



Voluntary Stewardship Program

Work Group Meeting, Tuesday, January 16, 2018

The meeting started at 1pm with a welcome from Ben Floyd with Vivian Erickson running the power point from Anchor QEA. Review of the agenda and discussion on confirming a meeting in date in February before submittal. Part of today's meeting will review the (4) Public Outreach Meetings that were held in December throughout Lincoln County. Ben asked if there were any questions from the group – there were none.

Public Meetings Summary: December 5 & 6

A total of 41 member of the public, Work Group, members and LCCD staff and support attended the four public meetings. Ben Floyd did a brief presentation on the VSP work plan. It included key stewardship strategies, goals, and benchmarks; an overview of implementation phase of the Work Plan; and the next steps for the Work Plan approval process and how to provide comments on the plan. The presentation is available on the LCCD VSP website.

<https://lincolncd.com/voluntary-stewardship-program.>

Public Comments Summary During Outreach Meetings:

The following were questions and comments were discussed at the public meetings;

- Will VSP affect existing or future NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program contract or other contracts? *No, VSP will only account for the practices that are implemented under these contracts. VSP is a state and local effort that relies in part on information from federal agricultural conservation programs*
- Will my information be released or made public? *No, information will be kept confidential and not made available to the public. Information will be reported at watershed and County levels.*

Ben – confidentiality and aerial imaging was a concern at every meeting. A reminder from Ben that info collected will be a countywide and not a singular landowner summary. Also, we could get very specific with methodology, but we haven't done that yet. Better to keep it more general but will wait and see what the state tech panel suggests.

- What variables will be reviewed in the aerial imaginary evaluations, and will there be a methodology described with qualifiers in the work plan? *National Agriculture Imagery Program aerial information will be reviewed along with Washington State Department of Agriculture and other publicly available information. Changes in climactic conditions, land use, and other factors will be considered. On the ground verification will also occur*
- Is VSP participation based off people or acres? *Participation is based on acres. Ideally, we would like to have as many producers and acres included in the program as possible.*

- Under VSP, do I have to report all my other NRCS programs? *The Conservation District expects to be able to collect this information directly from NRCS. It is hoped that producers will share information on other conservation practices that are producer-funded that can be accounted for under the VSP.*
- Will the plan address natural events? *Natural events and other climactic variation and their corresponding effects on critical areas will be accounted for in the tracking and reporting of VSP performance. Changes to the critical areas from these events will be adjustments to baseline conditions.*

Ben – Lots of questions on Natural Event; fire, floods. Went over how all these were addressed in the Work Plan and that the Work Group had been very diligent in the inclusion of this to the Work Plan.

- Do critical area maps identify natural resources on my property? Yes, *inasmuch as they are accurate. Maps are a starting point for on-farm conservation planning, when requested by producers. Critical areas maps are currently available from the Lincoln County Planning Department*

Dennis Bly – I think most producers would like to know if they have a critical area on the property.

Ron Mielke – I agree, I think it'd be very beneficial for producers to know if that have do indeed have a critical area on the property.

Action Item Reach out to Courtney Thompson at the county for critical area maps with layering of owners. LCCD has received these maps since this meeting in January and are on record. *

- Can VSP include past BMPs implemented even if it's not in an active contract? Yes, *the CD would like to account for all conservation practices implemented since 2011, even if some practices are no longer under contract.*

Next Steps from Public Meetings

Public comments are requested through January 12, 2018. The LCCD will share public comments with the Lincoln VSP Work Group at the January 16, 2018, meeting. Work Plan submittal for State review is anticipated in Spring 2018 with the Work Plan being finalized by Summer 2018.

Vivian Erickson Next went over the Comment Response Matrix:

We only received comments from one land owner in Lincoln County. Most of the comments were very technical in nature and mostly centered around wind and erosion and the accuracy of the current maps being used.

*Please see attached **Comment Response Matrix*** these are comments and response/discussion from the Work Group

Wind Erosion: *Is there a newer map available?*

Garith Krause – will a new map have any impact at the review level?

John Small – No

Ben – Vivian/John? How hard is to put a new map in?

Vivian – It would change all the intersect data.

Ben – Its's a minor item that would change only intersecting data

Garith – I say we acknowledge a new map was available at the end of the planning process, but the new data does not affect the data for the current work plan.

Water Erosion: *John Small – Commenter want to add moderate erosion to the sever rating

John – All soils have potential and we were keeping it to the extreme side. Areas could be shown on map as possible to be a moderate rating for erosion.

Ben – Let's include a blanket statement that all soil could erode - some more than others.

Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas: * Vivian Erickson – Commentator noted and summarized that other areas should be noted in the plan

Elsa Bowen – The RCW call out the areas within the county's mapping

Ben - We are looking to protect ground water quality throughout the county already.

Confidentiality: *Vivian – pg 33 we could add privacy note

Ben – Can we say Checklist can be kept confidential?

Bill Eller – If the Checklist is kept by the landowner it would be considered confidential. Please reference the policy on the on the WSCC website.

Elsa – If someone turns in a checklist to the CD's is it still private?

Bill Eller – No, only if they hang on to it

Vivian – Even though the checklist has no owner field on it? ie: Name, contact info?

Ben – CD's will have to figure out how to use it etc. during implementation

Garith Krause – Is this Checklist then for producer use only?

Elsa – No value if the producer doesn't turn it in

Ben – Web base reporting a possibility

Bill Eller – I can't guide you and how to do this. Individual Conservation plans will be confidential and checklists also if kept with the landowner

Garith – Why doesn't the Checklist stay confidential?
Ben – Could it be an appendix to the conservation Plan?
Elsa – Checklist could be done by yourself and sent in with random sampling
Eddie Johnson – What's Grant County's approach?
Ben – don't think Grant county has figured that out yet either
Bill Eller – I urge you to look at the plans that have already gone through and to look at the policy advisory board has already put into place
Ben – We'll do a little more research/homework with the Advisory Committee policy to everyone.

Watershed Planning: *Vivian – Suggested update; could add reference to tables 5-1 and 5-5
Ben – We can make it more of a direct tie to the Watershed planning

Ron Meilke and Jason Kunz (phone) – "Everything good so far"!

End of Public Comments Review

Eddie Johnson – We need a reworked Matrix with maybe Whitman and Grant county's privacy on reporting status if available.

Next Steps -

Elsa – Can we bring all this together by our scheduled next meeting, February 20?

Ben – Yes, we can bring all this together by then

Eddie – Keep March meeting on hold if needed

Ben - There will more edits after and during review so if we learn more about reporting we could add that as well

Ben – February 20th meeting we can determine whether or not we will be submitting the second half of March.

Bell Eller – As soon as you have a date let me know

Meeting adjourned at 3:05pm

The Work Group will meet on February 20, 2018, 1-3 PM, Public Works Building, Davenport, WA.

Attendees:

Workgroup members:

Ben Floyd
Jeff Schiebel
Tom Harding
Garith Krause
Val Vissia
Elsa Bowen
Laura Floyd

Other Attendees:

Bill Eller - phone
Vivian Erickson-phone
John Small-phone
Jason Kunz-phone
Ron Mielke-phone
Eddie Johnson - phone
Dennis Blye - phone
Tom Harding-phone