

**Yakima County Voluntary Stewardship Program
Meeting Notes - Workgroup Meeting #8
November 18, 2016 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
North Yakima Conservation District Office**

In attendance:

Eric Bartrand	Frank Hendrix
Betsy Bloomfield	Dave Holland
David Child	Frank Lyall
Stuart Crane	John Marvin
Laurie Crowe	Eric Olson
Lynn Deitrick	Michael Tobin
Steve George	Kerry Turley
Byron Gumz	

Project Staff: Neil Aaland, Sarah Sandstrom, Lisa Grueter

Welcome and introductions:

Facilitator Neil Aaland opened the meeting at 10:00 am and asked attendees in the room to introduce themselves. He reminded workgroup members that they decided to keep the December meeting on the 22nd (the regular meeting day), but wanted to reconfirm at today's meeting. Reconfirmed to keep it on the 22nd.

Information from John Marvin regarding beavers and water supply

Neil explained that John had asked him to send around information regarding beavers and water supply. John summarized the information, and Neil asked the workgroup for comments. Mike Tobin agrees with the benefits discussed, and noted these are also benefits to maintaining viable agriculture. The CD has a conservation practice that mimics functions provided by beaver dams. Structures added to streams add structure, as well as protecting ag viability. Steve George agreed that this is a good idea. There are some issues; these would be site specific, don't want to flood farm lands. Frank Lyall said we would also need the option to be able to control beavers. Mike noted that a function is out of balance and beavers might be a tool. Eric Bartrand said he would check on WDFW's position.

Review Sections of Draft Workplan

Based on workgroup discussions at previous meetings, the consultant team has prepared these chapters for review today: introduction, agricultural context, and background information from other plans. The workgroup has previously seen earlier versions of the first two chapters.

Introduction: Lisa reviewed the introduction. Comments from the workgroup:

- Add a description about the consequences of "failing out" of VSP
- Discussion about voting members. Neil asked Lynn if the County wanted to be a voting member; Lynn said no, the county is there to serve as a resource and does not want to be a voting member.

Lisa then reviewed the agricultural viability chapter. She explained that conservation practices will be discussed in another chapter. This chapter talks more about the agricultural economy. A definition of agricultural viability has been added.

Eric Olson said a discussion about pollinators and pollinator-friendly practices would be useful. Eric Bartrand noted that in 1.0, first paragraph, drainage should be added to the list: “Regional agriculture relies heavily on irrigation, drainage, and water rights...” Frank Lyall agreed, and asked that the ornamental industry and vegetable crops be added. For livestock, it was noted that grass-fed beef are a higher value than grain-fed beef. It was decided to use the term “cattle” rather than “beef cows”.

Next chapter discussed was background information. Sarah reviewed this chapter, noting that the topic has been reviewed before but this chapter has been newly written. Much of the discussion will be in the appendices. It was suggested that the chapter include USFS plans, which might address grazing; and WDNR plans, for the same reason.

Sarah noted that we have not discussed the “regulatory backstop” yet. That will be included in the appendix with more detail than this summary. There was a discussion about the relationship of VSP with SMA. New agriculture in the area under SMA jurisdiction would have hard buffers. Sarah will follow up with Byron Gumz on the relationship. John Marvin suggested that SEPA needs to be discussed, and the “open space agriculture” tax designation could be a tool. David Childs noted that salmon recovery plans should be included.

Critical Area Functions, Issues, and Potential VSP Goals. As with previous meetings, the workgroup then turned to continuing to brainstorm potential goals for specific critical areas. The workgroup discussion points were captured on flip-charts by Lisa and Sarah. These notes have been typed up, and are attached to these meeting notes as Appendix One.

