farm Corridor: An internal technical assistance mechanism is now resulting in members presenting to each other different practices and maintenance activities to farm more efficiently. The group is meeting monthly from November through April, then breaks for the farming season. The ability of farm corridors to support both technical assistance and marketing needs for members is becoming an important feature of their development.

Action Items and Closing:

5-Year Report

- Complete final draft and make available to group.
- Develop presentation for next meeting.

DRAFT

Location: MS Teams Conference Call

Page 2

Next Meeting

The next VSP meeting will be April 14th.