



Voluntary Stewardship Program

Work Group Meeting, Tuesday, January 21, 2020

Attendees: Ben Floyd, Kristen Balko, Elsa Bowen, Mark Steadman, Braidy Haden, Josh Sherwood, Connor Nikkola, Jason Kunz, Leslie Michel, Pete Wyborney, Carol Paul, Levi Keesecker, Keith Nelson, Val Vissia and Rex Harder. Jon Small, Jeff Schibel, Bill Eller, Ron Mielke and Nikole Stout were on the phone

Meeting started at 2:30 p.m. with Ben Floyd providing a brief overview of the agenda items. The group then introduced themselves.

Kristen Balko explained the cost share application process with LCCD that each applicant on the ranking sheet was required to complete. Connor Nikkola, LCCD's new Natural Resource Planner went on to explain how the projects were ranked using the ranking formula approved by the work group in October. After ranking all qualified projects there were three (3) that ranked in at the highest, scoring 100 on the ranking sheet. Connor pointed out that the ranking formula became a little difficult to use as each category was ranked by 10's: 10, 20, 30. This did not allow for much flexibility which in turn allowed for 19 projects to all score a 90 across the board. Having a little more flexibility with the numbers of the ranking tool and using a system where 15, 25 etc. could be used would help eliminate so many projects ranking the same as there are projects in that group that could be ranked between 90 and 100. Two of those projects are Pam Bahr, sediment basin and Ron Mckay, various projects creating a water facility. These two projects would be considered in the top five even though they ranked a 90 using the current system.

Ben suggested we go ahead and allow more flexibility with the ranking sheet as to eliminate this problem in the future. Work group agreed that this was good idea.

Jason Kunz, wondered if there was a "cookbook" available to help rank projects quickly and were we getting permits for any projects that would be requiring them? Kristen and Val both pointed out that no, there was no "cookbook" but that all applicant had gone thru the complete application process and upon approval from LCCD Board of Supervisors, all projects must meet NRCS standards including permits from all agencies as required. Val reminded the group that \$50,000 with a 75% cost share was approved for 5 projects at \$10,000 each and hopefully there will money left over to fund additional projects, but it was important to stay timely and on track. Kristen reminded the group that all projects that need permitting can get bogged down in the process and it was important to keep moving forward. Ben suggested for the next round of projects a subset group be formed to look at the projects so that there is another set of eyes available to keep the ranking process timely. For now, to keep things moving forward the top ten (10) projects will be emailed to the work group along with, mapping, ranking sheets and Connors notes and comments from ranking the projects.

Comments will be due back to Val from the work group by Monday, February 29th.

Connor Nikkola shared the new interactive map which has all the critical area layers and is available on the LCCD website. It was pointed out that the aquifer layer needs some adjusting and that Connor will work on it.

Val and Connor then went over recent Outreach efforts. 900+ postcards/mailers had been sent to several different drainage/watershed areas in Lincoln County since November. Val and Connor will be attending Highline Grain Growers meetings in February in Odessa, Almira and Reardan and introducing a new program - Coffee and Conversation with District - which will be followed up with postcards and social media marketing. The plan is to create a monthly meeting using this concept across Lincoln County. Targeting areas for this program will be done on interest, availability and applicable information.

Bill Eller provided VSP updates and the introduction of Levi Keesecker, Natural Resource Scientist, Washington State Conservation Commission who attended the meeting. Levi will be available to assist work groups with monitoring and data collecting and is stationed in Spokane. Bill also talked about two (2) separate bills that have VSP implications – SB 6545 – Allowing the 12 non-VSP counties back into VSP if they choose and HB 2549 – Integrating salmon recovery into GMA (impacts VSP) Position: neutral Testimony: yes Message: As the implementing agency for VSP, we have concerns about how the bill's provisions will be implemented. Concern: re impact to VSP counties and workload.

Bill also mentioned that there will be training pages for VSP added to the WSCC website and that there will be guidance available for the 5-yr report in March 2020. There is an online template being created for the 5-yr report for the districts to use. The subsequent 2-yr reports due for most in August 2021 will more than likely stay the same although Bill would like to also see that become a template but does not see that happening due to the nature of the 2-yr reports. The next technical advisory meeting is February 19 and will be available online and you can register on the WSCC website.

Next steps - Comments are due back on the top ten (10) projects Monday, January 27.

Next meetings: April 21, 2:30 PM - WebEx or in person at Public Works depending on content

July 21, 7:00 PM – WebEx

The meeting ended at 3:55 PM