

Minutes

Yakima County Voluntary Stewardship Program
Thursday November 19, 2020
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

1. Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Overview.

Meeting was conducted via Zoom in video and by phone. Chairman Gail Thornton was unavailable and Michael Tobin from the NYCD took lead to help administratively with the meeting. Participants included: Eric Bartrand WDFW; Scott Downes, WDFW; Erin Eaton, Trout Unlimited; Byron Gumz, Yakima County; Rodney Heit, SYCD; Mark Herke, Farm Bureau; John Marvin, Yakama Nation; Eric Olsen, Orchardist and Commercial Beekeeping; Dave Taylor, Dairy Federation; Michael Tobin, NYCD; and Megan Whiteside, Cowiche Canyon Conservancy.

2. Review September 2020 meeting minutes

Michael Tobin asked the Work Group Members for approval of the September 2020 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Eric Olsen and Seconded by Mark Herke to approve the minutes. By consensus, the Work Group approved the minutes.

3. Public Comment

None

4. 5-Year Report

Lisa Grueter with BERK Consulting took lead of the meeting to review the summary of enhancement benchmarks and results of the monitoring report, and walked through the meeting materials.

Work Group comments included:

- **John Marvin suggested some sources for water quality reports including a lower Yakima River working group.¹**
- **Scott Downes suggested he could provide information on a greenstrips project in the Blackrock area for fire management in shrub-steppe. For bees and pollinator habitat contact WSU extension.²**
- **Rodney Heit described that for soil moisture monitoring, and no-till, he monitors 2-3 times over a growing season.**
- **Regarding how to show wetlands protection with limited available data, we could look at code enforcement. The Ecology enforcement on Nile Creek was not agriculture but rather recreational. There was a County enforcement related to wetlands in an agricultural field in Sunnyside March 2020, but it has been resolved.**

¹ Contact marcella-appel@conservewa.net at Benton County Conservation District, also see Ecology TMDL Reports <https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Water-quality/Water-improvement/Total-Maximum-Daily-Load-process/Directory-of-improvement-projects/Mid-Yakima-Basin-Bacteria-TMDL>

² <http://entomology.wsu.edu/directory/faculty/david-g-james/>

- **Michael Tobin described a working lands concept to maintain agricultural viability; traditional agriculture on public lands. He described a conservation easement of 450 acres at Cowiche Creek.**
- **Michael Tobin suggested a statement of agricultural viability be included in the introduction.**
- **Byron Gumz indicated he could provide some information on agricultural parcels/segregations**

5. Administrative Items

- NYCD Report on Outreach & Cost Shares
Michael Tobin described the steelhead project on Wenas Creek. They have made a RCCP application with the Yakama Nation. Also about 107 letters were sent to producers along the Wenas Creek about habitat and fish screens.
- SYCD Report on Outreach & Cost Shares
Rodney Heit described sending out 30 mailings, and having 3-4 direct contacts. Rodney indicated they have been working on three large waste storage lining projects. They are planning to expand No Till to include fuel breaks.

6. Next Steps and Adjourn

The Yakima Work Group is scheduled to meet next on December 29, 2020 from 1-4 pm at which time Yakima County's final 5-year report will be finalized for submission.

Meeting adjourned