

Minutes
Yakima County Voluntary Stewardship Program
Tuesday, June 28, 2022
1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

1. Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Overview

Meeting was conducted in person with a Zoom option. Mike Tobin facilitated the meeting in the absence of the chair. Participants included: Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation; Erin Eaton, Trout Unlimited; Bill Eller, State Conservation Commission; Lisa Grueter, BERK; Rodney Heit, SYCD; Mark Herke, Yakima County Farm Bureau; Frank Lyall, Yakima County Farm Bureau; Eric Olsen, Orchardist and Commercial Beekeeping.

2. Minutes

Mike Tobin asked the Work Group Members for approval of the March 22, 2022 meeting minutes. With the correction to add Frank Lyall to the participants, a motion was made by Eric Olsen and seconded by Frank Lyall to approve the minutes as corrected. By consensus, the Work Group approved the minutes.

3. Public Comment

There were no members of the public in attendance.

4. Statewide Advisory Committee/Tech Panel June Meeting Debrief

Mike Tobin and Lisa Grueter shared highlights of the Statewide Advisory Committee/Tech Panel meeting including some of the slides shared for the meeting especially on ag viability and solar projects.

5. Ag Viability / Solar Outreach Update

Mike Tobin identified some responses to the letter the Work Group had sent to each Work Group. More responses are likely after the work groups meet at their next meeting. Mike discussed the barrier that the solar projects can become to agriculture viability and migrating species (at ½ mile wide). The issue is being discussed with the Washington Association of Conservation Districts. Need agriculture profitability to blunt the attractiveness of selling for solar projects. Siting is the most dangerous pieces. Mark Herke asked about the amount of conversion due to the projects and if it is technically still in agriculture if solar is considered “temporary.”

6. Monitoring/ Adaptive Management

Mike Tobin, Rodney Heit, and Lisa Grueter shared impressions of the field test results conducted in May with the Department of Natural Resources. It was a tool that could be used to field check spatial mapping results, or develop conservation practices. It is a pretty detailed process and could be abbreviated.

7. Work Group Member Recruitment

Due to retirements (including Gail Thornton) and other changes with work group members over time, Mike Tobin asked that Work Group members recruit and bring a friend to a future meeting. The Work Group would review operating rules at the next meeting and could elect a chair and vice chair.

8. Administrative Items

SYCD Report on Outreach & Cost Shares: Rodney discussed the status of the Kaiser spring development project, the SR 241 fuel break, livestock feed lot plans, waste separation, manure transfer, and no till drill activities. No till drill was applied on 1200 acres. A range drill is in progress. Deep soil sampling is underway as a pilot project. SVID open ditch to pipeline and irrigation enhancement is also active. Rodney also discussed a Rock Glade basin project to go from CRP to habitat with 4 springs and 1 guzzler. The owner is not planting.

NYCD Report on Outreach & Cost Shares: Mike Tobin discussed the Wenas and Purdin irrigation district projects, fish barrier removal projects, and riparian enhancement projects in Naches and Wenas basins. He also discussed site evaluations/cost shares in the Moxee area with shrub steppe. The 2021 newsletter was distributed.

9. Next Steps and Adjourn

The September meeting will be held on September 27, 2022 (fourth Tuesday of the month).