

***Columbia County Voluntary Stewardship Program  
Work Group Meeting Minutes***

September 3, 2019, 111 South 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Dayton, Washington 99328

**I. Call to Order**

Roland Schirman called the meeting to order the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter meeting of the Columbia County VSP Work Group at 6:03 p.m.

**II. Attendance**

Roland Schirman, Terry Bruegman, Don Howard, Tom Schirm, Marty Hall, Ryan Rundell, Meagan Bailey, Dena Martin and Don Brigham.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved as presented.

**IV. Updates and Old Business**

General discussion regarding the 2019 Biennia Report submitted to the state on Aug. 27, 2019.

Meagan announced that she has resigned from the County and has taken a position with the City of Dayton effective Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>. Dena Martin will take her place with the workgroup as Associate Planner.

**V. Budget for VSP Work Group**

Don introduced the July 9, 2019 – July 30, 2021 workgroup budget, noting that it is a state requirement to assign dollars to tasks. The budget categories were developed to match the VSP work plan and come in under the \$240,000 VSP Work Plan Grant amount to allow for contingencies. Don commented that 46 hours had been budgeted on the two-year report and only 24 hours were required. He said any budget savings can be transferred into the cost-share match to producers.

Roland asked what went into facilitation costs. Those costs represent work, research and communication by and between the consultant and staff. Roland requested that staff provide an overview of expenditures at each meeting. Budget will be included as a line item on future agendas.

**VI. On-going Items**

*New outreach methods – brochure, VSP card & banner* Meagan introduced the new VSP brochure that describes VSP, encourages participation and describes how to get involved. A pocket card was designed with information on where to learn more about the project and a canvas banner was created for use in the fair booth.

*County fair outreach* A fair booth will be created with farm décor, farm photos and brochures and information on the Voluntary Stewardship Program, Mapseed and how to participate.

Other Outreach Commissioner Rundell suggested the idea of advertising VSP on the radio and said that Whitman County VSP advertises their program on an AM station out of Moscow.

Potential new cost-share programs for new grant Don initiated a brainstorming session with the workgroup to identify programs that will appeal to a variety of producers. The top priority is to get producers involved as participants. Terry asked about partnering with the weed board for a second round of cost-share for weed eradication. Roland said he would prefer a program with long-term benefits over one that will require ongoing maintenance such as weed control. Meagan suggested allowing producers to suggest their own projects which would be ranked and prioritized with a standardized rating/review system. Terry mentioned the potential benefit of supplementing already-existing partially-funded projects through other agencies such as USDA.

Rating system/process for cost-share programs General discussion regarding the development of a project selection ranking/review system. The group discussed ranking by number of acres affected, direct vs. indirect benefits, critical areas impacted, overall project costs (such as financially prohibitive streambank stabilization projects and projects that may require cultural resource review). The rating system should be based around how well the projects fit with the VSP plan with points awarded and tiered by priority. Staff will research other jurisdictions to see if they have already developed an unbiased rating system and bring ideas and suggestions to the October meeting for review.

Outreach/Action Planning staff will prepare a one-page ISP application and develop a broad-based VSP postcard soliciting project applications with examples to be reviewed at the October meeting.

VSP succession planning & recruitment Brief conversation regarding the recruitment of new workgroup members. Word of mouth is encouraged. This topic will remain a standing agenda item.

## **VII. Election of Officers**

Marty Hall was elected as the new Voluntary Stewardship Workgroup Chair, assuming duties from Roland Schirman.

## **VIII. Next Meeting**

The VSP Work Group will meet Monday, October 7 at 6:00 at the Delaney Building, 111 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Dayton, location pending building availability. The following meeting will be at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, December 10.

## **IX. Adjournment**

Marty adjourned the meeting at 7:22 p.m.