



## Voluntary Stewardship Program

Work Group Meeting, Tuesday, October 17, 2023

**Attendees: Ben Floyd, Lara Floyd, Delaini Disher, Elsa Bowen, Tom Harding, Craig Madsen, Valerie Vissia, Jo Gilchrist, Melissa MacKelvie, and Rex Harder attended in-person, Adam Hill attended via Zoom.**

The meeting was called to order to discuss the ranking of and vote on cost-share projects and for the work group to give a final overview of the biennial report. The meeting started at 2:30pm with Ben mentioning the November 14<sup>th</sup> VSP monitoring workshop and confirming the next meeting date (December 12 at 1pm in the Public Works building). Ben provided an agenda overview.

Delaini gave an update on the CD projects for the new biennium and discussed the anticipated on-site monitoring. Elayne will be meeting with landowners soon and discussing their properties and projects. Delaini, Ben and Adam went through the presentation given to the tech panel on October 12<sup>th</sup> to update the work group on feedback and takeaways from the panel. Delaini gave an update on the current monitoring sites, including the three transducer sites. Due to an incompatibility with updated software, data from transducer sites was unable to be saved. This is one driving factor to find additional monitoring methods to collect consistent data. Rex asked if some data from the Sprague flood control monitoring project may be usable, and Elsa mentioned that she would follow up with Brooke Beeler from Ecology.

Regarding outreach, Delaini mentioned reaching out to Brad Johnson from Whitman County about their landowner outreach and feedback process. Elsa and Melissa shared some information on the Washington Shrub Steppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI), which has a lot of anticipated funding. Melissa mentioned that there is a focus on cheatgrass prevention/reduction and the possibility of coordinating with a vegetation specialist to identify critical areas. Rex asked about fuel management efforts and Elsa confirmed this is something that has been addressed in the long term advisory strategy she is participating in for the state. Tom mentioned solar panel related concerns, and Melissa acknowledged that WDFW has to consider the land composition and wildlife present on more of a case-by-case basis. Elsa and Ben agreed this is a topic to address in the upcoming VSP work plan reports and we can also arrange for future discussions with WDFW on shrub steppe habitat conditions in Lincoln County, and priority areas to focus on. Ben also suggested a VSP workshop be planned focused on shrub steppe in 2024 for landowners, WDFW and other partners. Ben asked if the group thought this would be valuable and there was support for the idea. Potential topics discussed include sage grouse as a key species and ongoing management efforts (noting the population was several impacted by the most recent fire), noxious weed control, and

questions surrounding solar panels. Delaini will send a follow-up email to work group members to learn if there are other related topics members would like to see addressed at the workshop.

Ben mentioned that WSCC is producing a monitoring guidance manual, and that the monitoring workshop in November should further inform LCCD monitoring efforts moving forward.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45pm and the **next meeting is scheduled for December 12, 2023 at 1 pm.**