



OKANOGAN COUNTY
OFFICE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

123 - 5th Ave. N. Suite 130 - Okanogan, WA 98840

(509) 422-7160 • FAX: (509) 422-7349 • TTY/Voice Use 800-833-6388

email: planning@co.okanogan.wa.us

Okanogan County VSP Meeting Minutes

1 A special meeting of the Okanogan County VSP Workgroup was held on December 15, 2020 at
2 6:00 p.m. via web: Microsoft Teams Meeting and phone conference.

3 **OKANOGAN COUNTY STAFF:** Director of Planning Pete Palmer, Natural Resource Planner
4 Angie Hubbard

5 **VOULUNTARY STEWARDSHIP MEMBERS:** Bill Tackman, Jerry Barnes, and Maurice Joy.

6 **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Amy Martin, Craig Nelson, Lynda Hoffman, Leslie Michel
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8 **Approve Agenda:** The agenda was approved as written
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10 **Approve Minutes:** No decision on minutes due to lack of quorum.
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12 **General:** WDFW hired a VSP coordinator Sean Williams. He needs to be added to the contact
13 list.
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15 **5 Year Review:** Amy Martin updated the group on the work that has been done for the 5 year
16 review and report. Amy contacted Les Kinney earlier in the day to update him on the
17 presentation material since he could not attend the meeting.

- 18 • Amy Martin updated the group that she has completed the land coverage analysis
19 compared to previous years. The information is indicating less irrigated land and more
20 dry land acreage. We will use this trending data for vegetation change analysis and
21 critical areas. Amy explained that in our VSP Plan we identify the ten year mark for
22 review based on the start of our baseline data/condition of 2011 as the starting year. 5-
23 year metrics will be reported in the 5-year Report as well.
- 24 • The five year plan will be reviewed by the state advisory committee and tech panel to
25 see if we are meeting the benchmarks contained in our plan. Leslie further explained it
26 is a long process. Close to a three month timeline from the submittal to Conservation
27 Commission. As we learn throughout this process there will be some changes and
28 working out the kinks for future reviews. Any comments on the process should be had
29 with the Conservation Commission.
- 30 • Amy continued to go over the 5 year review. The access database has taken a lot of
31 work to get going. There are 10 WRIA's or so that we have to report on. The report
32 evaluates protection benchmarks, participation benchmarks, effectiveness monitoring for
33 the critical areas. Basically, are we reporting and is there proof that we have been
34 achieving those benchmarks.
- 35 • Secondary review on adaptive management, and Agricultural viability. For Adaptive
36 management what can we do to make this work better and prove it. For Agricultural
37 Viability provide how Ag has changed since 2011. We are seeing a change in
38 agricultural lands which impacts our benchmarks and participation.

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- Amy presented a snapshot of the access database to give the group an idea of what the reporting looks like and how it relates to critical areas. Amy will present the data in excel for the workgroup. It is more manageable.
 - Amy asked about VSP jurisdiction on the reservation and reporting strategy. Pete explained that she didn't think that we have the authority to regulate on the reservation. If we are funding projects on the reservation, we should bring them into the discussion. Lynda explained that WDFW has authority for HPA's and holdings on tribal land but it is not clear. Amy explained that we need to clarify the role of VSP on the reservation in order to clarify what will need to happen in the future. Leslie stated that Spokane County has the Spokane Tribe involved in the VSP process so you could reach out to see how they have worked that out.
 - Amy continued to describe the benchmarks. There is great staff at NRCS and they have implemented many projects and hitting our mark in all categories except habitat management. Once we get some additional records for implementation, our stream habitat metric will improve.
 - Lynda and Craig thank Amy for doing such a great job.
 - Amy stated that it is clear we have a lot of conservation going on and we have exceeded our benchmarks. There is some adaptive management we should consider to integrate for pest management. We should also reevaluate habitat and stream to consider whether we need to alter that number. Amy explained that some projects will be added from other organizations.
 - Amy presented the results so far. A question was asked regarding if the Foster Creek CD projects were included in the numbers. Amy said the data is mostly NRCS and that she will check in with Foster Creek.
 - Lynda asked how many pages is the report and Amy replied some are 200 plus pages. Leslie asked if there was anyway to have the material presented attached to the workplan. Amy replied they are discouraging extra documents but does feel the agencies need to be able to see the work being done. Adding forest health related practices to the Work Plan would be a good idea as well as range management work.
 - Amy continued presenting. In the Foster Creek, Sanpoil, and Kettle WRIA most of the projects are forest health related. 80% of Ag occurs in the Okanogan WRIA. That is where a bulk of the reporting is.
 - Okanogan's Columbian sharp-tailed grouse population (Tunk Valley) is improving after translocation efforts to public and private land. Okanogan habitat trend monitoring shows improving steelhead habitat in all tributaries except Loup Loup. Game species show positive trends. In-stream flows improved through significant efficiency projects on Methow, Loup Loup, and Salmon Creek, etc. Lynda asked about which game species reports were referenced and Amy will follow up with those documents. There should be some habitat trend data available for the Methow River.
 - Amy continued with Wetlands, Geo Hazards, and floodplain and discussed the vegetation change mapping 2019 picked up a lot of brown on the imagery, in part due to the drought year. Craig stated this seems similar to fire assessment data which can be quite challenging to ground truth. Amy said that our plan will be using Adaptive Management to explore additional monitoring tools to figure out how to capture some of these changes. Amy plans on working with DOE and the workgroup to consider monitoring wetlands.
 - Groundwater data is still being processed. We've seen some data for spills but not related to Ag activities.

87 **Next Meeting:** December 22, 2020 at 6:00 pm

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90 **Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

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Summary of Motions

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94 No motions due to lack of quorum.

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98 Angie Hubbard

99 Natural Resource Planner

100 Okanogan County Office of Planning & Development