

Columbia County Voluntary Stewardship Program Work Group Meeting Minutes

February 3, 2022 ~ Columbia Conservation District Boardroom/Zoom Meeting Platform

I. Call to Order

Work Group Vice-Chair Joy Eckhoff called to order the meeting of the Columbia County VSP Work Group at 10:14 a.m. on February 3, 2022.

II. Attendance

In-person attendance: Joy Eckhoff, Roland Schirman, Aneesha Dieu (Conservation District Staff), Marty Hall (County Commissioner), Dena Martin (County Planning Staff).

Zoom attendance: Terry Breugman, Brian Cochrane (SCC Technical Panel)

III. Approval of Minutes

Schirman moved to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2021 meeting; Bruegman seconded; all approved.

IV. Updates

- **County:**

- Martin shared that the final 2021 quarterly report was submitted to the State.
- Martin provided a budget update of November and December expenditures.
- Several work group members have updated their OPMA training.
- No staff or work group members were able to attend the January WSCC Monitoring Symposium. Martin will watch for the recording to be uploaded to the VSP site and send out the link once it is available.

- **Conservation District:**

- Dieu updated the work group on current cost-share projects.

V. Discussion Items

- **Discuss County Water Monitoring Plan**

- Dieu introduced the concept of developing a Water Quality Monitoring Plan. The plan would piggyback on existing plans and leverage resources to provide data on watershed water quality.
- Attendees engaged in extensive conversation touching on the following topics:
 - Potential increasing Ecology water monitoring standards
 - How to provide usable data to mitigate negative producer impacts without identifying specific landowners
 - The types of data to collect and length of time required to make function/quality determinations
 - Watershed scale monitoring vs. smaller reaches
 - The development of a baseline using current or existing historical data

- Cochrane spoke about the importance of determining the question to be answered before creating a monitoring program and making sure that the data collected relates to the VSP concern of overall watershed health.
- Dieu will speak with Levi Keesecker for input on how to best implement the project.
- It is anticipated that the work group will need to approve the creation of a committee to develop the program and report back to the larger work group on progress.
- **Development of work group bylaws**
 - The work group discussed the membership process, the challenge of increasing the active work group size while maintaining a quorum at meetings, and OPMA requirements.
 - Attendees agreed that they did not want to have an application requirement.
 - Martin will develop a draft set of simple bylaws for review at the next meeting.

VI. Comments, concerns, items not listed on the agenda

None

VII. Next Meeting

The work group set a tentative meeting date of May 5, 2022 at 10 a.m. at the Conservation District boardroom, with attendance available via Zoom as well.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Columbia County Water Quality Monitoring Plan 2022

FEBRUARY 3

VSP Water Quality Plan
Committee



Water Quality Monitoring Plan

Vision, Goal, Concepts, & Questions:

Vision: Water Quality Monitoring provides the objective evidence necessary for the landowners and producers to make educated decisions on managing water quality and protect its beneficial uses throughout the county. Water-quality monitoring can be used to identify areas of current, ongoing or emerging changes, and notify' s landowners and producers in the area so that they may voluntarily address the change.

Goal: To equip landowners and producers with the right tools and data to independently monitor and address changes to water quality in their area, whether through private practices or utilization of their local conservation district.

Concepts: The CD to provide TA through VSP, providing water quality testing of areas public to access and within manageably sized designation reaches. These test to be made public and data stored for continuation of monitoring purposes. The intent is to drive self-awareness of landowners and producers to monitor the impacts that come of their individual land use practices. These steps will provide mitigation between landowner/producer and Dept. of Ecology, to negate the path of regulatory measures.

Questions:

1. Definition of a reach that is manageable in size.
2. How often would testing occur?
3. Would dept. of ecology be included in the plan?
4. What other partners in the area should be reached out to?

***“The strategy to improving water quality monitoring...
Goal oriented & incentivized self-awareness.”***

Committee- The committee would be in charge of researching, developing and communicating the plan. A timeline of plan completion needs to be discussed with designated milestones and clear goals of when each milestone will be met. The committee needs to present the plan to the workgroup at each milestone to review and discuss the progress made until its completion. Upon completion the committee needs to review the plan annually to evaluate the success or failure and make necessary evaluations and modifications if needed.

