



Walla Walla County
VSP Work Group
December 5th, 2023 Meeting

Minutes

Date: December 5th, 2023 Time: 1:00 p.m. Via: Zoom and in person

Work Group Members Present:

David Haire, CTUIR	Phil Neumann, Mainstem Malt
Judith Johnson, Kooskooskie Commons	Randy Bright, Ag. Community
Lindsey Williams, WWCC	Ryan Rea, Ag. Community
Morgan Morris, TSS	Tom Schirm, WDFW ex-officio

Absent: No Work Group Members absent

Also present: Grant Traynor, Eila Chin, Joanna Cowles-Cleveland of WWCCD; Rachel Wieme, WSU Extension

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

Approval of meeting minutes: After review, **Morris motioned and Haire seconded to approve the October 2023 minutes; motion passed.**

Project Approval:

- Lower Waitsburg Rd drainage/habitat project: This is on a small property halfway between Hwy 125 and Waitsburg, WA. County of Walla Walla accidentally removed ~¼ ac of vegetation, including willows and reed canary grass. Traynor explained that this land is in a Critical Areas liquefaction protection area. Traynor has observed that the property provides valuable habitat for wildlife, although the property is not included in County Walla Walla's habitat maps. Traynor proposed a ~2.5 ac planting project to install a 35 ft buffer around the drainage area and a budget of \$20,128.92. Morris expressed that if the reed canary grass were to be controlled it would be good to diversify the planting in the future.

Neumann motioned and Williams seconded to approve the Lower Waitsburg Rd. project; motion passed.

VSP Work Plan draft changes: Traynor presented proposed changes to the VSP workplan:

- 1) **ISP goal:** remove ISP goal.
- 2) **Riparian:** Specify that it is contract acres in riparian monitoring.
- 3) **Fish passage:** remove new fish passage barrier language and increase threshold of non-functional screens from 10% to 15%.
- 4) **Education goal:** remove education goal and replace it with an Enhancement goal.
- 5) **Fish passage barriers:** new goal to catalog fish passage barriers. **Morris said barrier should be defined** and asked that the **WDFW criteria** be used to define barrier.
- 6) **Ferruginous Hawks:** new Enhancement goal. Goals measure conservation acres and nest occupancy rate.
- 7) **Mule deer:** Traynor proposed this as a new Protection goal. Goals will 1) catalog Ag/no Ag in the foothills of the Blue Mts., which may be difficult depending on

landowner cooperation, and 2) monitor conservation acres. **Williams suggested that the goal be moved from protection to enhancement.**

- 8) **Wetland maps:** remove inventory goal because it has been completed. Have wetland goal be to audit 100 wetland shapes every 2 years.
- 9) **Flow meters:** change functional benchmark to 20%
- 10) **Irrigation efficiency:** New protection goal that will monitor efficient irrigation practices. Williams asked that “more” be deleted from the goal language, so that it reads “efficient irrigation practices will not fall by more than 500 acres every 5 years”.

Williams motioned and Neumann seconded to approve the VSP work plan draft with the following edits: 1) WDFW criteria are used to define fish passage barriers, 2) bull trout are considered when looking at fish passage barriers, 2) Mule deer goal will be added as an Enhancement goal, and 4) “more” be deleted from “more efficient irrigation practices” in the irrigation efficiency goal.

Grant updates: Traynor explained that Annie Byerley of WWCCD had found a BLM noxious weed grant and asked if any work group members had a need for that type of funds. Schirm said that land next to the Whitman Mission had a lot of Poison Hemlock and that WDFW has a project there in the works. Neumann said it would be helpful to have a way to keep workgroup members updated on grants the WWCCD is looking into.

VSP project updates: Traynor updated the work group on projects:

- Yellowhawk Screen and Meter Replacement – Closed out
- WW Flow Meter Replacement – Contract signed and waiting completion
- Ohima Rd Riparian – Contract signed and waiting next steps
- Mojonner Rd Riparian – Waiting funds

Program Updates: Traynor presented that he and Hadley attended the the SCC Technical Panel meeting on October 12. Also, the SCC executive director is upcoming and that position should be filled soon.

Partner Updates:

D. Haire, CTUIR: Mill Creek implementor meeting December 6th.


T. Schirm, WDFW: Steve Martin has left WDFW for SRSRB, TBD on replacement. The WDFW Habitat staff are relocating to the Water Center at WWCC.

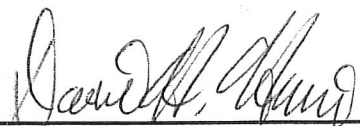
M. Morris, TSS: Designing the underground section for the Mill Creek Project. There may be a regional fisheries work crew available in 2025 to help with riparian projects.

L. Williams, WWCC: WWCC is interviewing for a new work force dean, who will oversee the Ag programs.

Morris motioned and Williams seconded to end the meeting at 2:45 pm; motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,


Eila Chin
WWCCD

 3/5/2024
David Haire
Vice-chair

Next meeting: March 5th 2024 at 4 pm