

Chelan County Voluntary Stewardship Program
VSP Advisory Committee meeting
Wednesday, February 20, 2019
1:00 pm – 3:30 pm
MEETING NOTES

The meeting began at 1:00 p.m. Introductions were made around the room. John Stuhlmiller, on the phone, updated about the proposed legislative amendment regarding new agriculture No legislation was introduced this year. This means the interpretation is going back to the advisory opinion issued earlier. John said the impact is new agriculture is not relevant to VSP implementation. Each county will need to work through how this applies in its county.

Public Comment

No members of the public were present to offer comment.

Consideration of Vice-Chair/New Ag Members: Mike Kaputa discussed the vice-chair idea, and new ag members, with the Board of County Commissioners. The BOCC supports addition of 6 new ag members, 2 per commission district. The workgroup needs to develop a set of expectations, including:

- Role of chair and vice chair
- How long they will serve; consider staggering appointments but serving for two years
- Frequency of workgroup meetings (likely quarterly)

Mike mentioned that we should look to tree fruit growers for new members, since that is a predominant form of agriculture in the county. Also consider grazing and vineyard owners. He has some ideas for individuals; will work with CCD and develop a list for the next meeting. Jim suggested using the local paper to notify about the regular meetings of the workgroup.

Update from CCD

Project input to tracking tool: Amanda noted a tracking spreadsheet has been developed. There are over 100 potential projects. About 20 are located in critical areas and agricultural land, those have been entered. They are also working on inputting the Trout Unlimited project.

Newsletter article: That was included in the last newsletter. No calls were received either by CCD or Chelan County NRD. The deadline for the spring newsletter is the second Friday in April (April 12). Jim mentioned a project from a couple of years ago regarding irrigation efficiencies, and wonders if that would count. The group thought it would, it is putting water back into the system.

Outreach – Next Steps

Proposed Ag Roundtable meetings and potential schedule: The ag roundtables were discussed. Vicki noted growers might be starting to get busy in April. Jim agreed and thought the sooner the better, as early as possible in April. When they are set, notices can be posted on the CCD website. Mike noted that the county gets a lot accomplished through working with the Stemilt Partnership and wants to include them in roundtables. Perhaps can double up some meetings; the

Stemilt Partnership meets the week of March 18 and maybe we could do before or after on VSP. The workgroup agrees and wants to explore doing something from 6:30 pm to 7:30 or 8.

Monitoring Report

We are on the schedule to discuss with the VSP Technical Panel on April 10. We will probably combine the two reports – monitoring and biennial update reports. One is due in July, the other in August. Lisa walked us through the February 15 draft. She noted a refresh will be done on the number of owners in the intersect area. The two year report is focused on the change in agriculture.

Carmen asked how the change in shrub-steppe is being captured. There is information on the footprint; Lisa will review that and come back to the workgroup.

The data show an increase of 2,000 acres of agricultural lands. This might be due to better reporting by WSDA. Jim wonders if new flood maps affect this. Lisa noted a change in floodplain acreage; she saw a 90 acre increase in floodplain acres with new mapping.

Vicki asked about the “fallow” category on page 5. She said some small orchards are being torn out, and wonders if the acreage still shows as “green” but is not really being used. Lisa thought that may be the case; perhaps the acreage is not yet fully converted to another ag category.

Additional comments and questions:

- The workgroup noted the “vineyard” acreage seems low
- Jim wondered about noxious weeds; can that be rolled into this report? [Lisa will look at that]
- Jim wonders about fire and how to discuss those impacts
- Be sure to state the accuracy of data used
- Benton VSP workgroup is giving individuals a map showing their property and the intersect
 - Consider having a printer station at any public meetings to do this

Carmen will brief the WDFW Technical Panel member and prep him for the meeting. Jim wonders how the Technical Panel will roll up statewide changes.

For the March VSP workgroup meeting, think about questions we want to pose to the TP. Jim suggested asking “what information are we collecting that we don’t need to collect?”

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Vicki Malloy
Neil Aaland, Facilitator
Mike Kaputa, Chelan County
Lisa Grueter, Berk Consulting
Hillary Heard, Chelan County

Jim Bartelme, CCD
Carmen Andonaegui, WDFW
Amanda Newell, CCD