



Voluntary Stewardship Program

Work Group Meeting, Tuesday, April 19 2016

The meeting began at 6:00pm. Elsa Bowen introduced the staff team and the facilitator, Ben Floyd. Ben reviewed the agenda and asked each participant to introduce themselves, and provide a brief perspective on their interest in the process.

Ben gave a brief presentation on the history of the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) process and the Growth Management Act. Critical areas for the Lincoln County VSP have not yet been identified but will be in the development of the VSP work plan. The workgroup gets to decide the level of detail for depicting critical areas and agricultural lands, consistent with state requirements. The workgroup discussed what the voluntary part of VSP means and how it affect participants.

A baseline of critical areas and BMP activities will be established for July 22, 2011. Generally, the lifespan of current conservation projects installed is 10 years. Most of the existing activities will most likely come from the NRCS database. Projects in place prior to July 2011 and still functioning should be documented. The work plan will be approved by the VSP workgroup, then reviewed by a State Technical Advisory panel before going to the State Conservation Commission for their approval.

Ben is also working with several other counties on their VSP work plans. Thurston and Chelan counties were both pilot projects and neither plan has yet to be approved. Lincoln counties unique topography with agriculture land, range land and timber will require a tailored approach in developing the work plan; the workgroup will assist with organizing the County into different areas, with applicable conservation measures applied to these different geographic areas.

Ben shared a presentation on VSP steps, work plan elements and terminology.

Ben also asked the following questions (with responses shown in italics) – **“How would you characterize the producers of Lincoln county?”** *Farmers who want to do the very best jobs and are environmentalist at heart.*

“What will make VSP successful in Lincoln County?”

- *General acceptance of the VSP program*
- *Having cost share dollars available for implementation*
- *The accountability for the things installed*
- *If the plan is beneficial to the user and the environment*
- *If the VSP plan can be marketed to show the importance of what it is accomplishing*

“What is the outreach/information marketing plan?”

The VSP workgroup will rely on its partners for communication avenues already in place, maybe take our

product on the road. The workgroup will ultimately make those decisions.

Ben showed maps of existing vegetation types within the County and the group suggested updates related to depicting rangeland . For precipitation the group would like a more detailed characterization, as it varies substantially from west to east within the County. Also the “wetland” map should be cross-checked with 2011 aerial imager to verify accuracy. NRCS may have some additional information that could be useful, including a 1990s inventory. Also review information in the WRIA 43 and 53 watershed assessments and draft planning documents. **Mapping will be needed for the following –**

- Fish & Wildlife habitat conservation areas. 1987 data point from USFWS might be something to look at. Sage grouse location is an area of concern and knowing the location of them is critical to for protection of them
- Geologic hazards, water erosion, wind erosion from NRCS data maps
- Frequently flooded area – FEMA mapping source
- Critical aquifer recharge area for public drinking water areas (cities and other Class A water systems)

Next steps -

Ground Rules were reviewed and will be approved at the next meeting on June 21, 2016, 7-9pm. The workgroup will operate with consensus. A quorum will be 8 of the 15 local workgroup members. Materials and agendas will be sent out a week in advance of meetings. The following dates and times have been chosen for the next 5 meetings at the Lincoln County Public Works Building.

June 21 7-9pm

July 19 7-9pm – possible webex or conference call

Sept 20 7-9pm

Nov 15 2-4pm

Dec 20 2-4pm

All dates and times will be reserved and confirmed.

Attendees:

Workgroup members:

Jeff Schibel

Keith Schafer

Alexandria Phillipson

Rex Harder

Ron Mielke

Garith Krause

Keith Nelson

Dennis Bly

Mark Stedman

Tom Harding

Craig Madsen

Val Vissia

Elsa Bowen

Other Attendees:

Sue Lani Madsen