



Walla Walla County
VSP Work Group
October 3rd, 2023 Meeting

Minutes

Date: October 3rd, 2023 Time: 4:00 p.m. Via: Zoom and in person

Work Group Members Present:

David Haire, CTUIR

Morgan Morris, TSS

Phil Neumann, Mainstem Malt

Randy Bright, Ag. Community

Ryan Rea, Ag. Community

Tom Schirm, WDFW

Absent: Judith Johnson, Lindsey Williams

Also present: Grant Traynor, Renee Hadley, Eila Chin, Joanna Cowles-Cleveland, Annie Byerley of WWCCD; Corrie Thorne-Hadley, WDFW; Jean Dolling, member of the public; Sarah McClure, member of the public

The meeting began with an invitation for public comments. There were none.

Approval of change to quorum rules: Traynor proposed changing the quorum to be defined as 60% of the current board rounded to the nearest number. **Morris motioned and Neumann seconded to approve the change the quorum to be defined as 5 board members or 60% of all board members, rounded up to the nearest whole number; motion passed.**

Approval of meeting minutes: After review, **Morris motioned and Neumann seconded to approve the December 2022, March 2023, and June 2023 minutes; motion passed.**

Project Approval: The following three projects were presented for consideration:

- **Mojonnier riparian/wetland project:** This is on a private property that the Walla Walla River sides on the south. Traynor presented the proposed planting plan and a budget of \$40,797.11. Haire requested that black cottonwood and red alder be added to the planting plan. Bright said that there was a supplier in Princeton, Idaho named Wildlife Habitat Nursery that he bought sedges and rushes from.
- **Ohima Project:** This is on a private property. The landowners heard about VSP through word of mouth and reached out to the WWCCD. Traynor presented the planting plan and a budget of \$16,217.66. There were no questions.
- **Eila Riparian project:** This is a riparian planting project on a private property that is sided by Yellowhawk Creek on the north and Caldwell Creek on the South. This property is not agricultural land use, but is immediately upstream of agricultural activity. Changes to the property would impact downstream conditions on both Yellowhawk Creek and Caldwell Creek. The proposed planting plan and a budget of \$20,100 was presented.

All three projects were voted on as a group. **Haire motioned and Bright seconded to approve the three projects; motion passed.**

Flow Meter updates: Traynor updated the work group on two flow meter replacements on the Walla Walla River and explained that replacing the flow meters would be more efficient and cost less than repairing them.

VSP Monitoring: Traynor presented on VSP monitoring efforts in Walla Walla County. Traynor presented the results of a wetland map accuracy audit where he surveyed sixty-nine mapped wetlands. He found that the maps were 9-36% accurate. Traynor also presented monitoring efforts on geologic hazard areas and the results of the liquefaction irrigation efficiency analysis. He explained that he used irrigation method as a proxy for soil moisture, which impacts liquefaction.

Work plan updates: Traynor presented on continued work towards developing new goals for the work plan. For **fish and wildlife habitat**, new goals focus on riparian areas, fish passage and barriers, and upland monitoring. For **frequently flooded areas**, the current work plan focuses on education. Traynor proposed that the work group shift goals to focus on tracking riparian areas, tracking agricultural practices, and floodplain reconnection. For **critical aquifer recharge**, Traynor proposed that new work plan goals include aquifer level and groundwater pesticide monitoring. The USGS and Department of Ecology plan on conducting studies that may help aquifer level monitoring. There is the possibility of a USDA partnership to conduct a study that would monitor agricultural pesticides in waterways in the Touchet/Lowden area. For **geologic hazardous areas**, which relate to steep slopes and wind/water erosion, the current goals include maintaining vegetative cover and education. Traynor explained that new considerations could be tracking conservation acres, land management, and land use.

Program updates: Hadley and Traynor will go to Pullman on October 12th to discuss issues with monitoring and discuss solutions with the VSP State Advisory Committee and Technical Panel.

Partner Updates:

D. Haire, CTUIR: Chris Marks is working again and wants to talk with Traynor and Hadley about integrating VSP into the Walla Walla Strategy

J. Dolling, member of the public: expressed concerns about ammonium and nitrate ending up in the water.

S. McClure, member of the public: harvesting carrots this year for the first time.


M. Morris, TSS: Finished the Mill Creek project, which was from downtown to the unconfined area, this summer. Has a project on Mill Creek from 3rd Ave to 6th Ave. Is also working on the Walla Walla River and the West Little Walla Walla River.

R. Bright, Ag community: tested his domestic well for nitrate and got favorable level of 5.5 mg/L of nitrate.

R. Rea, HT Rea Farming: Has family matter and has to leave right now.

Bright motioned and Neumann seconded to end the meeting at 5:35 pm; motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,


Eila Chin
WWCCD

/S/: David H. Haire

David Haire
Vice-chair

Next meeting: December 5, 2023, 1:00 pm

