

**Yakima County Voluntary Stewardship Program  
Meeting Notes - Workgroup Meeting #5  
August 5, 2016 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
North Yakima Conservation District Office**

In attendance:

Eric Bartrand	Frank Hendrix
Justin Bezold	Dave Holland
Betsy Bloomfield	Frank Lyall
Jackie Brophy	John Marvin
Laurie Crowe	Jason McCormick
Stuart Crane	Zach Meyer
Lynn Deitrick	Troy Schilperoot
Bill Eller	Gail Thornton
Jack Field	Michael Tobin
Steve George	Kerry Turley
Byron Gumz	
Ranie Haas	

Project Staff: Neil Aaland, Lisa Grueter, Sarah Sandstrom

Welcome and introductions:

Facilitator Neil Aaland opened the meeting and asked attendees in the room to introduce themselves. Neil reviewed the agenda.

Updates

a. Review latest mapping

Lisa Grueter opened this discussion. A link to updated maps was sent to the work group. Mike Tobin and others have filled in some of the gaps. Designation of “rangeland” has been removed from the training grounds, and added to the westerly portion of the county (national forest lands) where appropriate. Mike noted the USFS lands are multi-purpose; it was decided to code them differently than just “rangelands”. Other comments from the workgroup:

- Wilderness areas don’t have grazing
- Need to check with Yakama Tribe on working lands on the reservation
- WDFW has grazing on some of its lands

Lisa noted they are comfortable enough with the information to show the overlap with Critical Areas. The live link circulated to the work group is updated regularly. Table 5 in the memo describing this mapping discusses some acreage numbers in areas of intersect. There were some comments about what constitutes “waters of the state”.

Neil noted that if there is a question about what constitutes a critical area, the default will be what the county would define as a critical area.

Neil asked the group what general impressions the mapping provides. Thoughts from the work group included:

- The data table is critical, to help focus our attention
- There is a high potential to have more to consider in mapping out voluntary programs than previously thought; e.g. is a stream “real”
- Irrigation efficiencies have led to changes in critical areas – e.g. piping has reduced some flows
- We know what streams we want to be working in; tribe is most concerned about anadromous fish
- WDFW will expect, where waters of the state are flowing, to have protection
- Glossary to describe terminology (e.g. ephemeral, intermittent streams) will be useful

b. *Update: Summary of Related Watershed Management, Species Recovery, Water Quality, and Farmland Preservation Plans*

Sarah Sandstrom described how she has updated this document. The purpose is to identify issues, strategies, and monitoring that have been occurring through other programs that we can use in the VSP work plan. She showed some examples from the Rock Glade watershed plan. For example, the issue of reliable water supply has some related goals, benchmarks, implementation monitoring components, and effectiveness monitoring approaches. Comments and questions included:

- The Rock Glade plan had some statements about reducing pesticide uses; if pesticides are applied to riparian lands in accordance with labels that should not be discouraged
  - Mike Tobin said the message to him is that he could use those as a suggestion to develop a voluntary integrated pest management component
- These plans sometimes lead us away from our tasks; the hard part will be ten years out
- A key issue is there are limited resources; one reason for VSP is to not lose farmers and ranchers

c. *Technical Service Providers*

A memo was included with the packet of information describing the requirement to designate technical service provider(s), and including a table of potential providers. The workgroup thinks the two Conservation Districts are primary Technical Service Providers, and there is a list of other providers who can assist. Additional comments included:

- Include land trusts
- Trout Unlimited interacts with water users
- Yakima Basin Integrated Plan (YBIP) Habitat Subcommittee, and other components, can assist; very important to connect with YBIP
- Ecology is a provider
- Mid-Columbia Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group is a provider

- U.S. EPA provides services on the reservation

Continue discussion: key agricultural sectors in Yakima County

Lisa explained that this section of the work plan, as discussed at previous meetings, is to capture how the plan will describe the agricultural context. The document circulated with the meeting materials called “Agricultural Context” uses information from several different sources. Lisa met with Frank Hendrix and Frank Lyall to seek their input.

Comments and observations from workgroup members included:

- Frank Lyall thinks this does a good job of capturing their conversation; suggests adding a paragraph regarding measuring the economic structure (per capita income in Yakima versus the state; family income; rank of the county nationally; average farm income)
- Frank Hendrix also agreed it captured their conversation; want to characterize working relationships
- Add a paragraph describing how much production leaves the state
- Re-check the figure of 70,000 mares – is that horses?
- Food processing is a huge segment of the Yakima economy

Conservation Practices

Laurie Crowe gave a presentation on typical conservation practices used in the South Yakima Conservation District. One main focus is on water delivery conversions. Cost share rates are around 50%. Projects include solid set irrigation systems, tail water recovery systems, and concrete settling basins. She noted that 50% of solids go out of the valley – sold as compost.

Frank Lyall had several comments. He said no-till practices have their place, but some farmers don’t think they help with productivity. Laurie noted that deciding on practices is site-specific. She also said she does not do a lot of fish habitat restoration projects due to the critical areas present in SYCD. There are differences in critical areas between the two districts.

Lisa said conservation plans prepared through the VSP work plan provide good opportunities. Evan Sheffels noted the conservation checklist idea that Chelan and Thurston had pioneered.

Dave Holland suggested considering a case study on a small creek to demonstrate how to apply and implement conservation practices.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12 pm. Following adjournment, the video on the Open Public Meetings Act was shown to several workgroup members who had not previously received the training.

**Next meeting: Thursday, August 25 from 1:00 to 3:00 at the North Yakima Conservation District.**