

Adams County VSP Work Group Meeting Notes

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

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

Attendees:

Work Group Members	Other Attendees
Grant Miller – Landowner	Evan Sheffels – Washington Farm Bureau
Lynn Olson – Landowner	Heather Kosaka – Washington State Department of Ecology
Cara Hulce – Adams Conservation District	Ben Floyd – Anchor QEA
Rex Harder – Landowner	John Small – Anchor QEA
Dave Leatherman – Landowner	Nora Schlenker – Anchor QEA
Jake Wollman, Jr. – Landowner	

Follow-up from Last Work Group Meeting

Field verification of Adams County wetlands and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas occurred in early June. This effort found that wetlands in the northeast portion of the County correlated well with the existing mapping; in the southwest portion of the County, more wetlands currently exist than are mapped. A memorandum describing this effort is being prepared and could be incorporated into VSP implementation in fall 2017.

Work Plan Updates

The Work Plan was reviewed, and comments obtained at the meeting are included in the attached Comment Response Matrix. The Work Group discussed how environmental impacts from the Columbia Basin Project (CBP) expansion would be described, noting that environmental review for CBP expansion is separate from VSP. Additionally, it was noted that Cow Creek has minimum flow requirements for diversions, and language regarding this will be added to the Work Plan. Additional comments received at the Work Group Meeting and those received during the review period, along with proposed responses, can be found in the attached Comment Response Matrix.

Next Steps

The Comment Response Matrix is attached to these meeting notes. Additional discussion of the proposed responses and revisions to the Work Plan will occur in fall 2017. The next two Work Group meetings are scheduled for Tuesday September 12, 2017, and Tuesday November 14, 2017, both from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Adams County Building. The process is on hold until these dates, while the County awaits additional grant funding from the State.

