



Voluntary Stewardship Program

Work Group Meeting, Tuesday, February 20, 2024

Attendees: Ben Floyd, Elsa Bowen, Delaini Disher, Jeff Schibel, Jason Lowe, Bill Eller, Rex Harder, Elayne Hovde-Knudson, Taylor George, Craig Madsen, Melissa MacKelvie, , Adam Hill, Sean Williams, Ron Mielke and Rex Harder attended via Zoom.

The meeting started at 1:02pm with Ben providing an overview of the agenda and introductions from the attendees.

Recent VSP Coordinator Activities

Delaini gave an update on recent outreach activities, including the use of the VSP mapping tool to find landowner addresses in the Hawk Creek watershed and making a feedback form available on the LCCD VSP web page. This tool allows landowners to report critical areas present on their properties, BMPs that have been or are being applied, and landowner comments/interest in future projects, and questions/concerns. Using this same selection method, the tool can be used to find potential future monitoring and/or project sites. Delaini has also been attending ongoing workgroup meetings with other VSP personnel that meet every other month to share monitoring and outreach progress. She shared that Adam and Taylor will be joining her in late March/early April to install the monitoring stations to collect water flow and temperature data. Additionally, the District will be sending out a ballot for their annual election with information pertaining to LCCD's mission, past and present programs, and information about VSP. She mentioned that Elayne had been in contact with the selected cost share recipients to track their project progress, and that David Carnes has been responsive and is making slight changes to his project, but Carol Beaver has been less responsive. Elayne brought up that she did hear back from Carol this morning, and that hopefully she can get a well driller scheduled soon.

WDFW/BLM Presentation on Shrub Steppe

Ben handed off the meeting to Jason Lowe (Bureau of Land Management) to present on Cheatgrass Management Measures and Monitoring Results near Swanson Lake. Jason shared about and demonstrated the Rangeland Analysis Platform (RAP) that is used to track critical areas across rangeland, including layers that show noxious weeds. He shared the list of herbicides that are commonly used for weed control, and explained their different risks and benefits. He then showed the study design, including dimensions of the plots, a timeline of the study, and application plans. Using an ATV with a sprayer, they sprayed different chemicals on 5 separate transects and had used one control. He shared a graph with the results by herbicide type (including a control) to show the progression of cheatgrass growth over a season.

Another graph showed the control and treated transects 35 days post treatment, where all treated plots showed cheatgrass reduction. Jason went on to discuss the effects different herbicides used in this study have on perennial grasses and forbs, including photos from each site. He finished his presentation with a summary of each herbicide's effect on cheatgrass as well as native forbs, then naming pros and cons of each product. He then answered several questions from the group pertaining to the study and its results.

Ben thanked Jason for sharing the presentation and Jason mentioned that the RAP tool can be very useful for anyone interested in using an interactive map to get better insight on any rangeland property (tool can be accessed at [Rangeland Analysis Platform \(rangelands.app\)](https://rangelands.app)).

Next Steps

Ben discussed upcoming items for the next meeting, which we anticipate on May 21st. Ben mentioned that our monitoring plan is still being adapted to match some of the feedback we've received from the Conservation Commission. This allows us to give a more complete picture of the benefits of VSP and other conservation practices being implemented in Lincoln County. More outreach and monitoring strategy updates will continue to be shared at the next meeting. Delaini also added that Leslie Michael had reached out to schedule a field tour of past VSP project and monitoring sites, which will take place in mid-May. More information on the field day date and agenda to follow.

Elsa brought up the rising interest in proposed wind farms throughout Lincoln County and its potential impact on VSP moving forward. Ben mentioned that the regulations surrounding wind farms would be similar to other regulated practices. Melissa added a link to some updated WDFW guidelines in the chat, as Whitman County has had some similar discussions (guidelines can be found at [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Wind Power Guidelines | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)).

The meeting adjourned at 2:27 pm and the **next meeting will be hybrid (in-person with a virtual option) and is proposed to be scheduled for May 28, 2024 at 7 pm.**