



Walla Walla County VSP Work Group Sept. 6 2022 Meeting Minutes

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

Work Group Members Present:

Randy Bright, Ag. Community Lindsey Williams, WWCC
Judith Johnson, Kooskooski Commons

Absent: Robert Riley, Brian Maiden, Brian Burns, David Haire, Jonathan Hellberg-Wilson

Also present: Grant Traynor, Renee Hadley, Lynda Oosterhuis, Audrey Ahmann, Kayla Peterson, Annie Byerley of WWCCD; Brian Cochrane, SCC; Tom Schirm, WDFW; Don Sims, WW County Planning; **Ceana Pacheco-Kenny**, WWCC

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

Approval of Minutes: In the absence of a quorums the minutes were not approved.

Updates on Partner Activities:

Don Sims, County Planning said the department is busy. There are upcoming public meetings about a proposed cell tower in E. Walla Walla. New flood maps are being developed by the USACE ;the county will have a role later in the year. Developing these new maps is 3-4 year process.

Judith Johnson, Kooskooskie Commons: Completing a 319 grant funded project on Yellowhawk and is starting a new grant that includes both sides of the creek.

Renee Hadley, WWCCD: The district is busy with numerous projects in progress and more potentially funded. She told the group the district has access to some additional riparian project funding that can be passed through to other groups or set up with the district as partner.

Project Updates

1. **Flow meters:** Traynor said three meter projects were completed.
2. **Riparian Projects:** Traynor said the E. Little Walla project site prep is complete, plants are ordered for planting this fall. The Dry Creek project is at the same stage. The buffer width averages 30' with about 25% at 50'. The old fence is removed; the landowners may install a new fence later at their own expense. Walsh Creek and the Coppei Replanting projects will be installed this fall; project materials are ordered and work crew scheduled.
3. **New Projects.** In the absence of a quorum projects cannot be approved but were presented.
 - Dixie Spring Catch Basin: this project has the following critical areas: steep slopes, soil liquefaction potential, erosion impacting riparian area (and water quality). The proposed project is to install a sediment catch basin, divert overland flow to a seasonally wet area planted with wetland plants plus a 2.5 acre grass filter. Five acres will be returned to production.
 - Fish screens: Two screens on Stone Creek and WW River will be repaired or replaced

at an estimated cost of 750 to 3,000 each.

- **Pikes Peak Tree and Shrub Planting:** This reforestation project was designed and proposed for funding by NRCS. Critical areas include highly erodible ground, aquifer recharge and protecting habitat (creek sedimentation). The project needs only weed control prior to planting and the VSP funds are being matched with additional funds.

4. Use of Work Crews: VSP staff are planning to use Dept. of Corrections crews, the state Conservation Corps, and the Blues Crews' volunteers.

5. Work Plan Changes: The WW Work Plan needs to be modified in response to state panel suggestions and reviews. A draft of proposed changes to the work plan was presented. Discussion included dropping develop VSP Stewardship plans as a metric. These were not pursued due to privacy concerns. Staff instead complete project plans. The original goal of maintaining 90% of fish screens may be dropped because floods and other events can make the goal unattainable. Maintaining fish screens may be changed to an enhancement goal so they will continue to be a priority. To recognize upland critical area protection (geologically hazardous, wildlife habitat) shrub-steppe can be added as a goal with CRP enrollment as a metric. Education has been removed as a goal. Critical Aquifer Recharge may need to be removed from the plan. Traynor explained that might relegate it to the Critical Area Act. In discussions with the state panel, it was suggested that VSP may not be the tool to protect this critical area, since ag. inputs cannot be measured (due to the time it takes for surface activities to affect the aquifer) and even with aquifer recharge projects, there are so many natural and human-caused factors affecting the aquifer, the effect of a project cannot be measured nor can progress (or lack thereof) be attributed to VSP. Johnson suggested contacting the WW Basin Council which is tracking surface water quality issues.

No action was taken in absence of a quorum. An October meeting may be planned.

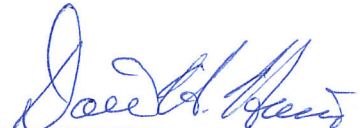
The meeting was closed at 2:15.

Respectfully submitted



Audrey Ahmann
WWCCD

~~Judith Johnson~~
~~Work Group member~~


David Harre
Vice - Chairman

Next meeting: Dec 6, 1:00 pm