



Walla Walla County VSP Work Group June 2022 Meeting Minutes

Date: June 6th, 2022 Time: 1:00 p.m. Via: Zoom, call-in only

Work Group Members Present:

Robert Riley, Ag. Community
David Haire, CTUIR
Lindsey Williams, WCC

Judith Johnson, Kooskooski Commons
Jonathan Hellberg-Wilson, Ag. Community
Brian Burns, Tri-State Steelheaders (joined late)

Absent: Brian Maiden, Ag. Community

Also present: Grant Traynor, Renee Hadley, Audrey Ahmann of WWCCD; Brian Cochrane, SCC; Morgan Morris, TSS; Tom Schirm, WDFW; Don Sims, WW County Planning; Randy Bright, member of the public

The meeting began with introductions followed by an invitation for public comments: there were none.

Approval of Minutes: Work Group members reviewed the March minutes. **Judith Johnson moved and Robert Riley seconded to approve the minutes as presented, motion passed.**

Updates on VSP Activities:

- 1. Project, in progress and approval:** Traynor informed the group that of the three meter projects previously approved, two were complete and one is in progress. The two approved riparian projects are making progress. The raptor habitat (pollinator) project is stalled while the producer considers options. Traynor presented the Walsh Creek Project for board consideration. The project extends one installed in 2019. The budget is approximately 10,640 for fencing and restoration planting. Lindsey Williams moved and Jon Hellberg-Wilsons seconded to approve the Walsh Creek project, motion passed.
- 2. Monitoring Feedback:** Traynor met with members of the state review panel, who initially wanted riparian areas on the Snake River included in the Work Plan's habitat goals. Traynor's presentation showed that the ag. interface on the Snake River is minimal and the steep rocky slopes of the shorelines will not support the usual riparian vegetation. The review panel wants to see more of a narrative in reporting. They support education but stated it shouldn't be used as a metric for monitoring success. Measured outcomes are supposed to "prove" our work has protected or enhanced critical areas of the county. A metric such as "follow the 2050 plan" was not acceptable. Hadley said the WW Work Plan was developed by considering how agriculture practices impact critical areas, while other counties were not as focused on ag. practices. Hadley said there are concerns that only agriculture activities may be considered when evaluating progress to the exclusion of other factors; for example, the aquifer might continue to decline despite recharge projects because factors outside the control of ag. producers also have a direct impact on the aquifer. In response to questions, Simms said residential development is exempt from critical aquifer recharge regulations. Larger commercial developments follow state regulation and the county does not evaluate the effectiveness of those state regulations. The work group asked staff to continue to explore monitoring and possible metrics to present at the next meeting.

3. **Vacancy:** Randy Bright volunteered to join the Work Group to fill the vacancy. After discussion, Judith Johnson moved and Jon Helburg-Wilosn seconded to appoint Randy Bright to the currently open position, motion passed. Hadley will meet with Bright to explain the roles and responsibilities of Work Group members.
4. **Partner Updates:** Brian Cochran informed the group that significant salmon recovery funds are available and to please bring project suggestions forward. He thought the state might be allowed to extend the funding to June of 2024. Hadley is working on a project list. She mentioned a project to restore forest habitat protecting the headwaters of a perennial stream. The Work Group was supportive of the proposal and requested more information

Each member then shared recent work as follows:

WWCCD: numerous stream restoration projects, Tree-of-Heaven survey is a proactive effort to curb spotted lanternfly which is spreading westward and may decimate tree fruits and vineyards.

Kooskooski Commons: wrapped up restoration work on property on Last Chance Rd.

CTUIR: working with Bureau of Reclamation on grant application(s) for additional surface water stations, drought resiliency efforts, Walla Walla 2050 efforts

Center for Agricultural and Natural Resource Excellence: The first cohort of Bachelors of Applied Science in Agriculture is graduating; the center is conducting Farm 2 Table collaboration with WWCC Culinary Institute; Viticulture program has change in staff

Tri-State Steelheaders: Mill Creek concrete channel work from Division to just shy of Roosevelt Street is scheduled for summer 2022 construction. After this project, close to half of the Mill Creek channel will have been improved.

State Conservation Commission: Significant increase in funding (Sustainable Farm & Field, Salmon Project funds, VSP Supplemental, CREP, RFP for cluster CD efforts); Cochran would like to hear from producers as to whether commodity pricing is affecting adoption of conservation practices.

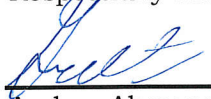
Walla Walla Co. Community Development: RFQ for update of Shoreline Master Program will be released in summer 2022 (for the larger rivers), includes select critical area standards.

Ag Irrigated Producer running cattle & alfalfa/hay operation: lots of commodities are sky high and these are not sustainable. Inflation across the board may result in net zero gains after all said and done (post-harvest)

Small farm (<20 acres) pasture operation: invited the Work Group to view the success of the first phase of riparian plantings installed in 2019.

The meeting was closed at 3:15 without a formal motion.

Respectfully submitted,


Audrey Ahmann
WWCCD

/S/ David H. Haire

David Haire
Vice- Chairman

Next meeting: Sept 6th, 1:00 pm