

**Yakima County Voluntary Stewardship Program  
Meeting Notes - Workgroup Meeting #12  
February 23, 2017 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM  
North Yakima Conservation District Office**

In attendance:

Eric Bartrand, WDFW  
Betsy Bloomfield, CCC  
David Child, YBJB  
Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation  
Laurie Crowe, SYCD  
Lynn Deitrick, Yakima Co  
Bill Eller, WSCC  
Steve George, Dairy Federation  
Byron Gumz, Yakima Co

Rodney Heit, SYCD  
Frank Hendrix, Ag Industries  
Frank Lyall, YCFB  
John Marvin, Yakama Nation  
Eric Olson, Honey Bees  
Arden Thomas, WWT  
Michael Tobin, NYCD  
Kerry Turley, Yakima Audubon

Project Staff: Neil Aaland, Sarah Sandstrom, Lisa Grueter

Welcome and introductions:

Facilitator Neil Aaland opened the meeting at 1:00 pm and asked attendees in the room to introduce themselves.

Public Comment: No members of the public were present to offer any public comment.

Outreach: The workgroup discussed additions to the table of potential outreach activities at the last meeting. Neil updated the table, and added information describing outreach in several phases: establishing the workgroup, outreach during the work plan development process, and outreach following plan approval. He noted that part of the intent of this chapter is to describe outreach required by the statute, and to document outreach that had already happened.

Workgroup members had a number of suggestions for outreach activities:

- Betsy said they gave a presentation to the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan committee; her suggestion is to give an informal presentation
- Eric Olson said Grant County has someone going to various ag groups
- Mike Tobin thinks the table should be a living document, amended to reflect ongoing activities
- Frank Lyall said large ag companies will have a specific point person, smaller it will be one person; this is two different focal points, smaller vs. larger
- Steve George said we need to target ones who can participate in VSP
- Mike thinks there are two types of education, implementation of VSP in the broad sense AND targeted at people who can participate
- Arden reminded us to track all things that have been done for the implementation phase
- Betsy wonders about new growers, targeted outreach to them

- Eric Bartrand noted that outreach needs to both sell and inform, explain why someone needs to participate in VSP including protecting critical areas.

### Stewardship Plan Checklist

Neil reviewed the homework assignment: all workgroup members were asked to fill out the checklist as if they were filling it out for their own property. The intent was to see what impressions workgroup members had about the checklist, any ideas on revising it to be more useful and effective. Lisa Grueter explained that there were two versions, one is the “short form” that would be filled out by the grower. The second is the “long form” that would be filled out by the technical service provider. The intent is to track at the basin level.

Comments on the “short form” from workgroup members included:

- Frank Hendrix thinks the short form worked well, is a good way to capture it
- First two pages are good, rest seemed a little incomplete
- Arden liked the format and length, wondered about the distinctions being drawn here between riparian cover and riparian forest
- Betsy likes this approach
- David liked it; he flagged some things he was doing that he didn’t realize were good practices per VSP
- Frank Lyall said it was difficult to capture every BMP; the more general, the better – helps to engage people
- Betsy suggested adding a comment line – “have you seen any changes?”
- Mike doesn’t think he would send out the short form; he would rather help them fill it out
- Arden and Lynn thought the issue of privacy and confidentiality should be mentioned
- Steve George is confused about the intent; we need to have the CD fill this out, not the property owner
- It was suggested that filling out the form is the second step; the first 1-2 pages could be mailed out in advance as the first contact
- Betsy wonders if this is the basis for holding workshops
- Eric Bartrand is not seeing the carrot – funding
- Add grazing to the short form

The workgroup only briefly discussed the longer form. One suggestion was to not use the word “exclude” on this form.

### Goals and Benchmarks

Sarah introduced this topic. Based on today’s discussion, we will come back in March with a “track changes” version for the entire document. We’re interested in highlighting the key issues, not detailed points for today. One thought is to consider more “lumping” of critical area benchmarks. The county already lumps critical areas in this way. We also have a few ideas for consideration regarding performance metrics.

One discussion topic was on “irrigation efficiencies with non-consumptive use agreements” as a performance metric for water quantity. Frank Lyall wondered about the need for the last part. Steve thinks it is more of a water quality issue, since quantity has already been adjudicated. Arden agreed and suggested moving irrigation efficiencies to the water quality benchmark. She also suggested striking “minimum flows”; make it clear that improving instream flows is an enhancement benchmark, since baseline water rights usage has been adjudicated.

Under water quality, clarify meaning of “riparian condition”.

Sarah asked if there are any ongoing water quality monitoring activities specific to agriculture. Betsy noted that TMDLs are happening in several basins. David Child said that turbidity is monitored at the Roza irrigation district drain. Frank Lyall noted that most turbidity improvement work has been done prior to the baseline year of July 2011.

Mike Tobin said water quality monitoring makes him nervous. This does not tell us how effective VSP is. He supports the idea of indirectly monitoring effect on water quality by evaluating how conservation practices are implemented (i.e. fenciness of a fence).

Eric Bartrand thinks change detection with imagery would pick up information helpful to assessing effectiveness for water quality and riparian habitat, but also for shrub-steppe (although it can't differentiate between broadleaf plants).

John Marvin suggested a good goal would be to measure stream sinuosity. Eric Bartrand agreed and thought that this is something that the aerial photography analysis could pick up.

The meeting ended at 3:00 p.m.

**Next meeting: Thursday, March 23 from 1:00 to 3:00 at the North Yakima Conservation District.**