

**Thurston County Voluntary Stewardship Program**

Workgroup Meeting #58

August 26, 2021, 4:00-6:00 pm

Online via Zoom

**DRAFT MEETING NOTES**

**In Attendance:**

John Stuhlmiller, WFB  
Karen Parkhurst, TRPC  
Eric Johnson, Johnson Jersey Dairy  
Bruce Morgan, TCFB/UPPL  
Benjamin Tindall, WFB  
Sarah Moorehead, TCD  
Brian Merryman, TCFB  
Christina Chaput, TC  
Jon McAninch, WWA, Cedarville Farms, TCFB  
Marguerite Abplanalp, TCD  
Paul Thomsen, Blacksmith Farms  
Richard Mankamy, TC Ag Committee  
Bill Eller, WSCC

**Excused Absences:**

Raul De Leon, TCFB  
Phyllis Farrell, Sierra Club

**Current Voting Members (as of end of 8/26 meeting):**

Jon McAninch, WWA, Cedarville Farms, TCFB  
Karen Parkhurst, TRPC  
Brian Merryman, TCFB  
Raul De Leon, TCFB  
John Stuhlmiller, WFB  
Bruce Morgan, TCFB/UPPL  
Eric Johnson, Johnson Farms  
Richard Mankamy, TC Ag Committee  
Phyllis Farrell, Sierra Club  
Benjamin Tindall, WFB  
Paul Thomsen, Blacksmith Farms

**NOTE: Language in RED indicates action items that need to be completed by the next VSP meeting.**

**Welcome and Introductions**

Co-chair Jon McAninch convened the meeting at 4:03 PM.

## **Approval of Agenda and Meeting Notes.**

Agenda and previous meeting notes approved.

## **Public Comment**

Bill Eller, of the Washington State Conservation Commission and the VSP Coordinator for the WSCC, shared that many of the counties are in the middle of their reporting process. The WSCC Commission created a reporting template for the 5-Year reporting. Bill explained that the Commission is setting up several panels in order to have a dialogue with the counties to talk about the things that will need to be seen in their next 5-year report. Bill encouraged the Thurston County VSP to take part in one of those meetings and provide some comments in the conversation. **It was decided that the Thurston VSP will be a part of the January meeting of the joint Statewide Advisory Committee and Technical Panel meeting.**

## **TCD Update**

Sarah Moorehead shared that the Conservation District has worked on a newsletter spotlighting the VSP. The purpose of the newsletter was to show how the program supports producers as well as protects the environment. The TCD held their VSP virtual workshop on August 25<sup>th</sup>. They also recorded the event and made available afterwards on their website. Sarah explained that they had about 30 people register. The workshop is posted on the TCD website at: <https://www.thurstoncd.com/education/workshops-tours/>

A link to the Nisqually Valley News Article can be found here: <http://www.yelmonline.com/stories/stewardship-program-maximizes-farming-capabilities-in-nisqually-valley,270867>

Sarah also shared with the group the good news that they have enrolled an additional 11 people in the VSP since the last meeting and the total is now at 79.

Marguerite Abplanalp shared further information about the VSP Workshop and spoke about some of the components of the workshop. They had a participant of the VSP program share which provided a valuable perspective for the attendees. There was also a positive Q&A session at the end of the workshop.

Discussion followed about the impact and feedback from participants of the workshop.

## **Thurston County Update – SCC Grant**

Christina Chaput reminded the group that the VSP is subject to the open public meeting act and that there is periodic training that the group should take part in. Bill Eller shared the various ways that this requirement can be met by the group. **It was determined that the group will watch the training video all together during the next VSP meeting. Christina agreed to place this on the agenda.**

Christina mentioned that there has been some interest in recording the VSP meetings and posting them on the VSP county website. The Interlocal Agreement was then brought up and anyone with questions about it was encouraged to ask Christina.

Thurston County has updated its VSP website and members are encouraged to access that website (<https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/planning/Pages/vsp.aspx>). The meeting calendar is on the website as well as past meeting agendas/handouts.

### **Discussion of the Biennial Monitoring Report**

Christina shared with the group about the draft of the 2-Year Status Report. We are due to submit the report by August 30<sup>th</sup>. John Stuhlmiller shared that this is in essence a status check-in letting the Commission know where we stand as a county VSP. There is less pressure on this report as there would be 5-year report. Discussion took place regarding the correct accounting and interpretation of the numbers. Namely, that the report needs to clearly indicate that 49 individuals have completed ISPs and this number includes the 30 who have more detailed ISPs. **Christina and Sarah Moorehead agreed to work together to adjust the language in order to make sure that those numbers are conveyed accurately prior to submission. The Workgroup approved submission of the report with those clarifying revisions.**

### **Ag Viability**

Christina shared that this issue is a “roll-over” from the last meeting’s interest in gathering examples of counties with strong sections in their plans in order to help the Thurston Watershed Workgroup improve our plan. **John Stuhlmiller shared that he will reach out to the Conservation Commission regarding this search prior to the next meeting.**

### **Other Business**

Karen Parkhurst shared that the TRPC is more than happy to post announcements and notices on their platforms to leverage that opportunity.

Bruce Morgan asked if anyone located additional conservation participants. **Christina will be reaching out to some individuals that may be interested in being a member of the VSP and report back on those leads.**

Karen Parkhurst asked if there have been efforts to reach out to the SW Washington Agricultural Business & Innovation Park in Tenino. Sarah Moorehead shared that the TCD is working with them to make connections and perhaps there may be some collaboration on various projects. **Christina mentioned that she would reach out to Aslan Mead, Director of Strategic Alliances with the Thurston Economic Development Council, about the Agriculture Park and any possible areas of collaboration. It was also agreed that Christina would offer Aslan a place on the agenda for our next meeting to provide an update to the full group.** Sarah explained that there is not necessarily a VSP connection with the park currently but a great deal of potential for that connection and Aslan would be the contact for more information.

**Next Steps:**

It was determined that a quarterly meeting will be able to provide stronger information than a monthly. It was encouraged that, as meetings and opportunities arise, the VSP members be kept informed. It was approved to move the meeting to a quarterly sequence. Next Workgroup Meeting is October 28<sup>th</sup> from 4:00PM-6:00PM. We will follow a regular pattern of the fourth Thursday of the month for meetings. The meeting following that would be January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 4:00PM-6:00PM.

**Adjourned at 4:58 PM.**