

Chelan County Voluntary Stewardship Program
VSP Work Group meeting
Tuesday, May 5, 2020
9:30 am – 11:00 am
MEETING NOTES

The meeting began at 9:30 a.m. This was a call-in meeting and no physical presence occurred (Governor's coronavirus requirements). An online meeting platform was used.

Public Comment

No member of the public offered comment.

Project Updates

Hannah reviewed a potential project on the little Chumstick. WDFW was contacted about removing an existing culvert, along with some riparian restoration work. She walked the property and thinks there are two projects. There are two parcels of property. One project is riparian restoration and removal of reed canary grass. The secondary project is culvert removal, which is only 67% passable for fish and is undersized. She proposed assistance in helping to facilitate permits and in removing the culvert. Currently, the landowner will be responsible for installing the new bridge. Project 1 (riparian work) would be up to \$5,000; project 2 (culvert removal) up to \$10,000.

Questions from the workgroup:

- Britt asked to have the proposal email to him so he can review.[Hannah sent the proposal on 5/4/20 shortly following the meeting.]
- Graham asked if the properties are staying in ag use; Hannah said all conversations with the landowner thus far indicated that they are.

The workgroup approved moving forward on helping with funding for these two projects. Hannah will move forward with developing one cost-share agreement with the landowner for both projects. She will then send to Britt for signature. The workgroup agreed that there is no additional workgroup approval necessary for the signing of the cost-share agreement.

Hannah then shared some ideas she has on targeting a specific water efficiencies project type within the densest ag drainage within each watershed. For example, in the Cashmere area there is the possibility of working on irrigation improvement, such as micro-irrigation projects.

Questions from the workgroup included:

- Britt thinks other entities have done targeted programs like this; how has that worked out? [Hannah is not sure, she will check]
- Lisa thinks this is a great idea, and wondered what the targeted basins are? Targeted basins will be determined by 1) water quantity issues present and 2) drainages with the densest ag influence.
 - Lisa noted the monitoring report identified some possible areas

Bill Eller provided some updates from the State Conservation Commission. The Technical Panel and Statewide Advisory Committee have been reviewing the five-year reports submitted by Chelan and Thurston VSP Workgroups last summer. The Commission is using those to develop a template and guidance document for all counties. Commission staff has proposed that three additional years be given to Thurston and Chelan since they were required to report only one year after approval. The SCC Executive Director is considering this idea. The SAC and TP meet on May 27 and Bill hopes this will be resolved.

Questions and comments:

- Neil asked what this means for the Chelan workgroup? [An additional three years would be provided for submittal of the monitoring report; then Chelan would use the template and guidance and submit a revised monitoring report]
 - Due date would be five years from the date the workplan was approved
- Lisa asked if there is anything else we should know; will the new template be approved by end of May? [No; it is likely the SCC will roll that out this fall; they are bringing in a contractor to help them]
- Britt wonders if the SCC wants any input on the template? [Bill said they are not providing a specific input opportunity but if we want, we can provide input. He stressed that the decision is made by the SCC Executive Director.]

Outreach

Hannah noted that Vicki Malloy agreed to participate with Douglas County to represent VSP at Tree Fruit Days. There was some interest but not a lot. Hannah contacted several grower associations about providing information for their meetings; several were interested. She provided information and sign-up sheets. A lot of sign-ups, but that was due to a misunderstanding of the purpose (most thought they were signing up for something else). This will be good to replicate next year, hope to have a physical presence at these meetings. Given the covid virus, future meetings are in flux.

As she already mentioned, she is thinking about identifying targeted areas and doing outreach there. Idea is to provide 50% match up to \$5,000 (irrigation efficiencies project). The workgroup approved the outreach for this idea.

She then discussed how Covid-19 has affected outreach. There are a lot of unknowns. Targeting areas will help; distancing requirements will affect this.

Bill Eller said the SCC understands that outreach needs to be different in these days. He noted we will need to document efforts in the next 5-year report. He also reminded the workgroup that current projects have until June 2021 for completion.

Bill also mentioned that WSAC has asked the Governor to consider pausing the implementation timelines as a whole due to the covid-19 shutdown impacts; there is not an answer yet.

Next steps

- Neil mentioned this was originally going to be his last meeting as facilitator, but since no travel was involved, he has funding left to facilitate the July meeting. Mike likes that idea.
- Mike noted that Hannah has done a lot of great work and thanked her for her efforts
- Hannah will send the PDF version of the project requests to Chair Britt Dudek for his signature
- Graham noted WDFW is hiring a VSP coordinator whole will likely be WDFW's main point of contact for VSP related items moving forward, but details are to-be-determined. Graham will continue to be the lead for Chelan.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:00 a.m.

Attendees:

Neil Aaland, Facilitator
Lisa Grueter, Berk Consulting
Mike Kaputa, Chelan County
Hannah Pygott, Chelan County
Vicki Malloy, Farm Bureau
Britt Dudek, Chair

Ranie Haas, Tree Fruit Association
Levi Keesecker, SCC
Bill Eller, SCC
Graham Simon, WDFW
Leslie Michel, WSDA