



Kittitas County Conservation District

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Voluntary Stewardship Program

Watershed Group Meeting

Hal Holmes Community Center, 209 N Ruby St, Ellensburg

10:00 AM Monday, November 20, 2017

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Anna Lael, John Small, Nora Schlenker, Terry Clark, Mark Charlton, Brian Cortese, Kevin Eslinger, Jack Clerf, Lila Hanson, Karen Poulsen, Bambi Miller, John Marvin, Justin Bezold (on phone), Arden Thomas (on phone), Mitch Long, Chelsea Benner, Mark Crowley, Rose Shriner, Karen Hodges, Kat Satnik, Jennifer Nelson, and Mark Moore

- I. **Welcome** – Anna welcomed the attendees to the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Watershed Group Meeting.
 - a. Introductions were completed.
 - b. Anna reviewed the agenda and meeting objectives.
- II. **Discuss Membership, Participation Agreements and Roles Review**
 - a. Watershed Group Representation – Anna had no changes to report.
 - b. Review Past Meeting Minutes – John Marvin asked that information from the County’s new Critical Areas Ordinance be used in the VSP plan and not the old CAO. (The new CAO is still in Draft form and may not be completed by the time the VSP plan will be completed.) Lila Hanson asked if there would be definitions presented as part of the plan. Nora asked that everyone make notes of what needs to be defined and if there is enough interest a glossary could be added to the document.
 - c. Outreach Update – The website has been updated. Anna has not attended meetings or given presentations since the last meeting.
- III. **Anchor QEA Presentation (Click here to see [Power Point File](#))**
 - a. Nora Schlenker reviewed the agenda and provided a recap from the last meeting.
 - i. A comment form has been provided to the group. The comments will be combined to form a matrix of comments. The deadline for comments on Sections 1 - 4 is Monday, December 4.

- b. Anna discussed the Community Areas – after reviewing the Farm Service Agencies (FSA) common land units (field boundaries) and the Washington Department of Ag (WSDA) crop data, she reports that all agricultural lands were still not included. So, she used the tax parcel data as well as it includes Department of Revenue codes for agricultural lands. See the maps.
 - i. John Marvin asked about private grazing on public lands – public lands are not included in VSP even if leased to private operators.
 - ii. Lila Hanson asked if the presented Community Areas will be used. Yes, the Rapid Watershed Assessment will be broken down to specific areas of the County.
 - iii. Table 3.1 and the data in Section 3 will be updated to the new Community Areas.
- c. Protection and Enhancement Strategies (Nora)
 - i. Key Conservation Practices – will be looking at specific practices and how they effect change in critical areas
 - ii. Baseline for change is July 22, 2011. Information provided by NRCS shows the practices implemented since 2011. There will be more clarification on actual benefits for Aquatic Organism Passage and Clearing & Snagging, both of which address fish passage.
- d. Goals and Benchmarks (John)
 - i. The plan will look at functions and values county-wide not in specific areas. How the changes are measured will need to be specified.
 - ii. Goals for “Protect and Enhance” are strongly suggested by the State Technical Committee. The question was asked, “What is the definition of protect?” The definition will be provided from the RCW.
 - iii. Simple goals make it easier to measure if a goal is being met.
 - iv. When goal objectives are determined, some will look at the whole and some will look at specific functions. Objectives are determined locally to meet goals.
 - v. Benchmarks – so far on other plans Anchor QEA has assisted with developing benchmarks have been tracked by the amount of stewardship practices implemented. Not all practices implemented are maintained so this will need to be taken into account.
 - vi. Critical Area benefits need to be recognized for both their direct and indirect benefits.
 - vii. Conservation Practice Physical Effects (CPPE)
 - 1. Numeric scores 1-5 are given to conservation practices to show benefit to four categories (Habitat, Hydrology, Water Quality, & Soil Function)

2. Some of the members of the group questioned the points given for Pest Management for WQ on the slide presented. What is on the slide is a nationwide number not a local number.
 3. There was a short discussion of Managed Grazing vs. Prescribed Grazing, as producers are often reluctant to meet all requirements for the formal NRCS practice but are managing their grazing in ways that benefit critical areas.
 4. Members asked if the chart will also show negative reaction numbers and Ag viability. It was suggested that showing a fifth column would allow for Ag Viability to be included.
- viii. Setting a Protection Benchmark and Objective – the benchmark minimum is no net loss of critical area function. An Objective for a target number of practices each year after 2011 needs to be determined. An argument could be made for the target objective to be zero.
- ix. Understanding Discontinuation of Practices – a chart was presented that shows the likelihood of practices stopping in a year. The group needs to review rates to make sure they meet local needs.
- x. Measurable Objectives – Protection – the chart provided shows that Kittitas County is already well above the protection requirements in most areas.
- xi. Setting an Enhancement Benchmark and Objective – Are projects likely to be implemented if funding is available. What is the level of funding needed to do more work? Regulations can be a barrier to implementation of projects too.
- xii. Measurable Objectives – Enhancement – a slide was shown of what the Kittitas County benchmark would look like if the goal was to continue the current level of work.
- xiii. Enhancement Objective – Aspiration, Realistic, Conservative
1. How does Kittitas County want to set objectives to meet benchmarks?
 2. Mark Charlton suggested that the benchmarks should be based on the objectives.
 3. There are no consequences for not meeting Enhancement Benchmarks.
 4. Mitch Long suggested listing objective for all three for guidance if more funding comes available and to show the actual need.
 5. The Technical Committee needs to know the group's main objective it can be expanded from there.
- e. Indicators and Adaptive Management – What if what is being done isn't helping?

- i. Adaptive Management – Are conservation practices having the effects the group expected?
 - 1. Direct vs. Indirect Monitoring
 - a. Direct – volunteer information provided by the landowners. It was noted that landowners are reluctant to provide information. How can the information be protected?
 - b. Indirect – water quality stations, habitat use – are any of these directly related to Ag? How much Ag land is lost to development? How does this affect benchmarks? What monitoring is going on and is likely to continue?
 - 2. Indicators
 - a. Water quality monitoring, flow data, priority habitat & species data, and aerial imagery – use this data for long term changes but not yearly changes
 - b. Benefits of stewardship actions may not be evident for years or even decades because change doesn't happen quickly.
- f. Adaptive Management – the slide shows a possible process to adapt to changes
- g. Next Steps
 - i. Comments for Section 1-4 should be turned in by December 4 to be included in the comment matrix and reviewed with the next draft.
 - ii. November 20 discussions will be prepared as Section 5 in the next draft and will be out to the Watershed group one week before the next meeting.
 - iii. The next meeting will discuss Outreach and Implementation and review comments on Sections 1-5
 - iv. The next meeting is Monday December 18, 10:00 to 12:00

IV. Adjourn

- a. The meeting adjourned at 12:04 PM.