

Chelan County Voluntary Stewardship Program
VSP Advisory Committee meeting
Wednesday, February 28, 2018
9:30 am – 12:30 pm

The meeting began at 9:30 p.m. Facilitator Neil Aaland asked each participant to introduce themselves and reviewed the agenda.

Public Comment

No members of the public were present to offer comment.

Implementation

Neil asked Ron Shultz, WSCC, to provide his thoughts on workgroups transitioning from planning to implementation. Chelan is an early adopter, along with Thurston. Ron is looking for several things:

- How things are progressing for Chelan
- Progress on benchmarks
- Funding – how funding is working, what specific things we need funding for. The WSCC is looking at what is needed.

Mike asked who the key legislators are; Ron thinks the budget chairs are key. The current fund source is public works assistance account, and there is some push back on continuing use of that. Mike wonders whether a work session in the fall from counties to legislators might be helpful. Britt thinks the discussion needs to be on all needed resources, not just dollars. Ron asked that we keep in touch with them about other programs need to implement. Challenges within the NRSC include budget cuts, staff reductions, are having difficulty just doing timely paperwork.

Jim asked about benchmarks. He wonders if standardized reporting on benchmarks statewide might be helpful. Ron expressed concern that this might stifle the unique attributes of individual reporting on benchmarks.

Field guide

The field guide is an idea from consulting staff. It is intended to be a resource for the workgroup to be able to use, especially when the consulting team is finished with its support work. Lisa noted it is intended to be tactical; she reviewed an outline of issues and ideas. Graham thinks this is helpful; Jim agreed, saying it highlights what we're working on. John Stuhlmiller also liked it. He has seen some de-stabilizing from new members in other workgroups and thinks this will help. Mike Kaputa likes it, suggested spending time on #4. He also thinks implementation priorities should be higher, as well as outreach.

Regarding representation, Britt says the issue is individual producers as members. Think about a strategic approach, perhaps lean on Cascadia CD. Jim agreed it's a big issue; the CD struggles to get supervisors. Some think perhaps we need to target individuals. John suggested having an executive group of 2-3 people to address immediate issues; perhaps tag a couple such as chair and a co-chair. Britt and Mike like this idea.

Neil noted that the environmental group membership is an ongoing issue. Perhaps contact TNC, local chapter of Audubon. Neil and Mike K will work on this.

WDFW Change Analysis

Ken Pierce from WDFW headquarters called in and gave a presentation, showing some maps and graphics. Lisa suggested getting rid of city parcels, since those are not part of VSP. Need to understand the reasons for change. Also need to think about what our guiding principles are – for how this analysis will be generated and used. Want to be able to show beneficial change, to get at ag viability, but Ken thinks this will be difficult. Ken said he can provide the layers and geodata to the county. WDFW is now done with the analysis for Chelan County. Lisa and Erin will talk about next steps. John suggested talking with Brian Cochrane (SCC staff) regarding other ways to show positive change.

Budget

Hillary and Lisa explained the one-page handout. Jim explained the task 2 switch to “incentive”. Regarding the “farmbudsman” position, it’s not really to discuss laws and regulations, but provide other assistance. Britt thinks the cost for technology may go down as technology changes. He has some other ideas and will discuss with Lisa and Hillary. Mike thinks the tasks will be somewhat driven by priorities, which we will discuss at the next meeting. We might see more start-up costs in the 17-19 budget cycle. He’d like to know regarding the TSP task, what the CD is already doing that VSP can supplement. He’d also like to see a portion of funding given to the workgroup for them to direct to enhancement projects; “seed money”.

At the next meeting, we need to discuss prioritization.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:10 p.m.

Next steps:

1. Consider appointing a co-chair and having the chair and co-chair serve as an executive committee. This would help with the membership issue.
2. Continue developing the field guide.
3. Neil and Mike coordinate on the environmental group representation issue.
4. Lisa and Erin will discuss next steps on the change analysis.
5. Brian Cochrane will be contacted regarding thoughts on using the change analysis to highlight positive change (increased agricultural activity).
6. Britt will discuss his ideas for using technology with Lisa and Hillary.
7. Consider allocating a portion of funding for use as seed money for enhancement projects.

Attendees:

Jim Bartelme, Supervisor, CCD
Britt Dudek, CDFB
James Wiggs
Ranie Haas, WA State Tree Fruit Assoc.
Graham Simon, WDFW

Ron Shultz (on phone)
John Stuhlmiller (on phone)
Neil Aaland, Facilitator
Mike Kaputa, Chelan County
Lisa Grueter, Berk Consulting

Hillary Heard, Chelan County

Erin McKay, Chelan County