

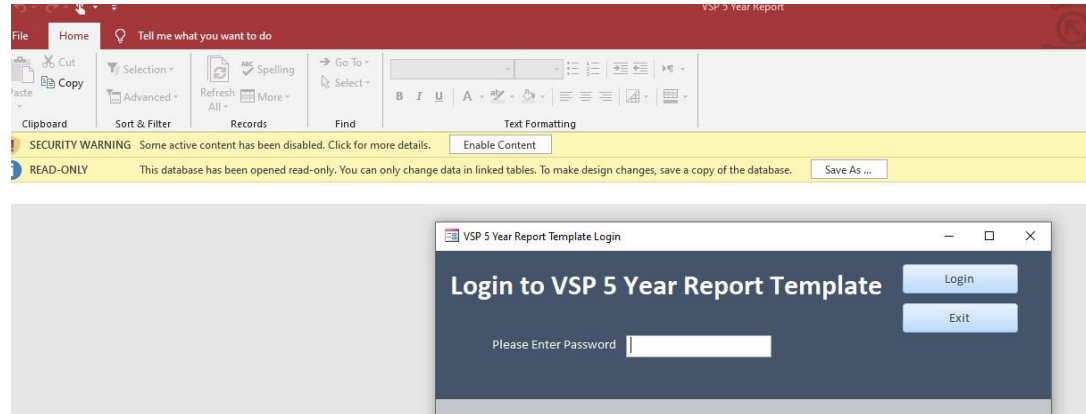
# Yakima VSP Work Group

Meeting:  
November 19,  
2020

# Agenda

- Monitoring Template Update
- Shrub-Steppe Expert Panel Results
- Updated Monitoring Results
  - Conservation Practices and Enhancement Goals and Benchmarks
  - Protection Goals and Benchmarks – Data Follow Up
  - Participation Goals & Benchmarks
- Discussion
- Final Steps

# Monitoring Template Update



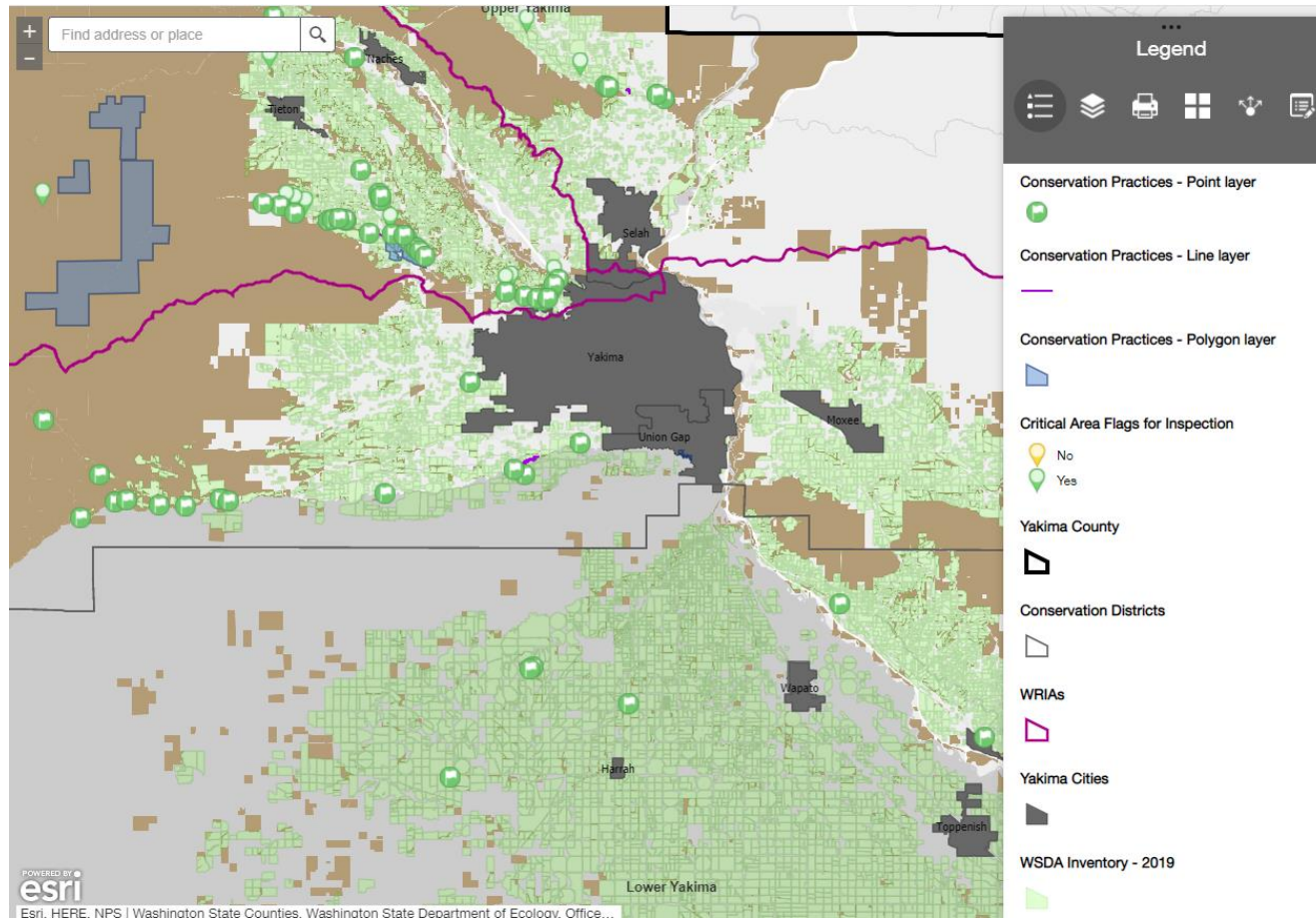
Access Database  
Sent out in early November  
In progress