Adams VSP Draft Work Plan – Comment Response Matrix

2017 June DRAFT

Comment matrix updated: 6/28/2017

Comment No.	Commenter	Section No.	Page No.	Comment	Proposed Response	Further Discussion Needed?						
Technical Panel Comments Received on Grant for Incorporation into Adams Work Plan												
1	Tech Panel comments on Grant County Work Plan (approved)	Section 1	7	<p>Re: RCW 36.70A.720(1)(B) – <i>Seek input from tribes, agencies and stakeholders</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The list of work plan participants looks representative of the area, but I didn't see a description of the process that was used to select the Work Group (WSSC). It does not appear in the work plan that there was much outreach for input. Perhaps this just needs to be clarified as to what outreach was done on the plan (ECY). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add before last sentence of paragraph: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “The Work Plan was developed through a series of [number to be added] Work Group meetings, beginning on September 13, 2016, through [number to be added]. The Work Group was formed by the Adams County Planning Department, and invitations were sent to representatives from states and federal agencies, tribes, and various stakeholder and interest groups. Meetings were typically held on the second Tuesday of the month. Meeting agendas and materials were available to the public on the Adams County VSP webpage (http://www.co.adams.wa.us/departments/building_and_planning/volunteer_stewardship_program.php) and also emailed to the VSP interested parties/contact list for all Work Group meetings. The interested parties list included all the representatives who were invited to the Work Group but didn't apply, as well as people who requested information about VSP throughout the process. [add information on additional outreach that will occur in Fall 2017]” Add which organization or stakeholder group each Work Group member represents on before page 1. 							
2	Tech Panel comments on Grant County Work Plan (approved)	Section 5	66-77	<p>Re: RCW 36.70A.720(1)(E)(i) – Create measurable benchmarks that, within ten years after receipt of funding, are designed to result in the protection of critical area function and values</p> <p>The current level of participation is the baseline though a number is never given. A key assumption is that participation describes ecological outcomes. I have two concerns:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> There is high uncertainty that participation = ecological outcomes. This approach does not speak to the entirety of critical areas in Grant Co, only those enrolled in a program/ or passively doing conservation (WDFW). <p>Central premise is that measuring participation and implementation of specific BMPs will protect CA functions and values by linking CPPE values to CA functions. The problem is that these only address protections of functions and values for participating producers, which is acknowledged at 10%, county-wide. It does not address CA functions and values on a watershed scale (or community scale as they've chosen to divide the county) or for non-participating producers (WSSC).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise Habitat Indicators to read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Habitat indicators will include evaluation of publicly available aerial imagery available at the 5 and 10-year performance review periods, based on adequate resources provided through the state for VSP implementation to assess critical area resource protections (primarily HCAs and wetlands). Imagery evaluation will include a random sampling of areas¹ within the Work Plan's community planning areas. Analysis results will be summarized in the reporting at planning area and County scales. Individual parcels will not be identified, and producer privacy will be maintained in the evaluation process. Priority habitats and species data available through WDFW will also be evaluated, in addition to other related information that might or is expected to become available in the future, such as remote sensing through WDFW's High Resolution Change Detection program or other GIS approaches for habitat assessment, if this information is made available to Adams County. Additionally, ground-truthing will be needed to ensure change detection data made available fit the scope and jurisdiction of the VSP, and that agricultural activities were actually the cause of any identified degradations. Review of PHS updates and other relevant information comparisons against the 2011 baseline conditions will be done in coordination with WDFW. 1 = Random sample areas will include a representation of lands for VSP participants, as well as other lands that may or may not have practices implemented on them. These results will be extrapolated to the larger watershed analysis unit areas and the County, in an effort to more accurately characterize critical areas protections achieved. Revise Table 5-5; last row for “Protect or enhance terrestrial and aquatic habitat” goal; revised the following three columns: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Indicator Data Source</th> <th>Performance Metric</th> <th>Monitoring Method</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>WDFW Priority Habitats and Species data, GAP data, <u>or other aerial and GIS based evaluation</u></td> <td>Changes in amount of <u>priority habitats and species, HCAs and wetlands</u></td> <td><u>Tracking priority habitats and species data through the WDFW or GAP data.</u> <u>Evaluating random sample areas (including a representation of lands with conservation practices documented and lands where practices are not documented) using aerial imagery and associated GIS methods.</u></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Indicator Data Source	Performance Metric	Monitoring Method	WDFW Priority Habitats and Species data, GAP data, <u>or other aerial and GIS based evaluation</u>	Changes in amount of <u>priority habitats and species, HCAs and wetlands</u>	<u>Tracking priority habitats and species data through the WDFW or GAP data.</u> <u>Evaluating random sample areas (including a representation of lands with conservation practices documented and lands where practices are not documented) using aerial imagery and associated GIS methods.</u>	
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Draft Work Plan						
3	Matt Harris	Overall		Review the Adams, Benton and Grant county VSP documents to determine uniformity in some of the terms used. For example, I noticed the word "pesticide" used frequently in the Adams doc and probably a better fit would be "crop protection tools." The reason for the request most potato growers farm in multiple counties and word uniformity when crossing conservation district lines would be appreciated.	Revise Adams County Work Plan as noted. The Grant County Work Plan has been adopted. The Benton County Work Plan is not being prepared by Anchor QEA.	
4	WG Mtg 6/13	1	6	Opting into VSP – specify that grant funding was provided in 2016 and 2017	Revise as noted.	
5	WG Mtg 6/13	1	6	Agricultural activities – State that this is the RCW definition. Add that this applies to dryland, irrigated and rangeland	Revise as noted.	
6	Lynn Olsen	2	14	Water quality function Delete pesticides and insert crop protection tools delete chemical and fertilizer and insert crop protection tools nutrient	Revise as noted.	
7	Lynn Olsen	2	16	Soil heath delete pesticides and fertilizers insert crop protection tools and nutrients	Revise as noted.	
8	Lynn Olsen	3	36	Delete the word costs used in first paragraph delete fertilizer and insert nutrients table 3-3 delete the word costs delete the words chemicals/fertilizers and insert crop protection tools/nutrients	Revise as noted.	
9	Lynn Olsen	4	40	Under pest management - delete pesticides and insert crop protection tools	Revise as noted.	
10	Lynn Olsen	4	42	Under NRCS conservation practices - delete pesticides insert crop protection tools	Revise as noted.	
11	WG Mtg 6/13	4	46	Define open space - Undeveloped not in use for agriculture. Need to define how we are using it here - add what is included here	Table 4-3 provides a summary of change analysis in agricultural landcover between 2011 and 2015. This summary table indicates that changes in agricultural landcover are mostly a decrease in rangelands, but there have been increases in dryland, open space, and non-agricultural lands. Open space in this instance refers to barren ground, herbaceous wetlands, and woody wetlands instead of land that is considered either agricultural land or other developed lands, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture landcover data (USDA 2011).	
12	WG Mtg 6/13	4	47	Odessa Groundwater Replacement Project Add discussion about future changes in agricultural development. Important to state that if the project rises to the SEPA/NEPA it will require mitigation and this is contained within the project. Conservation practices on land after completion of the project would be encouraged Send out updated text for Work Group review (see response column).	The Odessa Groundwater Replacement Project has the potential to supply 164,000 acre-feet of surface water from Banks Lake to irrigate 70,000 acres of land currently irrigated with groundwater in the Odessa subarea. This project has the potential to affect agricultural land coverage within the County portions of the Odessa subarea, which includes the area east of the East Low Canal and south of Billy Clapp Lake. The Office of the Columbia River and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation are in the process of constructing the infrastructure needed to bring the water to the Columbia Basin irrigation districts (Ecology 2016b). Any potential impacts to critical areas that would result from proposed CBP modification would be analyzed and mitigated for as part of the federal and/or state environmental review process that would occur outside of the VSP. VSP conservation practices can be used to manage water on farms after water is delivered to a producer.	Y
13	WG Mtg 6/13	5	40-41	Highlight conservation practices that can capture stream flows and extend flows into the summer for Cow Creek	Add as Protection and Enhancement Strategies Conservation Practices a callout similar to those on pages 40 and 41 (one for irrigation management and one for water storage).	
14	Lynn Olsen	5	51	Under agriculture viability delete chemical and insert crop protection tools, nutrients and irrigation inputs. As applicable	Revise as noted.	
15	WG Mtg 6/13	5	51	Agriculture viability – 4th bullet – replace chemical with "chemical, nutrient, and irrigation"	See response to Comment 14.	

