



## Voluntary Stewardship Program

Work Group Meeting, Tuesday, October 15, 2019

Attendees: Ben Floyd, Elsa Bowen, Kristen Balko, Mark Steadman, Jeff Schibel, Braidy Haden, Keith Nelson, Val Vissia and Rex Harder. Jon Small, Justin Quinley, and Vivian Erickson were on the phone

Meeting started at 2:35 p.m. with Ben Floyd providing a brief overview of the agenda items. The group then introduced themselves.

Bill Eller provided VSP updates. WSCC hosted a training for new state agency staff on Oct 3 in Lacey, WA. Staff from the Department of Ecology, Department of Ag, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and others were in attendance. Bill reported this might become an annual event. This training will soon be available in a webinar. There will be a program update in November at the WASAC Annual Conference. November 6 is the next Technical Panel Statewide Advisory Committee meeting. This group will discuss the 5-year report submission and evaluation process.

Val then presented an outreach summary. There were posters and a display of the VSP outreach materials shown at the Lincoln County Fair. The district won exhibit awards for this display. Val distributed four different drafts of postcards to be mailed out across the county. The idea is to send these out consecutively about every other month and then follow up with phone calls. There were questions on how these landowners were selected. Elsa reported the landowners were selected if they were included in a critical area identified from county maps. Feedback on these postcards will be taken until Nov. 1. Information is still being distributed in LCCD newsletters and large organizations, such as Wheat Life, have shared information on the program as well. Future outreach efforts will be conducted at organizational events such as the Annual Grain Growers Meeting and social media blasts.

Justin Quinley of Anchor QAE displayed a GIS database that can be used to generate a mailing list and mail tracking form. The database included layers for each of the critical area based on HUC 12 numbers. The new GIS employee (to be hired) can use this information to track which mailer has been sent out to a landowner, phone calls made and site visits. Justin will coordinate with Courtney at Lincoln County to make sure the information in the database is accurate.

A chart listing the budget items for VSP was then discussed. Elsa suggested \$50,000 of the project funds go toward cost share projects. There were questions about the line item for Administration and Contracted Services and the workgroup requested this line item be broken down to see the distribution as it compares to the \$50,000 listed for cost share projects. It was suggested that this number for cost share projects be increased, but Elsa and Bill stated VSP was not to be a commodity program as funding might then be taken away from other WSCC areas. Gareth suggested this figure be justified compared to the

costs imposed by the Growth Management Act.

A draft cost share policy was reviewed and was approved by consensus.

A change in the work group by-laws was also approved by consensus. This change would establish an authorized signer for these cost share projects on behalf of the group. Mark Steadman and Keith Nelson volunteered to be authorized signers for the group.

A draft cost share ranking sheet was distributed and a waitlist of LCCD cost share projects. Keith suggested giving more preference to first time applicants. Ben suggested that more focus could be given on project functions rather than critical areas – where more functions satisfied by a project would give more points in an area of impact. Val will revise the document and send it to the workgroup via email by next week for feedback. A final ranking sheet will be completed by Nov. 1.

Ben and Elsa then led a discussion of VSP Implementation Tracking, which included all projects completed since Lincoln County opted into the program. NRCS has been contacted to add more information to this summary. A full tracking summary will be completed by January 2020.

Ben reminded the group that the 5-year Performance Report will be due in March 2021 and the 2-year report will be due in August 2021. Bill suggested submitting both reports together in March 2021 to simplify the process.

The next in-person meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2020. Cost share projects will be ranked and selected at this meeting. There will also be an update on outreach efforts, and a new LCCD VSP staff member will be introduced to the work group.

Future meetings were also scheduled for April 21, 2020 (web meeting), and July 21, 2020 (in person).

The meeting ended at 4:05 p.m.

**Attendees:**

*Workgroup members:*

Ben Floyd

Jeff Schibel

Garith Krause -phone

Elsa Bowen

Val Vissia

Mark Stedman

Kristen Balko

Rex Harder

*Other Attendees:*

Jon Small-phone

Vivian Erickson-phone

Justin Quinley-phone

Braidy Haden