

Adams County VSP Work Group Meeting Notes

Tuesday, March 14, 2017

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Work Group Members	Other Attendees
Jake Wollman Jr. – Landowner	Eric Pentico – WDFW
Lynn Olson – Landowner	Grant Miller – Landowner
Dave Leatherman – Landowner	Craig Simpson – East Columbia Basin Irrigation District
Cara Hulce – Adams Conservation District	Tim Unruh – Adams County Building and Planning
Marie Lotz – Grant County Conservation District	Ben Floyd – Anchor QEA
	John Small – Anchor QEA
	Nora Schlenker – Anchor QEA

Work Plan Content Review

First Impressions: Overall, attendees thought the Work Plan was easy to read. One suggestion was to spell out some of the abbreviations that are less well known. Stated that agency and some farm program abbreviations were ok to keep because most producers are familiar with them.

Introduction Section: No comments provided at the meeting.

Regional Setting Section: It was discussed that since water erosion potential is not a critical area and is not a large issue in Adams County it should not be highlighted as a major resource concern. Instead it should be discussed that the VSP can provide additional benefit to water erosion but this discussion will occur in the goals section and under agricultural viability.

It was suggested that “Water Quality” be changed to “Water Quality Function” to highlight that water quality in terms of critical areas is defined as the function of the landscape to filter and retain sediments and nutrients. This contrasts with other definitions of water quality which look at the composition of water in streams and other waterbodies.

Baseline and Existing Conditions: It was discussed that unknown streams should be removed from the stream calculations and spoken to only in the text. They should be qualified that they are mostly topographic lows that only have water during flood periods that occur infrequently and the rest of the time many of these areas are farmed. Additionally, attendees requested adding a callout box to the wetlands section discussing how irrigation influenced wetlands are defined by the state and how they will be addressed through VSP.

Edits were made to the agricultural viability strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, including reiterating that climate and transportation are strengths in Adams County, and a request was made to add that cheap electricity and the variety of crops produced are also strengths.

Additionally, small market size, limited political power, and the fact that certain crop types are not well suited for Adams County were added as weaknesses. Additions to the SWOT analysis or other agricultural viability feedback was requested.

Protection and Enhancement Strategies: It was discussed that concentrated animal holding facilities need to be addressed, specifically that they have a separate set of regulations that still need to be followed, but when they intersect with critical areas they could also have voluntary measures consistent with VSP protection and enhancement goals. Add this as an FAQ to Section 1. Additionally, it was suggested that key technologies are highlighted in this section with a description of the technology/practice and how it is helpful to critical areas functions. Attendees will help compile information on these technologies and share them with Anchor QEA.

Goals and Measurable Benchmarks: Indirect vs. direct effects were discussed and it was requested to update Figure 5-2 to better represent where critical areas are located in relation to agricultural lands. Additional discussion will be held at the next Work Group meeting on this topic.

Implementation: This topic will be discussed at the next Work Group Meeting.

Work Plan Layout Review

Overall, attendees liked the layout of the Work Plan and will provide specific comments during their review. Additionally, attendees identified photo updates to better match the text and highlight conservation practices in Adams County, especially in the Protection and Enhancement Strategies Section. It was requested that additional photos be sent via email to Nora at nschlenker@anchorqea.com.

Next Steps

Comments on the Draft Adams County Work Plan are requested by Friday, April 7, 2017. Please fill out the comment table and send comments to Nora at nschlenker@anchorqea.com. The next Work Group meeting is scheduled for Tuesday April 11, 2017, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Adams County Building.