



Okanogan County VSP Meeting Minutes

1 A regular meeting of the Okanogan County VSP Workgroup was held on January 4th 2018 at
2 6:30 p.m. in the Natural Resource Conference Room, 123 5th Avenue North, Okanogan,
3 Washington.

4 **OKANOGAN COUNTY STAFF:** Director of Planning Perry Huston, Natural Resource Planner
5 Angie Hubbard, Administrative Secretary Rocky King

6 **VOULUNTARY STEWARDSHIP MEMBERS:** William Tackman, Jerry Barnes, Dick Ewing, Les
7 Kinney, Maurice Joy, Nicole Kuchenbuch, Robert Wilson,

8 **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Amy Martin, Craig Nelson, Mindy Widell, Randy Kelley, Lynda
9 Hoffman

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11 **Approve Agenda:** Dick suggested amending the agenda to strike Critical Areas Designations
12 Review and add page 1 to section 3.1 Baseline and Existing Conditions document review.
13 Robert motioned to accept as amended and Nicole seconded.

14

15 **Approve Minutes:** Les motioned to accept and Robert seconded.

16

17 **2 Regional Settings Critical Areas 12-5 document:**

18 Dick suggested removing lines 25-28 on page 14 because it is referenced elsewhere Les is
19 concerned that listing game species along with endangered species would make the entire
20 county considered a critical area. He would like to add the language from page 21 in the
21 Stevens County Plan that would state “Okanogan County CAO only lists protection
22 requirements for habitats and species that the state or federal government has designated as
23 threatened, endangered, and sensitive.” The group agreed. Perry reminded the group that the
24 new CAO will site the VSP plan. Craig suggested leaving out a reference to the CAO in the
25 VSP plan and only stating “this VSP will protect threatened, endangered and sensitive species”.

26

27 **4 Voluntary Protection Strategies**

28 On page 1 line 8, Dick suggested inserting the concept that overall ag preserves land from more
29 intensive development and in addition many opportunities to conserve and improve the
30 environment. The group discussed whether or not to add energy saving to the list but decided it
31 was covered by reduced inputs.

32 On page 4 bullet 4, the group would like to add “only on the boundaries of the reservation”.
33 Amy reminded the group that they could be more specific in the appendix. Craig asked if state
34 laws apply on the reservation. Perry said yes, that’s the way we interpret it. Amy suggested
35 that the language be added as a footnote. The group agreed. Les suggested adding a page of
36 acronyms.

37 On Table 4.2 Robert pointed out that irrigated water conveyance pipeline was listed on the table
38 twice so, one should be deleted. Amy pointed out that the number of watering facilities should
39 be corrected to say 19 instead of 689. Craig suggested adding a caveat on livestock fencing

40 because there was a lot of fence replacement due to wildfire repair. Dick asked if restoration
41 due to the fires would add to the benchmarks. Amy said that yes, it would be mentioned. Craig
42 informed the group that Bill Eller said that it would count but the level wouldn't be maintained
43 and we would need to be careful how it was worded. Put in a reasonable goal with lightly
44 lowered numbers because you never know what will happen to affect it. Nicole said that we
45 need to set realistic goals incase funds are decreased. Craig suggested adding language to the
46 goals section that states that if funds drop, then goals will drop also.
47 Amy will add the Weed Board to the table on page 10. Lynda said that WDFW offers tech
48 assistance, not just financial.
49

50 **3.1 Baseline and Existing Conditions:**

51 On page 1 line 11, Dick said climate change needs to be removed and he wants to elaborate
52 the concept of climate variation. Climate poses the possibility of variations and trends that can
53 alter the baseline conditions unrelated to ag practices such as prolonged drought periods that
54 change snow pack and stream runoff patterns affecting water availability. Similarly an increase
55 in snow pack and annual precipitation can bring many benefits that are positive such as more
56 abundant habitats and larger crop yields for agriculture along with negative impacts such as
57 flooding and erosion. These climate variations need to be evaluated in a way that does not
58 negatively impact the gains and efforts which ranchers and farmers make under the VSP
59 program.

60 On page 4, Amy will add the language from the Stevens County plan about species. Dick
61 suggested striking the language that says "which has fragmented much of the shrub-steppe
62 and".

63 Dick would like to add to section 3.1.4 language like this VSP recognizes water quality best
64 management practices to deal with the lack of information on CARAs being thoroughly mapped.
65 Bill said that it doesn't need to be tied back to mapping, just best management practices. Amy
66 will put some short reference there but, the majority of the work will show up in the goals and
67 benchmarks.
68

69 **3.2 Dick's Edits**

70 Dick presented his edits to section 3.2 to the group. Nicole thinks that the plan should mention
71 that the government has outbid many farmers and taken land out of ag. The group discussed
72 whether or not it's appropriate to tell the government they can't make an offer on ag land to
73 convert. Perry will draft new language.

74 In the weakness section of the table on page 3, Craig pointed out that right now, export is good
75 but can fluctuate, it is not necessarily a weakness however. Nicole would like to add the word
76 "affordable" to the phrase "stable labor supply".

77 Perry explained to the group that the Hirst decision did agriculture some good protecting senior
78 water rights.
79

80 **Next Meeting:**

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82

83 **Adjourn:**

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85

86 Rocky King
87 Admin Secretary