



OKANOGAN COUNTY
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Okanogan County VSP Meeting Minutes

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

OKANOGAN COUNTY STAFF: Natural Resources Planner Angie Hubbard, Planner 1 Pam Wyllson, Administrative Secretary Rocky King

VOULUNTARY STEWARDSHIP MEMBERS: Les Kinney, Nicole Kuchenbuch, Jerry Barnes, Dick Ewing, Robert Wilson,

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Amy Martin

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

Approval of Minutes: Nichole moved to approve, Jerry seconded.

Okanogan Conservation District: Amy presented her report from her meeting the week prior. She stated that some work groups have hired facilitators to guide them, others have hired consultants. At the meeting, Mike Kaputa talked about the Chelan County work group. They wanted to emphasize work that the Conservation District and the NRCS are already doing. If we summarize and monitor these activities, this will show what great stewards of the land farmers already are. Kelly McClain, from the Department of Ag., explained that if it is not financially feasible, it is not up to every producer to enroll in VSP. Amy also reported that Grant and Chelan County will be submitting their drafts soon. Also, she let the group know that the VSP funding will not be rolling over.

Les asked how long until there would be maps provided to look at. He is concerned that without maps showing aquifer-recharge areas, it will be difficult to know what to look for. Amy and Angie said that the contract would be going before the Commissioners the following week and funding would then be available for the Conservation District to begin work. Les stated his concerns about all of the regulations we already have. He has streams and wetlands that go through his property and wants to build a culvert but must go through too many agencies. He has many slash piles that have not been dealt with because DNR has so many rules it makes it impossible. He is concerned that after this product goes before the agencies he will have to accept something he did not agree with.

Nicole updated the group about her conversation with people in Thurston County. She said they were skeptical of the plan and feeling forced into it. They had hired a facilitator, but did not feel that the work reflected what the group wanted.

Email from Evan Scheffels: Dick said that there is a way to make the plan simpler, so that it is more than just checking off the statutory boxes. Nicole said it is a delicate process to maintain the integrity and still maintain the statutory requirements. She is glad that some of the counties are moving along so that we know what documents will pass. Dick said that Chelan County is a more comparable plan to our county.

Thurston County Matrix: Amy said that there will be potential funding from NRCS to provide programs to enhance the viability of agriculture. Les wants to be given permits for Elk tags based on acreage that the land owner would be able to sell. Amy said that under activity 8, there would be directives to the Conservation Commission to find funding to help with those activities. Nichole said that DOE is really difficult with permitting. It would be nice if they could lower their fees and speed up the process time it takes for them to approve permits. Robert said that it is ridiculous that Fish and Wildlife do not allow more than one kill permit when Les has so many acres available.

Table 12: Dick said that he doesn't see similarities between Thurston County and Okanogan County. He suggested that Thurston County be scrapped and Nichole agreed. Jerry suggested that Chelan County may be streamlined to fit our county.

Whitman County Plan: The group really likes the box on the corner of page 12 that disclaims the data sources. They like how the consultant drafted the Whitman County Plan.

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

Adjourn: Nichole moved to adjourn. Les seconded.

Rocky King
Administrative Secretary