- Goals and Benchmarks Results
  - Adaptive Management
- Strategies and Benchmarks Results
  - Adaptive Management
- Participation Goals, Benchmarks and Metrics
- Critical Area Function Monitoring Details
  - Adaptive Management
- Report Approval and Finalize for Submission

# Shrub-Steppe Expert Panel Results

- Work Plan: biennially and every five years, ...commission imagery interpretation, surveys, and convene an expert panel on fish and wildlife conditions.
- October 14, 2020 meeting:
  - WDFW
  - Pacific Northwest National Laboratories
  - Washington Department of Natural Resources
  - Washington State University Extension
  - Yakima Training Center
- Mapping and modeling of shrub-steppe is difficult.
- Priorities for monitoring and enhancement:
  - Combine imagery analysis with ownership.
  - Private rangeland most important to review at lower elevations.
    - If federal land burns then more pressure on private lands.
    - North slope looks good. South slope looks rough.
    - Consider protecting areas with water sources.
- Landscape goals:
  - Maintain or increase perennial grass cover.
  - Emphasize importance of preventing healthy shrub-steppe from converting to undesirable stable state.
- What conservation practices for agriculture would work best in Yakima?
  - Consider novel grazing cheatgrass in fall and winter.
  - Incentives – Conservation grazing.

# Conservation Practices Mapped



Basin	NYCD	SYCD
Lower Yakima	20	41
Naches	40	
Upper Yakima	15	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>42</b>

# Enhancement Benchmarks/Metrics

## Critical Low Flow ✓

- Benchmark: Increase flow in critical reaches during critical low flow period.
- Methods: BMPs for irrigation, water resource agreements, Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (YBIWRMP) monitoring results.
- Results:
  - Irrigation: WSDA thousands of acres in more efficient system
  - Conservation Practices: 17, 306.5 acres
  - Water Resource Agreements: 4 agreements, 93 acres, 9,351 lineal feet
  - Summarize Yakima Basin Implementation and Water Supply Reports

## Floodplain ✓

- Benchmark: Increase floodplain connectivity, groundwater recharge, and instream habitat complexity.
- Method Tracking tool: Floodplain and stream restoration projects implemented.
- Results:
  - 6 projects, about 1,815 lineal feet of creek enhanced, 0.23 acres of barriers removed, 2.36 acres of connected floodplain retained

# Enhancement Benchmarks/Metrics

## Riparian ✓

- Benchmark: Re-establish or enhance riparian vegetation to improve instream habitat, shading of stream, and other water quality functions:
- Methods:
  - Tracking tool: The number and extent of BMPS or voluntary enhancements that address native species.
  - Sample areas using site visits by technical assistance providers.
  - Remote sensing imagery interpretation ... Equivalent alternatives to imagery interpretation include: conservation practice implementation (Tracking Tool), Technical Provider field visits, periodic watershed assessments by experts.
- Results:
  - Tree/Shrub Establishment: 12 projects, 6.5 acres
  - Livestock: Off-site watering, 9 projects
  - Riparian Fence: 17 projects, 11,567 lineal feet

## Surface and Groundwater Quality ✓

- Manage nutrients, pathogens, and other contaminants to improve surface and groundwater quality.
- Methods:
  - Tracking tool: The number and extent of best management practices that address water quality and nutrient management.
  - Percent of irrigation water management plans and soil nutrient monitoring plans meeting objectives.
  - Ongoing water quality monitoring in agricultural drains and Lower Yakima Groundwater Management Area
- Results:
  - See Critical Low Flow on irrigation water management.
  - Nutrient Management 14 plans, Pond Liners 7, Waste Storage Structures 5, Manure Transfer 1
  - Monitoring – obtain more information on monitoring from SYCD

# Enhancement Benchmarks/Metrics

## Fish Passage ✓

- Benchmark: Improve fish passage conditions related to agriculture.
- Method: Survey fish passage barriers via available information from the North Yakima Conservation District and Washington State Fish Passage Map or any available fish passage data.
- Results:
  - 17 Compliant Fish Screens

