



OKANOGAN COUNTY  
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## Okanogan County VSP Meeting Minutes

A regular session of the Okanogan County VSP Workgroup was held on April 6, 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, Planner 1 Pam Wyllson, Administrative Secretary Rocky King

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

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Amy Martin, Mindy Widell, Craig Nelson, Harold Crose, Marie Lotz

**Approval of Agenda:** Megan moved to approve, Jerry seconded.

**Approval of Minutes:** Bill wanted to correct the minutes to reflect that Nicole was not in attendance and add that he was. It was Megan who moved to adjourn last meeting not Nicole. Megan moved to approve amended minutes. Bill seconded.

**Presentation by Marie Lotz and Harold Crose from Grant County:** Dick introduced the speakers and had everyone in the group introduce themselves. Harold talked about where Grant County is with their plan. He spoke about the history of VSP and why it was started. The objective is to keep volunteer conservation alive. Bill asked how many counties Harold works with. Harold said that he works with 9 counties. Bill asked how many have completed the process. Harold said that Grant county will be the first, Thurston and Chelan County have had their plans looked at but, they were not accepted. Harold presented his power point.

Craig asked if enhancements that are done on public land will be a credit towards VSP. Harold said no, public lands are exempt. Les mentioned that activity may not degradant your area but, may affect critical areas downstream. Harold spoke about irrigation and erosion harming other lands. Les asked how do we would know if it's getting worse the 2011. Harold said that is difficult but we look at the records from different agencies. Technology is helpful and overtime management will get easier. Bill asked how the 2014 fire's destruction will affect the baseline. Harold said that credit will be taken for every bit of conservation that has been done since 2011. Les asked if Grant County took credit for all of the farm land or only the overlap. Harold told him that they take credit for all of the farmland, and they take credit for existing plans. Les said there isn't enough private land to support cattle. They must graze on public land to survive. Perry asked why we would not promote public lands and extend VSP to those lands. Harold said that the RCW's state that public/state lands are exempt. He suggested that it be tucked into the ag viability as a necessary area. He said it is important to set goals to what you know to

be true and to get out and educate the public. Les wants to add something to the plan to include public land.

Megan asked how much the Grant County work group was involved in coming up with the plan. Harold said that they were involved in every step. They reviewed everything throughout the process. Dick asked how much of the core came from the work group. Harold said very little. They kept him on track and pointed him in the direction they wanted to go. Megan asked how many hours of staff time did it take. Harold said hundreds. He suggested that the group adds the Farm Start program into their VSP plan. It allows a farmer to pick what they will do to set goals then locks them in. DOE cannot then make them do more. Dick asked about Anchor and what Harold thought of them in this process. Harold said they needed to educate them on what ag is because they were treating things like a water resource plan but now they are working for 5 counties and that is good because everything will be done the same way. He would recommend them.

**Update on the RFQ:** Perry said that the deadline is April 7<sup>th</sup> @ 5pm (the next day) and planning has only received one. He agreed to make some calls the next day to some of the companies that the group wanted.

**Identify Key Concepts for our VSP from the VSP Plans Created by Anchor and our Local Needs:** Dick suggested that the plans that have boxes be put on a spread sheet so that they can be compared side by side but it will be hard to compare text.

Megan said it will be important to use outreach to have success. The biggest challenge will be to get volunteers. Bill suggested it may take time to allow people to get used to the idea. We need to start right now with the outreach. Perry reminded the group that there is only a weekly paper and radio only goes so far. He suggested that the group looks at different ways to get the message out. Dick suggested everyone write out a simple paragraph about what they want to do for outreach. The group will look at each of them and look for a common thread.

Les would like to see Craig send someone out to his property to be told what should be done so that he has examples to take to the cattlemen. Craig said that it would not be that simple. It takes weeks to look at what is being done and what is planned to be done. Perry said it was a good idea to use an example to show the public. The group agreed to use Les' farm as an example. Craig will go out and do a one day assessment. Dick suggested that they set a goal of July to begin outreach. Megan said that if they did a press release the paper would cover it.

Dick asked the group to look at the text in the Grant County plan and bring notes to the next meeting. They should look at 5 critical areas and set goals. He asked planning to pull out the tables on the plans and put them on paper side by side to be compared.

**Next Meeting:** Feedback on presentation given by Harold Crose  
Review text from Grant County plan  
Review Charts  
Conservation District present data

**Adjourn:** Bill moved to adjourn. Megan seconded.

Rocky King  
Administrative Secretary