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16	Eric Pentico	5	52	Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas Protection and Enhancement Goals: Water Quality Function "Reduces siltation by stabilization streambanks from riparian vegetation." This wording is confusing. Perhaps reword to say 'Riparian vegetation stabilizes streambanks, reducing siltation.'	Revise as noted.	
17	Eric Pentico	5	52	Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas Protection and Enhancement Goals: Habitat "Provides spawning, rearing, and migratory habitat for fish, and riparian habitat also provides refuge, nesting and rearing areas for wildlife." Riparian areas also provide valuable travel/migration corridors for wildlife.	Add as noted.	
18	WG Mtg 6/13	5	63	Agriculture viability –replace "Reduce input cost" with "Manage chemical and nutrient inputs"	Revise as noted.	
19	Eric Pentico	5	66-67	Habitat Indicators- PHS maps are not monitoring tools and cannot answer monitoring questions. PHS is not updated often enough to be used as a monitoring tool nor does WDFW document changes on the map. The PHS map is designed to provide general guidance on presence of PHS species but is not designed, nor accurate enough, to determine change over time. To monitor VSP indicators, a system designed to detect ecological changes should be utilized. WDFW suggests designing a field-based, site-level change approach and would be happy to help Adams Co. design or review potential approaches that could be utilized until High Resolution Change Detection, as discussed in the WDFW presentation on monitoring at the January 2017 VSP Regional Meetings by Mathew Muller, is available.	See response to Comment 2.	
20	WG Mtg 6/13	5	47	Add caveat to Hydrology indicators stating that Cow Creek from Sprague Lake to Palouse River has a minimum flow requirement. Anyone with a diversion they are required to pass 1/2 cfs above cow lake, 1 cfs below. – can put this in there that there are ecology stock water flows – it is a controlled system similar to CBP. Additionally, each diversion has a calculated amount we can divert	Add a callout box on page 47 regarding Cow Creek with the following language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cow Creek from Sprague Lake to its confluence with the Palouse River is regulated by minimum flow requirements. All diversions from Cow Creek must pass at least 0.5 cubic feet per second of flow. Therefore, no diversion can result in depleting Cow Creek of flow. Additionally, each diversion has a set maximum withdrawal that cannot be exceeded. Additionally, the following will be added to page 24 under Characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water diversions in Cow Creek are regulated so that at least 0.5 cubic feet per second of flow passes each diversion. 	
21	WG Mtg 6/13	6	78	Add VSP Liaison to this sentence "CDs, the County, and others can help in performing these responsibilities."	Revise as noted.	
22	WG Mtg 6/13	6	79	Table 6-1 Second row (Education...) under Description add "Consider funding a VSP liaison" Third row (Monitoring...) under Who add GCCD	Revise as noted.	

