

Columbia County Voluntary Stewardship Program

Meeting Minutes

May 9th, 2018

I. Call to order

Roland Schirman called to order the regular meeting of the Columbia County Voluntary Stewardship Program at 1:31 PM May 9th, 2018.

II. Attendance

Meagan Bailey, Dena Martin, Don Brigham, Roland Schirman, Terry Bruegman, Don Howard, Marty Hall, Brian Cochrane.

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting

The minutes were approved as is.

IV. Agenda items

A. General Concerns and/or Issues

- i. Schirman asked what happens if state funding for VSP ends or doesn't come through since the Implementation Budget Chart in Chapter 6 of the Columbia County VSP Plan assumes state funding at a level of \$220,000 for each biennium. Bergman said that VSP was originally designed to be implemented alongside existing programs and there may be other avenues of funding, such as USDA and CREP, in the case that direct legislative funding is not appropriated. Schirman requested that a sentence be added to the Implementation Budget Chart stating that if state funding is discontinued and there is no additional funding source, implementation may be diminished accordingly.

B. Update from State VSP

- i. Brigham provided an update on his informal presentation of the Draft Work Plan before the State Tech Panel on April 13. He felt the presentation went well and provided the Tech Panel with a good introduction to the plan and "familiarized them with the unique attributes and issues in Columbia County."
- ii. Brigham requested that the work group consider allowing him to submit the Work Plan to the state this month in order to get in line before a growing number of submissions.
- iii. If the submission is approved, Brigham would plan to make a formal presentation to the state in June, with adoption anticipated in July. He suggested the work group meet on June 7th, prior to the formal presentation.

C. Brian Cochrane – State Conservation Commission

- i. Cochrane gave a presentation on monitoring science and how to gather meaningful data that is robust enough to stand up to a legal challenge.
- ii. He gave examples of using imagery as a monitoring method. He said the National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP) and Landsat both provide free imagery. NAIP flies every two years, in midsummer, and Landsat flies every 16 days.

D. Monitoring and Implementation Discussion

- i. Discussed the difficulty in finding and affording qualified individuals and tools to perform accurate assessments. Questioned how specific the monitoring needs to be. Discussed the need to use different methods to monitor different critical areas.
- ii. Cochrane suggesting using the following questions: What is important to us here? What do we want to look at? How much change matters/What is the threshold to manage? What is the most meaningful and easy to measure? What are the most effective, affordable methods to monitor that?
- iii. Hall asked how we can make sure what is currently considered a good practice will be considered a good practice long-term, and used the example of braided streams losing and gaining favor. Cochrane said that the plan can be revised and adapted over time.
- iv. Schirman asked the work group for consensus to endorse the current Columbia County VPS Work Plan and formally submit it to the state. The work group endorsed the plan and Brigham agreed to submit the plan on May 10.

V. Adjournment

Schirman adjourned the meeting at 3:32 PM.

Next meeting: June 7th, 2018 @ 7:00 PM, location to be determined.

Minutes submitted by: Dena Martin