



Walla Walla County
VSP Work Group
April 7, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Date: April 7, 2026 Time: 4:00 p.m. Via: In-person and Zoom

Work Group Members Present:

David Talkington, TSS

Judith Johnson, Kooskooskie Commons

Ryan Rea, Ag. Community

Ceana Pacheco, WWCC

Absent:

Brian Burns, TSS; Dana Sheedy, CTUIR; Lindsey Williams, WWCC; Phil Neumann,

Mainstem Malt; Randy Bright, Ag. Community; Jackie McCool, WDFW

Tom Schirm, WDFW ex-officio

Also present: Don Schwerin, Supervisor of WWCCD; Grace Cooper and Jenny Freer of WWCCD. Roman Rangel, Walla Walla Community Development

The meeting began with welcome and introductions.

New or interested work group members: None at this time.

Meeting paused at this time for a request of public comments. There were none.

Approval of meeting minutes: After review, **Talkington motioned and Pacheco seconded to approve the February 2026 minutes as presented; motion passed.**

Action Items:

- Cottonwood Rd Well Pump and Hedgerow
 - This a project that was presented at the last meeting. A pasture that is converting to a Christmas tree farm. The request is for 39k and includes increasing the current well pump size from 3.5 to 7hp and creating a .3-acre hedgerow with native plants.

Johnson motioned and Pacheco seconded to approve applying for capital funds for the increased well pump and hedgerow, as presented; motion passed.

- VFD and Flowmeter
 - This project is to replace a flow meter and VFD off of the Walla Walla river. This project request is for 29k and if approved the landowners would temporarily donate surface diversion for two years.

Talkington motioned and Pacheco seconded to approve applying for capital funds for a VFD and Flowmeter, as presented; motion passed

- Well Flow Meter
 - This project is to replace a well flow meter off of HWY 125. Landowner uses a three well system; two will run at a time and the third is a backup. This project will cost \$4,700 and the flow meter will cover 330 acres.

Johnson motioned and Talkington seconded to approve applying for capital funds for a Well Flowmeter, as presented; motion passed

- Stock Water Well
 - A landowner is currently hauling water for 200 head of cattle. This project includes digging a well in the canyon and a trough for lessening the operational costs and differential grazing land. The cost of this project would cost 38k.

Talkington motioned and Pacheco seconded to approve applying for capital funds for a Stock Water Well, as presented; motion passed

- Columbia CD Virtual Fencing
 - Columbia Conservation District had reached out to partner on virtual fencing for a landowner whose property is split between both counties. Currently Columbia CD has funding and ownership of this project but WWCCD would like permission to partner with Columbia CD in the future. As of right now, 300 acres are in Walla Walla that would need to be reported on by WWCCD and excluded from Columbia CD's report.

Johnson motioned and Pacheco seconded to approved partnering with Columbia Conservation District in the future, as presented; motion passed

- Request to approve Shrub Steppe participation
 - Several VSP counties in the Columbia Basin are collaborating to streamline consistent protocols and applications for monitoring shrubsteppe habitat under VSP. The collaboration is requesting funds from potentially two different sources (SCC WSSRI and Science HUB). Approval is needed to be included in their ask and to provide a letter of support.

Johnson motioned and Talkington seconded to approve shrub steppe participation, as presented; motion passed

Program Updates:

- **10-year Report Reviewing Timeline:**
 - The 10-year report has been submitted. On May 26 the Tech panels comments are due to the county. June 16, the county's response is due to the SCC. July 8 is the Joint Statewide Advisory Committee and tech panel review. By September 12 the directors' determinations of program status are due to the county.
- **Ranking System:**
 - **Cooper** shared that a ranking system will be valuable in determining how each project benefits the ag viability within the county. The ranking system will also be helpful when there are limited funds; determining which projects can move forward based on rankings. Cooper shared a rough draft with the work group.

VSP April 7th 2026 Work Group Meeting Minutes

- **By laws:** Cooper shared that a copy of another VSP's bylaws were shared and that we need to formulate it to meet our work groups needs.
-

Partner Updates:

Cooper: shared that she is leaving the CD in early June to join a research crew in New Hampshire.

Pacheco: shared that Walla Walla Community College is dealing with million-dollar budget cuts; Pacheco's position will end in June but is actively looking for a replacement representative for the workgroup.

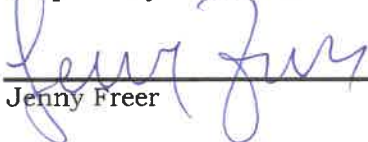
Johnson: Kooskooskie Commons is working on riparian projects on the Yellowhawk. Native plant garden tour and more applications coming soon.

Talkington: shared that Tri State Stealheaders is losing an educator and that they are looking into potential AmeriCorps help. Riparian projects are upcoming. Talkington also shared that they are losing funding as well.

Rangel: Created a critical area tool that will be released later this week. This will allow landowners to click on their parcel and know what critical area they are in and what they need to do.

The meeting was unofficially adjourned at 5:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Jenny Freer



Work Group Member

WWCCD

Next meeting: June 2, 2026 at 4 pm

Approved:
