



Walla Walla County VSP

Sept. Work Group Meeting

Date: Sept. 6 2016 Time: 1:00 p.m. Place: Conservation District
Conference Room

Board Members Present:

Robert Riley, Ag. Community	Jason Bulay, Blue Mtn. Land Trust
Brian Maiden, Ag. Community	David Haire, CTUIR
Brian Burns, Tri-State Steelheaders	Chris Marks, CTUIR (alternate)
Jonathan Hellburg-Wilson, Ag. Community	

Absent: Tom Schirm, WDFW;, Judith Johnson, Kooskooskie Commons, Mark Klicker, Ag. Community

Representatives of Other Agencies: Tom Glover, Walla Walla County; Zach Meyer, Ecology; Evan Sheffel, Washington Farm Bureau via phone

Also present:

Joanna Cowles, Audrey Ahmann, Renee Hadley, Jeff Klundt, WWCCD:
Kevin Scribner, Anderson-Perry; Brian Mahoney, Brandi Pettit, Anderson-Perry

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by David Haire.

Minutes: The minutes were reviewed by those present. Robert Riley moved and Jonathan Hellburg-Wilson seconded to approve the minutes as presented, motion passed.

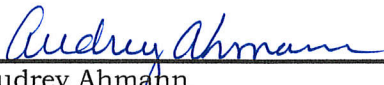
- 1. First Foods Presentation:** Chris Marks and David Haire narrated the presentation: [Fisheries Restoration in a First Foods Context](#). They explained the concepts of the presentation then described how VSP may be an opportunity to use the experience of CTUIR in restoration and to achieve results in the lower valley of Walla Walla. The connections were noted in that the critical areas (aquifer recharge, fish/wildlife habitat) are areas that intersect with the First Foods priorities.
- 2. Anderson-Perry report:** Kevin Scribner defined Critical Areas as a review:
 - wetlands
 - frequently flooded areas
 - aquifer recharge areas
 - geologically hazardous areas (includes highly erodible land)
 - wildlife habitat (this includes upland and aquatic species)


He encouraged the group to develop a vision statement to focus efforts and maintain a sense of purpose. VSP is seen as a performance-based process relying on voluntary efforts to protect areas rather than an enforcement approach; the distinction being that VSP promotes proactive steps as opposed to enforcing regulations after the fact. Brian presented Thurston County's draft work plan along with other handouts to give the group a sense of what the eventual work plan might include.

- 3. Discussion: Setting Benchmarks and Ag. Viability:** Renee provided a handout with information about defining the viability of agriculture as required by the work plan. Definitions have been developed by the Dept. of Ag: [Agriculture Viability, Dept. of Ag.](#)) and the Conservation Commission: [Ag. Viability, Conservation Commission](#) . Ideas included marketing strategies such as developing a label ("Farm Smart") for direct-market items produced by a VSP participating producer. Setting the benchmarks was also discussed. Benchmarks are based on the status of critical areas as of July 2011. Improvements made since then can count towards meeting the work plan goals. The issue of critical areas that have possibly been degraded since 2011 was raised, but Hadley explained that the District only has access to *improvements* made through cooperative work of ag. producers.
- 4. Letters of Support:** The work group agreed to provide letters of support for activities that promote and complement the VSP process when requested
- 5. Discussion of Unintended Consequences:** The group discussed the problem of unintended consequences of restoration efforts; specifically, the piping of irrigation districts to save water to increase flows seems to have affected shallow aquifer recharge and shallow wells. The work group members from the ag community were asked to consider how VSP might affect their operations and bring those ideas/concerns to the next meeting.
- 6. Upcoming meetings:** The next meeting will be October 4th at 1:00.

With no further business on the agenda, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted


Audrey Ahmann
WWCCD


David Haire
Vice-Chairman

Next meeting: October 4th 1:00