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Appendices						
23	WG Mtg 6/13	Cover		Make the cover of the Appendices more distinct to differentiate from the Work Plan and add a TOC to the Appendices document	Revise as noted.	
24	Eric Pentico	Appendix B-3	2	Bald Eagles are no longer listed as threatened or endangered. They are state sensitive and a federal species of concern. Sage sparrow is a candidate bird species that could be listed here. Merriam's shrew, Preble's shrew, Townsend's big-eared bats, black-tailed jackrabbit, and white-tailed jackrabbit are all candidate mammal species that could be listed here.	Add as a footnote stating this is an update to the information listed in the Critical Areas Ordinance.	
25	Lynn Olsen	Appendix C	2	Table 1 under water quality-resource concern delete pesticides in surface and in ground water and insert crop protection tools in both places	Revise as noted.	
26	Lynn Olsen	Appendix D	1	Existing conservation programs Bottom paragraph delete international insert G.A.P. above Global G.A.P. G.A.P. [Good Agriculture Practices] is a USDA [United States Department of Agriculture] program. This is a possible definition Good Agriculture Practices [G.A.P.] is a voluntary audit which verifies that fruit and vegetables are produced, handled and stored as safely as possible using industry recognized agriculture practices	Revise as noted.	
27	Lynn Olsen	Appendix D	7	Should grant conservation district be added as co-lead under lead and description?	Add GCCD to Table 2 and clarify that Adams CD is the lead for tracking and reporting. GCCD will give this information from its district to Adams CD. Each CD is the lead within their district for working with landowners; however, Adams CD is responsible for overall VSP implementation.	
28	Lynn Olsen	Appendix D	15	Under VSP intersect, delete fertilizers and insert nutrients	Revise as noted.	
29	Lynn Olsen	Appendix D	16	Under VSP intersect, second block, delete fertilizer and pesticide, insert nutrient and crop protection tools	Revise as noted.	
Self-Assessment Checklist						
30	Lynn Olsen	Checklist	3	Reduce inputs- delete pesticides or fertilizers and insert crop protection tools and/or nutrients	Revise as noted.	
31	Lynn Olsen	Checklist	4	Define mulch-till this is a possible definition in agriculture, mulch tillage or mulch-till fall under the umbrella term of conservation tillage in the united states and refer to seeding methods where a hundred percent of the soil surface is disturbed by tillage, whereby crop residues are mixed with the soil and a certain amount of residues remain on the soil surface. A great variety of tillage tools, such as chisels, field cultivators, disks, sweeps or blades are used to perform mulch-till.	Discuss options for addressing this comment with the Work Group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add list of conservation practices and their definitions as an appendix to the Work Plan and refer to is in the Self-Assessment Checklist. Add a page to the Self-Assessment Checklist that defines common conservation practices. A combination of the two options above. 	Y
32	Lynn Olsen	Checklist	4	Define reduced-till this is a possible definition reduced tillage systems or conservation tillage is a practice of minimizing soil disturbance and allowing crop residue or stubble to remain on the ground instead of being thrown away or incorporated into the soil. Reduced tillage leaves between 15 to 30 percent residue on the soil. This may involve the use of a chisel plow, field cultivator or other equipment.	See response to Comment 31.	Y
33	Lynn Olsen	Checklist	4	Chemical and nutrient management - delete chemical and insert pest	Revise as noted.	

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34	Lynn Olsen	Checklist	4	Soil management - define mulch this is a possible definition mulch can be divided into three classes which include un-grazed mature vegetation residues still attached to the plant [cured herbage], vegetation residues detached from plants covering the soil surface [ground litter], and decomposing residues partially or completely incorporated into the soil [humus].	See response to Comment 31.	Y