



OKANOGAN COUNTY
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Okanogan County VSP Meeting Minutes

A regular session of the Okanogan County VSP Workgroup was held on March 2, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in the Natural Resource Conference Room, 123 5th Avenue North, Okanogan, Washington.

OKANOGAN COUNTY STAFF: Director of Planning Perry Huston, Natural Resources Planner Angie Hubbard, Administrative Secretary Rocky King

VOULUNTARY STEWARDSHIP MEMBERS: Les Kinney, Megan Kernan, Jerry Barnes, Dick Ewing, Maurice Joy,

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Amy Martin, Mindy Widell

Approval of Agenda: Bill moved to approve, Jerry seconded.

Approval of Minutes: Angie corrected the date on the minutes. Les corrected a statement that he had made about the cost of DNR permits. Jerry moved to approve as amended, Les seconded.

Okanogan Conservation District: Amy introduced Mindy as a GIS analyst for the Conservation District. She explained that the contract with Okanogan County has been in place for two weeks and they have made progress on Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas (CARA). She read the definition of CARA from the Grant County plan. Grant County and Whitman County used wellhead protection areas for the mapping of CARAs and to help identify how likely pesticides are to infiltrate drinking water. The Department of Health has examples of one year and ten year infiltration rates on the radius around the water systems. The overlap with ag. land and CARA is around 5%, so very little ag. land intersects with them.

Grant County is focusing on a site-specific identification. This means there is more work with the land owner to get the data of well sites and soil types. Bill asked what other areas would be considered CARA. Megan asked if the Department of Ecology has a definition of CARA. Angie said that the definition comes from the Department of Commerce. Dick asked if perch basis that fill up in continuity with the stream be considered. Amy said the problem is that it is not defined. We don't have the data readily available.

Perry said that planning is going to adopt our Critical Area Ordinance (CAO) under the 2012 revision soon and turn around and update our CAO for our 2018 revision. CARAs are a sensitive issue. The current plan does not have a lot of the areas mapped. Remember, VSP is only dealing with the intersections. Dick suggested that the group takes initial steps to define CARA but, leave it open to add additional information as it becomes available. Perry said that a definition is a good place to start. Not all ag. activities will have an impact on CARA. Department of Health regulations say that the source of water requires a 100 foot radius of protection. We do not have the resources to map them perfectly. As Angie points out, the

commerce definition come from the WAC and will be safe to use in our plan. Amy said that they have well depths and NRCS susceptibility reports, which can be looked at also.

Dick suggested to make a general reference to wellhead protection areas and potable water in our definition contained in the plan. Perry suggested that it would be possible to use NRCS soil types to determine susceptibility to contamination. Only ag activities impact will need to be worried about. Megan asked if there is any indication of a problem with ground water.

Generally that is nitrates. Perry said that there are reports in the Methow that they had tested for coliform and the test came out clean. Bill stated that soil testing is done when orchards are removed and put to a different use. Perry suggested to get the test results that are known. We do not automatically assume that ag. activity will have a negative impact. If you come up with a negative impact, you can manage for that in your plan. Amy said that the group does not need to rely on water quality monitoring but instead could rely on nutrient management plans. Bill suggested that complying with pesticide standards could be a management tool. Amy said that there is a need to explore more ground water data to see if there is contamination. Perry said that intersections could add to the base line. He suggested that since water systems report annually, the data should be available to use. Bill stated that there are naturally occurring contaminates. Megan said we would need to be careful what contaminates we were testing for since arsenic occurs naturally. Jerry provided an example that a team of scientist came up to prove that pesticides were contaminating Palmer Lake but, they discovered that arsenic was naturally in the bedrock. He suggested that only the wellhead protection areas should be considered in reference to CARA's and not to expand beyond that.

Perry asked if the group wanted to map wellheads or if they want to map soil types and a more described wat to define them in order to create the baseline. Megan suggested to use the definition from the Department of Commerce with the addendum from Dick.

Amy said that after talking to Grant County, the agencies are open to a definition for CARA that can be used on the ground.

Les asked about the landowner with a well in the center of his property surrounded by ag activities. Amy said that there are many tools from NRCS. We look at well depth, soil leaching application, and irrigation infiltration rates to help it from getting contaminated. Les asked why anything would need to be done if the water had tested negative for contaminates. Megan said that if they want to voluntarily do this, they should get credit as a landowner. This would be a tangible thing to monitor.

Perry suggested to go back to the 2011 benchmark and see how many landowners had voluntarily gone through the process to protect the wells and compare that to how many do it now, these numbers could be use as measurement to achieve the benchmarks. Dick suggested that the plan should use the definition from the WAC and utilize the Grant County definition as well. Bill added that this is a good start, the more we find out the more we can add to modify it down the road. Dick suggested that the plan includes the tool box from page 38 from the Whitman County plan. Amy said that we will include practices that apply to this area. We can build our baseline off of data collected from programs over the last five years. There would be a checklist for farmers to go through on their own.

Fish and wildlife habitat information: Moved to the next meeting.

Chelan and Whitman County Plans: Bill said that he likes the Whitman County plan. It is laid out nicely and is more simple and straight forward. He said that there are examples from page 20 on the Chelan County plan that would be beneficial to incorporate. Jerry said the Chelan County plan has good examples on horticulture. He thinks that the Grant County plan will have more farming for better comparison to Okanogan County. He said he thinks the Whitman County plan has a more welcoming feel. Dick said he didn't think the plan from Chelan County was a detailed about what they planned to do. Les said he thought it was about all ag land and not just the overlap. He suggested the group decides whether they are going to look at the overall ag land or just the overlap. Bill thought it would be ok to use the overall. Megan said she is confused about what was being talked about, ag viability or the intersection of ag with

critical areas if a certain species is not covered. Economic habitat for endangered species is totally different. Bill said that habitat has to be considered overall. Les said it is either just those areas or everywhere. The impression from Whitman County is that they are including everything. Perry showed an example of how bird habitat may intersect with ag activities. He explained that the management plan would deal with that individually and overall ag is used for economic viability.

Next Meeting: Critical Aquifer Recharge Maps
Fish and Wildlife Habitat Maps

Adjourn: Nichole moved to adjourn. Les seconded.

Rocky King
Administrative Secretary