
MEETING MINUTES

VSP Watershed Work Group

May 22, 2018 | 6:00 – 7:45 PM

Mason Conservation District

450 West Business Park Road | Shelton, WA

ATTENDANCE

Members: Larry Boltz, Allan Borden, Laurie Hager, Jeanne Rehwaldt, and Bill Short

MCD Staff: John Bolender, Barbara Adkins

Facilitator: John Kliem, Creative Community Solutions

AGENDA

FIRST FORMAL REVIEW

- Discuss comments received and suggested changes
- What happens at Second Review?

NEXT STEPS

- Implementing the outreach process

NEW BUSINESS

- Next meeting

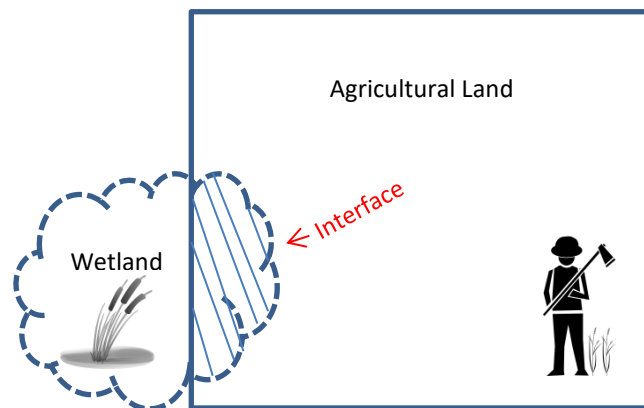
MINUTES

FIRST FORMAL REVIEW

District Staff attended the First Formal Review of the Work Plan with the Washington State Conservation Commission's Technical Panel on May 22, 2018. During this review, Staff provided the Panel with a PowerPoint presentation highlighting portions of the Work Plan while demonstrating that its contents met the intent of VSP statutes. During this presentation, Panel members asked questions of Staff regarding clarification and made suggestions for improvement to specific sections. Overall, the document was well received and the interaction with the Panel was helpful. Once the first formal review is complete, the Panel's VSP Coordinator compiles the comments into a table where they are organized based on their relationship to the statutory requirements. District Staff then uses that table to make revisions or responses, as required, and then submits it and the revised Work Plan back to the Panel for the second formal review and final approval. At the time of the Work Group's meeting, the

table had not yet been received for review, however the Coordinator’s minutes had been and these were used for discussion purposes. Copies of the minutes were provided to the Group in advance and are provided with these meeting minutes. Some of the Panel’s comments, as interpreted from their minutes, include the following:

- The analysis of agriculture as it relates to the various critical areas uses the term “interface” meant to refer to where the two overlap (e.g. 100 acres of agricultural “interface” in a wetland means that there is a 100 acre overlap of agricultural activities within a wetland or wetlands)



The intent behind using interface as a method of calculation for change was to illustrate how the increase or decrease in the amount of interface could determine positive and negative changes to both the agricultural activities and the critical area they interact with. However, the portrayal of this analysis in the Plan and the tables wasn’t easily understood by the readers and changes and clarifications were suggested.

- The Tables in Appendix 6 showing the Goals and Benchmarks are organized in a way that doesn’t relay BMPs as being universally applied in a critical area, but appear to be specific to a certain WRIA. These should be re-organized to read better.
- Again, in the Tables in Appendix 6 under the Actions column for Adaptive Management, it would be helpful if there were examples.
- There was some discussion as to whether or not the regulatory backstop section of the Plan was sufficient, and reference to RCW 90.48 (WA Clean Water Act) be added. Edits to this section will depend on the formal comments in the Coordinator’s Table.
- Appendix 7 of the Plan is the Monitoring Program and is a list of those resources the District intends to utilize for monitoring purposes. It was suggested by a Panel member to include the Washington Department of Health’s 303(d) list:

The federal Clean Water Act requires that all states restore their waters to be “fishable and swimmable.” Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act establishes a process to identify and clean up polluted waters. Waters whose beneficial uses (such as for drinking, recreation, aquatic habitat, and industrial use) that are impaired by pollutants are placed in the polluted water category (category 5) of the water quality assessment. The 303(d) list, so called because the process is described in Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, lists waters in the polluted water category.¹

There was a good deal of discussion during the Group’s meeting on this topic and how, and if, the Work Plan should be amended to include this resource. Since VSP is not centered around water quality and it is not categorically a critical area, so including this type of monitoring tool within the Plan could obligate the Work Group to a challenging and unnecessary task. It was decided that Staff would again wait to review the Coordinator’s Table of comments before deciding how to respond to this request.

- Another item in the Plan’s Monitoring Program is the use of the National Wetlands Inventory as a resource to determine on the grounds changes. However, it was pointed out to Staff that this particular resource is not updated in a manner that makes it a reliable data source for the future and it would be best to use wetland change analysis information instead.
- The Plan has a section that reviews other relevant watershed plans drafted in the past, which is a requirement under the statute. The Panel would like to see more tie-in of those plans into the Work Plan, and how the future implementation of Best Management Practices would fulfill prior goals and objectives.
- Part of the VSP is to ensure that there are people and agencies in place to provide assistance for landowners interested in participating in the program. The Mason County Board of Commissioners designated the Mason Conservation District as that technical assistance provider and it is appropriately noted in the Plan. It was suggested though that including other service providers in the area would be helpful landowners.
- Salmon habitat projects have been included in the Work Plan as they are considered protection and enhancement measures to fish and wildlife habitat. Projects implemented prior to July 2011 have been included in the baseline, and future projects will be monitored for their contributions to the protection and enhancement of habitat. There was a Panel comment suggesting that salmon projects are considered to be enhancement and not protection, and should be categorized as such. District Staff is not in agreement with this statement as there are several projects “in house” that serve as both. This was discussed and supported by the Group.

¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Water-quality/Water-improvement/Assessment-of-state-waters-303d>

NEXT STEPS

The debriefing discussions over the First Formal Presentation were lengthy, but very informative and helpful in the revising process. Discussing the next steps and embarking on outreach was decidedly postponed to a future meeting. The Group was anxious to move toward Plan approval and a short hiatus before implementing the next phase. In the meantime, Staff will be making edits to the Work Plan based on all the feedback and the Panel's comments. The revised Work Plan needs to be resubmitted to the Panel far enough in advance of the second review on June 19 to allow for evaluation. The VSP Coordinator asked that we aim for as close to June 1 as possible. The Group was interested in reading through the revisions and those will be sent out; however they may be sent concurrently with the resubmission as June is quickly approaching.

NEW BUSINESS

The Group would like to celebrate our success with a get-together in June instead of a regular meeting. A barbeque was suggested in one of the County's local parks inviting family and neighbors to give ourselves some kudos and give the Plan some publicity. We (John B. and I) are going to work through some ideas and dates for a party and get those out to all of you for a "vote".