## Wetlands ✓

- Benchmark: Enhance wetland functions and values.
- Method: Wetland area, and cover, as detected using Ecology's Wetland Change Analysis, if it becomes available. In the interim, riparian cover in areas intersecting mapped wetlands and agriculture will be used as a proxy.
- Results:
  - See Riparian
  - No Ecology Change Analysis
  - Tracking Tool: 1 wetland enhancement project



# Enhancement Benchmarks/Metrics

## Biodiversity: Shrub-Steppe Enhancement and Habitat Connectivity\*

- Benchmark: Improve biodiversity of shrub-steppe habitats.
- Benchmark: Improve habitat connectivity in important linkage areas or pinch points.
- Methods:
  - Remote sensing imagery interpretation ... Equivalent alternatives ...include: conservation practice implementation (Tracking Tool), Technical Provider field visits, periodic watershed assessments ...
  - Mapped area of habitat connectivity corridors including linkages and pinch points.
  - Site visits by technical assistance providers.
- Results: **Discuss next steps**
  - Prescriptive grazing and grazing management on land in range purchased by WDFW but continuing some ag activity (~2 locations and over 320 acres in Naches)
  - One site: wood jam activating floodplain to allow grazing management
  - Shrub-steppe panel: future focus on conservation grazing

## Shrub-Steppe – Fire Enhancement\*

- Benchmark: Reduce fire risk to shrub-steppe habitat.
- Methods:
  - Tracking tool: The number and extent of best management practices that address cheatgrass or other invasive species.
  - Fire plan preparation. This includes a willing landowner working with a technical provider to create fire breaks or other management techniques. ...
  - Site visits by technical assistance providers.
  - Remote sensing imagery interpretation ... Equivalent alternatives to imagery interpretation include: conservation practice implementation (Tracking Tool), Technical Provider field visits, periodic watershed assessments by experts.
- Results: **Discuss next steps**
  - Conservation Practice: 1 in progress fuel break, green strip
  - Remote sensing results: trend of reduced bare ground; 2011-2017 increased grass, 2017-19 shrub reestablishing
  - Areawide Fire Plans: Summarize plans from <https://www.yakimacounty.us/396/Wildfires>.

# Enhancement Benchmarks/Metrics

## Pollinators Enhancement \*

- Benchmark: Improve the abundance and diversity of native pollinators.
- Methods:
  - Tracking tool: Voluntary enhancements or added best management practices to improve pollinator habitat.
  - WSU baseline of acres in bloom and forage in crop land is not yet available.
- Results:
  - 30 IPM practices countywide
  - 2 cover crop results
  - GS Long contact in progress

## Geologic Hazards ✓

- Benchmark: Manage irrigation practices and agricultural activities to maintain integrity of steep slopes by: Avoiding increases in erosion. Avoiding steep slopes or helping to stabilize steep slopes where practical. Avoiding irrigating unstable slopes.
- Methods:
  - Tracking tool: The number and extent of best management practices addressing slope stability and erosion.
  - Identify areas subject to erosion for vegetative cover using site visits by technical assistance providers.
  - Evaluate water quality monitoring of sediments in hydrologic study areas, where such results can be attributed to agricultural activities.
  - Remote sensing imagery interpretation ...
- Results:
  - Cover Crops: 2
  - Tillage Management/No-Till: 7
  - Access Road: 1
  - Water Quality: See Surface and Ground Water

# Protection Results Follow Up

- Wetlands and Riparian Protection:
  - Suggestion with lack of imagery information to review code enforcement results for areas of change
    - Ecology – 1 case in Naches basin since 2011 to remove illegal fill in floodplain and restore shoreline
    - Yakima County: unknown, difficulty reach staff

# Participation Goals & Benchmarks Status

- Direct Participation: Benchmark: Sufficient participation by commercial and non-commercial agricultural operators that achieves the protection of critical area functions and values across WRIA basins.
  - NYCD: Every two years, survey VSP eligible producers across basins, and directly contact 20 percent of producers about VSP program. Guide technical provider resources based on priorities in Work Plan ...
  - SYCD: Every two years, contact VSP eligible producers about VSP program, targeting between 100 to 200 producers. Provide technical assistance or education annually on average to 35 to 65 producers. Direct technical provider resources based on priorities in Work Plan ...
  - [Number participants annually since 2017.]
- Indirect Participation: Appears sufficient – WSDA inventory, Census of Agriculture.

# Agricultural Viability

## Reduction of Ag in Naches

- Cessation: WDFW purchased the 4600 acre Van Wyk property in 2019. Converting it from ag / rangeland to state ownership.
- Limited: 2014 WDFW purchased rangeland from Tieton Cattle Company limited grazing prescriptions

## Ag Conservation in Naches

- Ag Continuing with Development Rights Purchase ~73 acres in Naches

### Area of Focus:

- Conservation Grazing and Public-Private Reciprocal Grazing
- Work with WSU Extension and Kittitas County

# Discussion

- Participation goals/benchmarks
- Areas where data is limited or implementation / monitoring is early
- Statement on Ag Viability

# Next Steps

- Full Report in format for Tool Input – draft Mid December
- Work Group Meeting in late December
- Submittal Prior to 1/21/21