



Kittitas County Conservation District

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Voluntary Stewardship Program

Watershed Group Meeting

Washington State Cattlemen's Association, 1301 N Dolarway Road, Ellensburg
9:00 AM Monday March 28, 2016

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Justin Bezold, Bill Eller, Brian Cortese, Mark Crowley, Sherry Swanson, Tom Gauron, Jennifer Nelson, Kevin Eslinger, Mark Charlton, Elayne Hovde-Knudson, Jill Scheffer, Doc Hansen, Mark Moore, Dale Rusho, Jim Miller, Matthew Cox, Lila Hanson, Bambi Miller, Tip Hudson, Sam Kayser, Terry Clarke, Karen Poulsen, Jack Clerf, John Marvin, Mitch Long, Kat Satnik, Anna Lael, Jim Huckabay, and Evan Sheffels

- I. **Welcome** – Anna Lael, District Manager of the Kittitas County Conservation District (KCCD) welcomed the attendees to the second meeting of the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Watershed Group. [See Attachment A for power point presentation]
 - a. Introductions were completed
 - b. Jim Huckabay reviewed the agenda
- II. **Membership, Participation Agreements and Roles**
 - a. VSP Ground Rules
 - i. Jim reviewed a sample set of operating procedures and ground rules with the group (See Attachment B). The Group discussed item 1 – Decision Making extensively, after which Jim suggested that the group sit on the list for a bit. He handed out another list for other possible ideas with the intent of revisiting the ground rules again later in the meeting.
 - b. VSP Membership
 - i. Anna reviewed the Watershed Group membership. After the March 9th meeting, Jack Clerf (Cascade Irrigation District), Justin Bezold (Trout Unlimited), Mitch Long (Kittitas Conservation Trust), Jill Scheffer (Forterra) and Tom Gauron (Kittitas Audubon) were added.
 - ii. The technical committee members were also reviewed and discussed. Kat Satnik (Kittitas County Water Purveyors) was added. Anna informed

the group that the Department of Ecology declined to participate citing a lack of resources.

- iii. After a short break, it was suggested and agreed upon that voting members should sit at the table with name cards.
- iv. The Watershed Group directed KCCD to reach out to the groups who have declined the invitation due to lack of capacity (e.g. Kittitas County Conservation Coalition, The Nature Conservancy) and encourage them to participate, as well as reaching out to additional groups (e.g. KEEN) to add environmental interests.

III. VSP Process

- a. Jim invited Evan Sheffels with the Farm Bureau to talk with the group about the history of VSP. Evan also shared his experience with the VSP processes in Thurston and Chelan Counties, including a discussion about the operating procedures or ground rules utilized by those counties. Evan shared handouts that are available on the Farm Bureau website at <http://wsfb.com/advocacy-4/voluntary-stewardship-program/>
- b. Anna followed Evan's presentation with a review of the priority watersheds (Upper Yakima and Alkali Squilchuk). A small portion of Kittitas County in the Naches watershed is not included in the VSP process as it is primarily forested and public lands.
- c. Anna reviewed RCW 36.70A.715 including the references to protecting critical areas while maintaining the viability of agriculture, the inclusion of goals and benchmarks for protection and enhancement of the critical areas and the definitions of agricultural activities, enhance and protect.
- d. Anna reviewed the Watershed Group duties as outlined in the RCW and presented a draft prioritization or reordering of those duties in a more logical and sequential order. The first task, to review and incorporate applicable data, was discussed at length as the data available (e.g. wetlands, FEMA maps, etc.) may not be the most accurate or up to date. This is an issue for VSP processes across the state, not just in Kittitas County. The Group will need to use what data is available and make corrections in the plan as best possible. The plan can and should note when and where additional data is needed.

Lunch Break

IV. VSP Process

- a. Watershed Group Ground Rules
 - i. Jim returned the Group to the discussion regarding operating guidelines or ground rules. He polled the membership asking if everyone was okay with the original ground rules list that was passed out and reviewed earlier in the meeting. There were two members that voiced some hesitation, but were okay to move forward at this time.
- b. VSP Process – Anna returned to the power point presentation and discussion from the morning session regarding two watersheds to be included in the plan. The small area of the Naches watershed left out does include potential private grazing leases. It is also primarily forested and forestry is not considered an agricultural activity for inclusion in VSP. The Group questioned whether the Watershed Plan should include activities like private grazing leases on public lands. The grazing leases do impact the activities of the private lands that are the base operations for the livestock producers, and they impact the critical areas even though state and federal lands are not subject to the Growth Management Act. The Group also discussed Anna’s suggested priority or reordering of the duties specified in the RCW and agreed that it made sense and was logical.
- c. The Critical Area maps were reviewed. The Critical Aquifer Recharge Area (CARA) map only represents high risk areas as there is currently no designated CARA in the County. The data sources were discussed and Anna asked the Group what data they would like to review. This list was generated:
 - Wetlands – NWI, any new data
 - Crop mapping
 - Ag areas
 - Priority habitats
 - Species recovery plans
 - TMDLs
 - Slope
 - NRCS Prime farmland

The Group discussed the definition of agricultural practices vs farmland. Tip Hudson suggested that Western SARE has a good definition.

