



Okanogan County VSP Meeting Minutes

1 A special meeting of the Okanogan County VSP Workgroup was held on March 22, 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, Administrative Secretary
5 Rocky King

6 **VOULUNTARY STEWARDSHIP MEMBERS:** Jerry Barnes, Dick Ewing, Les Kinney, Megan
7 Kernan, Nicole Kuchenbuch, Bill Tackman

8 **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Amy Martin, Craig Nelson, Mindy Widell,
9

10 **Approve Agenda:** Dick asked to add discussion about extra monthly meetings and ag viability
11 aims and tracking to the agenda. Megan motioned to approve as amended, Bill seconded, all
12 approved.
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14 **Approve Minutes:** Jerry motioned to approve, Les seconded, all approved.
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16 **Meeting Dates:** The group discussed options for a second meeting date each month until the
17 plan must be submitted. They agreed to meet April 5th and 26th, May 3rd and 24th, and June 7th
18 and 11th.
19

20 **Benchmarks and Goals:** Amy reminded the group of where they left off and the fact that they
21 may want to change the benchmark tables. They discussed the Stevens County Plan and the
22 methods used to create their tables and pick their practices. Amy presented the new qualitative
23 chart of benchmarks. Megan feels that the quantitative chart is easier to read than the
24 qualitative chart. Nicole thought that if they set general goals, they would need more
25 participation. Amy pointed out that quantitative data can be pulled from NRCS and qualitative
26 data will be more difficult to get. She then went over the quantitative table for the group and
27 gave a summary. Les mentioned that dry land farming is limited on what can grow; there is not
28 enough moisture for cover crops on dry land. Amy pointed out that not all practices apply to
29 every farm.

30 Les asked if the group is still only talking about only the overlap of ag and critical areas or if they
31 are talking about all of the farmlands. Dick reminded the group that all good management
32 practices count to VSP. Megan said that the tech panel will focus on wetlands, fish and wildlife
33 habitat, and CARAs. Nicole asked Amy if they will use CPPE or if the NRCS does the ground
34 work. Amy said that the conservation district is trained to do both but, they will bring in NRCS.
35 They group discussed the Stevens County Matrix showing “who does what”. Amy asked the
36 group if they want to include data on water trusts and instream flows and informed them that
37 other groups have included conservation easements. Megan asked if they could be included as
38 practices. Amy said that we want to show how farmers are helping salmon habitat. Megan
39 suggested that it may be easiest to put the data under water management. Jerry doesn't feel

40 that conservation easements would be considered practices. Nicole pointed out that they are
41 happening all over the county. The group agreed that conservation easements will go in habitat
42 management and water savings will go in water management.

43 The group discussed separating enhancements and protection and what option would be best
44 to suite the county. Les asked Linda if leaving a wetland alone would be considered enhancing
45 or protecting. Linda said that it would be site specific but if it was left alone, it could be
46 considered a conservation easement.

47 Megan Moved to use quantitative protection benchmarks with provision that Amy research
48 enhancement benchmarks from Whitman and Stevens County, Nicole seconded, all approved.

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50 **Monitoring and Adaptive Managements:** The group reviewed the Stevens County Plan. Amy
51 told the group that the Conservation District keeps records of participation and people that they
52 have talked too. She showed the group a list of existing monitoring resources that included
53 Department of Ecology, Department of Health, the Colville Tribe, NRCS and WDFW. Nicole
54 asked if they could use entities that aren't on the list if needed. Dick pointed out that the last
55 sentence of the first paragraph on page 52 of the Stevens' plan gives room to add more. The
56 group discussed ways to get more data and aerals to include in the plan.

57 Nicole motioned to have Amy use the Stevens County plan to create chapter 6 in the Okanogan
58 County Plan, Megan seconded, all approved.

59 Amy explained Appendix E in the Stevens County plan to the group. Dick likes that the
60 checklist maintains continuity with NRCS. Jerry asked how many producers there are that don't
61 have a farm plan. Craig said that there are many farms that do not have one or if they do, they
62 are out of date. Megan asked if it is necessary to know what WRIA the farm is in. Craig said
63 that is the info that we will need when applying for grants. Amy will prepare a draft for the next
64 meeting.

65
66 **Select a Lead Entity:** The group discussed the potential roles and resources from the
67 nominated groups.

68 Megan moved to select the Conservation District as lead agency for outreach and
69 implementation of the work group, Jerry seconded, all approved.

70
71 **Ag Viability Aims and Tracking:** Amy presented the draft she provided for the group. Dick
72 presented his edits. Amy will come up with a style edit ready for the group's suggestions to be
73 added.

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76 **Next Meeting:**

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79 **Adjourn:** Megan motioned, Nicole seconded.

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81

82 Rocky King
83 Admin Secretary