Specific comments included:

- For Geo-hazards, focusing on what’s in the intersection of geo hazards and agriculture, not a lot of intersection
- In response to a question about how often the county must address geo hazards with agriculture, Byron Gumz said not very often – there are some active alluvial fans
- Betsy noted that spring flash floods have wiped out farm roads; one idea might be to have a goal to obtain engineering resources to help farm infrastructure be protected
- Aquifer recharge: soil moisture is like the “7th reservoir”
- The county rarely refers to the “aquifer recharge” chapter of the CAO; usually defer to DOH regulations

The meeting ended at 12:00 p.m.

Next meeting: Thursday, December 22 from 1:00 to 3:00 noon at the North Yakima Conservation District.

Attachment One

Yakima County VSP – November 2016 Meeting Flip Chart Notes

CRITICAL AREA GOALS

Wetlands / Floodplain

- County goals (CAR / Comp plan)
 - Quantity
 - Quality
 - Connectivity
- Beavers, beaver dams, mowing, burning (management for defined purpose)
- Floodplain connectivity
- No net loss / increase where possible
 - Do not consider wetlands driven by irrigation.
 - Qty? Functions?
 - Challenge in measuring (disagree)
 - Challenge in maintaining wetlands driven by irrigation as irrigation efficiencies improved
- Consider artificial wetlands as benefit for enhancement
- Enhance floodplain processes for water storage
- County floodplain management (FLZD) Comp. Flood Hazard Management Plans

Geologically Hazardous Areas

- Including channel migration zones (definition important)
 - Steep slopes
 - Landslide hazards
 - Seismic hazards
- Intersect?
- Control runoff / irrigation practices to limit runoff to steep slopes
- Success with Roza (RSBOJC) Irrigation District reducing turbidity in runoff

Aquifer Recharge

- GWMA and integrated plan
- Floodplain percolation preferred over injection for water quality
- Other rules/regulations
 - DOH
 - Stormwater control
- Manage drainage networks
- Enhance organic matter in soil to improve moisture content
 - No till
 - Manure application
 - Double cropping
- Storage of potential contaminants (e.g. petroleum)
- Coordinated / Integrated recharge
 - Integrated plan

AG VIABILITY GOALS

Wetlands / Floodplain

- See county goals in comp plan
 - Quantity
 - Quality
 - Connectivity
- Incentives – address
- Habitat farming
 - Wenatchee community college
 - Jay Gorden
 - Site specific
- Burning – defined purpose
- CRP
- Tax breaks
- No value judgment re: habitat farming v. ag.
- Voluntary support for artificial wetlands option for natural water quality filter
- What is baseline of wetlands for no net loss? Changed over 100 years
- No net loss – natural only
- Increase / enhance voluntarily
 - Soggy area
- Focus away from surface irrigation
 - Prob. less artificial wetlands in lower valley
- Wetlands v. instream flow
- Enhance floodplains for storage / groundwater recharge natural floodplain
- Flood safety – dissipating energy, bridges not critical areas focus
- County flood program – part of salmon recovery
 - Reconnection Comp. Flood Hazard Management Plans (FCZD)
- Animal pads – example
- Control noxious weeds in riparian areas
 - Weeds of west
 - Control invasive weeds
 - Less herbicides
- What's good for pollinators – several on weed list

Geologically Hazardous Areas

- Dense, deep rooted veg, help avoid erosion
- Landslides – earthquakes– outside VSP scope, not Ag related
- Not really an issue with lack of precipitation
 - Reducing runoff
 - Irr. District example
- Alluvial fans, washout roads, engineering resources – protect infrastructure, education
 - Redesign on road on ranch

Aquifer Recharge

- Percolation better than injection

- Ag. Benefit to recharge
- Soil moisture 7th reservoir
- Drainage networks help aquifers
- Recharge most applicable
- Enhance organic material in soils
 - Site specific optional
 - Credit practices
 - Double cropping, no till, increase organic matter
- Ecosystem market log and monetize
- Where placing fuel tanks, etc.
- Wenas Creek, well casings
 - Integrated plan, connect dots