

**Minutes  
Work Group  
Spokane County Voluntary Stewardship Program  
July 10, 2019  
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

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

**Staff:** Lindsay Chutas, Walt Edelen, Doug Phelps

**Facilitator:** Andy Dunau

**Handouts:** Meeting agenda, Draft Biennium Report, Draft VSP Minutes from 6-12-19, VSP Ag Liaison Position Description, Table 8

**Welcome, Minutes and Announcements:** Andy welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made around the room. Minutes from the June meeting were reviewed. Kevin wanted to make sure that the mapping would be reported at the watershed level and not at the parcel level. Walt confirmed that is the case. Jay motioned to accept the minutes and Casey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Updates:**

Story Mapping: Lindsay reported on the progress of website development with Mapseed (the developer). Initial development is promising for showcasing VSP stewardship projects and providing opportunities for agricultural producers to share and post their stewardship practices. Mapseed is currently working through the list of revisions requested by staff. Jay asked how much participation there has been in Whitman County. Lindsay found that Whitman County has 21 projects entered to date. Kevin asked if he can participate with 400+ acres in direct seed. Lindsay will send Kevin link for Whitman County participation. Once the next round of iterations is complete, the work group will be sent a link for review.

Aerial Imagery: Lindsay reported on the progress CORE GIS has been making on the comparative change analysis for riparian areas. She reported CORE GIS has developed a solution for determining buffer widths, which will define their area of analysis and meet one of WDFW's key goals.

Lindsay has a call with CORE GIS on July 12th to check the progress of the 1<sup>st</sup> iteration of the analysis. This is expected to lead to field visits to ground truth the analysis. Amanda agreed to help by identifying Lands Council projects that could participate in ground truthing activities. When this is complete, Matt (CORE GIS) will either come to a work group meeting to present his process/findings, or will present virtually via GoToMeeting or similar program.

Staff also clarified that the initial change detection analysis will be between the baseline year (2011) and 2017. Future analysis will compare the baseline year to years correlating with submission of biennium reports in 2021, 2023, etc. and five-year reports.

### GIS Calibration

Doug Phelps showed the group a short PowerPoint presentation demonstrating how determining ag/critical area intersects using GIS are being re-calibrated. Specifically, the entire parcels that contain ag and critical areas are no longer being counted in their entirety. Instead, SCD has determined a way to calculate a more precise amount of intersection. Second, there was duplication (overlap) in some of the critical area source data. SCD found a way to remove the duplicate data. The new intersect numbers will be calculated and included in the biennium report.

This will also be updated for future biennium and five-year reports. There was discussion that if future analysis shows significant change in the results, VSP should work closely with various agencies to determine why.

### Plazcek Project

Lindsay reported on the status of the project. She has been in contact with the owner, who has committed to watering on the agreed upon schedule. Lindsay also explained the relationship between the cocoon plantings and the Land Life Company (they are Dutch). In this project, SCD used VSP funds to purchase their cocoon product. However, Land Life may pay for the entire planting projects in the future in exchange for signing over the rights to potential carbon credits that may become available on the property as a result of the plantings. Nobody is aware of an existing carbon market in Washington. It was posited that it would take a large emitter of carbon (e.g. Amazon or utility companies) to acquire those credits in order for a carbon market to have success.

### **Biennium Report Draft Materials:**

The group reviewed a draft of the biennium report that is due in August. Andy led the discussion, highlighting sections which are in the process of receiving staff and work group member input. Staff will follow-up and have a commitment to review these updated materials with the work group at the August meeting.

Amanda mentioned that she may want to add a paragraph about what the lands council is doing.

When reviewing the outreach section, the group discussed whether to host a November workshop for producers to highlight technical and financial assistance, raise awareness and gain public trust. The alternative would be going out to meet with people as part of association annual meetings and workshops. Possibilities discussed include:

- Farm Bureau's annual meeting in October
- Service club in Spangle
- Spokane County Wheat Growers Association
- Tri-State Grain Grower meeting in Spokane
- WA Association of Wheat Growers

In addition, promotion through the FSA newsletter and WA Association of Wheat Growers Green sheet.

Andy will initiate electronic newsletter outreach with staff in August and Hilary will develop rack card.

Other items discussed include:

- Recommendation to add photographs to provide visual context.
- Doug Greenlund asked if we can present Table 8 by watershed. Staff will review.
- Walt mentioned that the subsection 3.6 title should be changed to "Related Regulatory Activity and Policy."
- David asked if anybody knows about any experiments with flocculants that could be applied to ag land as a liquid or solid in order to collect and aggregate suspended pollutants from runoff and thus stop them from entering waterways.

### **Agricultural Liaison Job Description:**

Walt started the group discussion. The idea is to have a fully dedicated VSP staff member who could work in the field, coordinate with the group, and ensure implementation of technical assistance, inventory, reporting, outreach, project opportunities, and generally fulfill all deliverables. Staff recommended Doug Phelps, who was brought on in the spring as a contract employee to help start VSP implementation and has demonstrated his ability to do the work.

There was further discussion about the duties. It was confirmed that the salary would come from VSP funds. Walt also noted that the SCD is strongly committed to using Doug's time to leverage additional funds for implementation activities.

Amanda asked what would be the overlap between RCPP and VSP position? Walt mentioned that although there is some overlap, it would be minimal. RCPP is focused on Farm Planning and goes into a lot of detail with a few people. The focus of the ag liaison would be to broaden the net of contacts to identify additional project opportunities as well as practices done solely at the expense of the producer and thus not noted in any data bases. Staff reiterated the high need and priority to work directly with producers, a process that can be lengthy as it requires a lot of trust building (even when resources to implement conservation practices are readily available).

An example of a new opportunity is working with the Land Life Company (see Plazcek Project notes above) to invest in riparian projects as a way acquiring and trading carbon credits. This also highlights the need for the group to be willing to prioritize Doug's time. In this example,

there would need to be a long-term commitment to also invest in carbon credits and carbon sequestration as policy related issues of interest to VSP.

Amanda moved that the group approve the creation and funding of the VSP Agricultural Liaison position. Doug Greenlund seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Action Items and Closing:**

August: 14<sup>th</sup> next meeting. Andy thanked everyone for coming. There were no further comments and the meeting adjourned.