- d. After a short break, Anna reviewed a suggested VSP timeline to work on the duties laid out in the RCW. Funding is currently available until June 2017, but VSP process has 2 years and 9 months. Jim asked for agreement on the timeline as presented and the Group agreed. There was some discussion about waiting for the Thurston and Chelan plans to be presented to the State Review Panel in the interest of learning from the review of those plans in order to learn from

their work and experience. Evan indicated there is a good chance one or both of those counties will have submitted their plan by July. In the meantime, data collection and review can move forward.

- e. The assembly of conservation projects since 2011 was discussed as an important step for baseline conditions.
- f. Clarification was requested about the options if VSP fails in a County. Evan reviewed the RCW 36.70A.735 and the four specific options if failure occurs.

V. Participant Forum

- a. The group discussed options for reviewing items decisions made at previous meetings. It was agreed to provide space at each meeting for members to bring up concerns with decisions from previous meetings.
- b. Anna offered to present VSP to any of the groups involved in the Watershed Group or to any other interested groups in the community.
- c. It was requested that minutes be available a month prior to the next meeting.

VI. Action Register

- a. The next meeting was set for Wednesday, July 20, 10:00 am to 2:30. KCCD will look into a new meeting place.

Attachment A

<http://www.kccd.net/VoluntaryStewardship/Watershed%20Group%20Mtg%203-28-2016.pdf>

Attachment B

Ground rules should be used at every meeting. It is both the facilitator and the Participants' responsibility to see that the ground rules are followed.

1. Decision-making - All members are expected to participate in all phases of discussions and decisions. Active voting members will endeavor in good faith to reach decisions by consensus on issues. Consensus shall consist of all voting members present, less the support of no more than two voting stakeholder members actively participating, to approve a decision. Those disagreeing may submit a position statement for inclusion in the records of the Watershed Group. Active participation for purposes of voting shall be defined as consistent attendance – not more than one unexcused absence in the previous three scheduled meetings.

2. Respect for Interests - The Voluntary Stewardship Watershed Group members represent a full range of interests related to protecting critical areas and sustainable agriculture in the County. Every idea has merit; all the members recognize the legitimacy of the interests and concerns of the other members and expect that their interests will also be respected.

3. Suspend Assumptions, Listen Carefully, Speak to Educate - The members commit to suspending assumptions about each other's interests, to listen carefully to each other, to recognize each person's concerns, to ask questions for clarification, and to make statements that attempt to educate or explain.

4. Creativity - The members commit to search for opportunities, options, and alternatives. The creativity of the group often finds the best solution.

5. Open Dialogue - The members agree that they have a responsibility to discuss the issues and plan development, and to use open and candid communication with each other. The purpose of the frank discussion is to bring issues out in the open, provide greater understanding of member's perspectives, share insights, reduce hostilities, and build trust.

6. Working with Media and Public - No individual member will speak on behalf of the Watershed Group without the consent of the group. Press releases may be issued from time to time based on decisions of the group. Individual members are, however, encouraged to discuss the Watershed Group activities and the VSP project with others, so long as they do not claim to represent the Watershed Group.

7. Advisory Process, Open Meetings - All committee meetings will be open to the public. Observers are welcome to attend the committee meetings. The Watershed Group will occasionally schedule special meetings to provide information to the public and to solicit public comment and feedback. Summaries of each meeting and important decision will be posted on the Watershed Group website.

8. Freedom to Disagree - The members agree to disagree. The point of our interaction together is to foster open discussion of ideas. We need to respect each other's right to disagree so this can happen.

9. Speaking - One person will speak at a time, and Facilitators will make every effort to assure that everyone will have an opportunity to speak. The facilitator will recognize each speaker.

10. Attendance - Attendance is critical to the success of this planning process. Each member will take the responsibility to get the information they missed due to an absence. Non-(poor) attendance leaves an interest without a representative. Members may waive the opportunity to participate in decisions due to lack of attendance.

11. Vulnerability Acknowledged - When people are candid with each other it can make them vulnerable. Members agree that what is said during the committee meetings is to bring all the issues "to the table." The information will not be used against the individual at a later time.

12. Responsibility to meet needs - Each member will take the responsibility for getting their needs met, for getting the needs of those they represent met, and for getting the needs of the other members met.

13. Responsible statements - Committee members are responsible for the statements that they make to the other committee members as well as to the public regarding the work of the committee.

14. Start on time - Committee members agree to start the meetings on time and end them on time.

Unless there's an emergency responding to cell phones, telephone messages, etc. will wait until the members are on a break, or the meeting is over.