



Voluntary Stewardship Program

Work Group Meeting, Tuesday, October 24, 2017

The meeting started at 2:05pm with a welcome from Ben Floyd with Vivian Erickson running the power point from Anchor QEA. Ben let the group know that he is no longer an employee with Anchor QEA and will be working as a consultant from this point forward, but nothing will change, and he will still be the facilitator for the Lincoln County VSP. Ben's new company is White Bluffs Consulting. Today's meeting will focus on the status of Lincoln VSP Work Plan June draft, Comment Response Matrix and any additional suggested edits based on Tech Panel review of already submitted Work Plans. We will also talk about upcoming outreach meetings to the public and work on the schedule to submit to the Tech Panel Feb/March. Ben asked if there were any questions from the group – there were none.

Comment Response Matrix – Reviewed with Vivian Erickson

Rex Harder asked if QEA has looked at other plans? Vivian and Ben both confirmed that yes, they have been working on Whitman and Grants Work Plans and that they have both been approved. Yakima is in review with some good suggestions from the Tech Panel. Vivian started the review of the Comment Response Matrix.

Comment Response Matrix notes and suggestions from Tech Panel and Lincoln Work Group

- 1. Developing Work Plan & Into the Future** - Clarification of outreach in development of Work Group and what is to happen in the future, example: LCCD will conducted outreach meeting on the Draft Work Plan in Late 2017 early 2018 before submittal – Work Group agreed. Vivian worked with Val & Elsa to clarify the recruitment of the Work Group. Work Group agreed.
- 2. Establishing Baseline Monitoring Approach** – Measuring as we move forward. **Ben** – not adding new but being very clear that we will measure change moving forward. Work Group agreed.
- 3. Acres Involved** – Clarify how acres are calculated and be clear on participation data of acreage. **Ben** – make sure not to reach too far on reported acres participating. Work Group agreed
- 4. Adaptive Management** – Make sure outreach is included as an adaptive management action. Work Group agreed.

5. Habitat Indicators – Keep language currently in Lincoln Work Plan with the addition of public aerial imagery. Some of the comments from the Tech Panel on Grant County’s Work Plan also included this language (aerial imaging) along with random sampling using publicly available aerial imagery with high resolution change detection mapping or other GIS approaches for habitat mapping that are made available to the County.

Ben – the key to this change is how do we know what others are doing? This helps to get a more inclusive/clearer picture of not only VSP participants but of Lincoln County as a whole.

Garith Krause – “What does random sampling mean?” **Ben** - Agriculture lands in the county of not just VSP participants but of non VSP participants also. Example: Riparian areas from 2011 data versus 2022. All results will be combined, and individuals will be protected, and adjustments will be made to baseline for natural events etc. (see Comment Response Matrix).

Garith – “Will owners be notified if randomly sampled?”

Ron Meilke – “Will it be flyover/aerial only?”

Rex Harder – “If disclosed, land owners may have questions”

John Small – “Every (2) years the department of Agriculture does a fly over exercise of croplands etc. We would use this as a quick snapshot say of riparian areas for comparison. Are they smaller, wider? Just another tool for our protection benchmarks.

Mark Stedman – the whole county has been talking about *Transparency*. Should something like this be put in the newspaper& let owners know what and why we’re doing this?

John – We would be using the same imagery as Google Earth. **Ben** – the whole intent behind this would be for a back check. This would be the proof - GIS analysis to further validate what is happening on the ground. It is a better use for when land that is going through a change of use.

Jason Kuntz DFW – Is Grant County approved with this included in their monitoring? Will the methodology of measuring and tracking be done in consistent manner?

Ben – Yes, we will be doing the same and all projects/participants will be tracked along with random sampling. We will work with LCCD and the county to set protocol and standards of what we prescribe to do. The work group will stay together, and all others will have an opportunity to comment etc. LCCD will probably look at the plan every year with the Work Group and interpret every (5) years on GIS review.

Tom Harding – Could we look at GIS review annually? **John** - I think it is important to stay very flexible with the language we choose as technology is changing rapidly, it may also be a budget restraint. **Ben** - GIS will be a back check and used as an indicator. The Tech Panel is good with every (5) years for GIS. Ben recommends keeping GIS to the tech panel recommendation of every (5) years for back checking and validation. Work Group agreed.

Eddie Johnson – “We need a strong broad base transparency statement so that the people of Lincoln County will have knowledge of what’s going on.” **Ben** - Yes, we can add that. Work Group agreed.

6. **“Guiding Principles” for the Use of Aerial Imagery Interpretation** - included in Yakima’s County’s Work Plan as a monitoring tool.

Vivian Erickson – We will use bullet points like the example from Yakima County.

Garith – Can we change and put *Natural Events* before *Climate Change* in the last bullet point so that climate change is part of the natural events. **Vivian** – we can do that. Work Group agreed.

7. **Changes to Baseline Conditions** - also recommended in the language for Yakima County Tech Panel review to have Natural Events before Climate Change. Vivian will revise. Work Group agreed

8. **Consistency Comment** – as recommended from the Tech Panel on review of Whitman County Work Plan. **Vivian** – list indicator data source and keep consistent with data sources. Work group agreed.

9-19 These are all changes recommended and approved by the Work Group during the June 6, 2017 meeting. *See Comment Response Matrix for list*

Public Outreach Meetings –

Discussion with the Work Group on what materials should be made available for the meetings and also for advertising: VSP Checklist, What is VSP, VSP 101 as we move forward into submittal in March 2018. Ben also asked the group, “When, where and how do we do these mtg?”

Timing is not great for grower/producer meetings but with advertising and spreading out across the county it was agreed to move forward on several area meetings. We will use a trimmed down version of the VSP handout/checklist and hold meetings in the Harrington/Sprague area, Reardan/Davenport area, Wilbur and Odessa. Hopefully using some data base information from WSU Extension office, Farm Bureau, or even FSA to get the word out. Ben would like as many Work Group members present as possible. Last year when Ron Meilke was present at a meeting where Ben presented it really made a difference to others in the audience. Val & Elsa will work on meeting dates, times and places.

Next Steps -

The Work Group will meet again after the Outreach Meetings on January 16, 2018, 1-3 PM, Public Works Building, Davenport, WA with a possible back -up meeting on February 20, 2018. Val will email marketing materials along with Checklist to the Work Group once they are finalized.

Attendees:

Workgroup members:

Ben Floyd
Jeff Schiebel
Tom Harding
Keith Nelson
Ron Mielke
Mark Stedman
Tom Harding
Rex Harder
Eddie Johnson - phone
Garith Krause - phone
Val Vissia
Elsa Bowen

Other Attendees:

Bill Eller - phone
Vivian Erickson-phone
John Small-phone
Jason Kunz