

Thurston County Voluntary Stewardship Project
Workgroup Meeting #9 Draft Summary
October 21, 2014 4:00-6:00pm
Farm Bureau
975 NE Carpenter Rd, Lacey, WA 98516

In attendance: Patrick Dunn, Kathleen Whalen, Bill Dewey, Bruce Morgan, James Myers, Theresa Nation, Ben Rau, Karen Parkhurst, Neil Aaland, Glen Connelly, Jane Mountjoy-Venning (presenter), Jim Goche, Dean Pigman, John Stuhlmiller, Evan Sheffels, Eric Johnson, James Weatherford

Communicated inability to attend: Addie Candib, Cindy Wilson, Rick Nelson, Raul DeLeon

Summary

This meeting began with a discussion regarding what information to include in a future presentation to the group by WDFW. Suggestions included: riparian habitat, relevance and how to determine boundaries; policy/regulatory areas that would fit well with VSP; endangered species, grazing, spatial relationships for aquatic species and whether these are considered at the basin-wide level or in geologically specific areas; impact for/of bees.

Jane Mountjoy-Venning from Thurston County Public Health gave a presentation on their education and outreach efforts and the work done in the Scatter Creek area. The work in the Scatter Creek Aquifer focused on septic impacts on water quality. A model was developed that allows for various contaminants to be analyzed in order to better understand the impact of those particular contaminants on water quality. The value for VSP is that the Health Department is already monitoring water quality so has data for many years that can be used for benchmarks, and data continues to be collected. The County can also use this model in the future to measure other pollutants and their impacts.

James Weatherford from the Conservation District presented information on the kinds of agricultural issues they typically deal with when working in the Chehalis watershed area. The CD responds to complaints received by regulatory agencies, including Thurston County Environmental Health, on agricultural sites.

The CD does not step foot on the site, until the landowner contacts our office. This is because the CD is a non-regulatory entity. The most common problem the CD deals with and which ties up a lot of their resources is responding to neighbor wars/complaints. Many of these complaints turn out to be unfounded and as a result are a waste CD resources. James hopes that some of the work that is done via the VSP program will help to reduce these kinds of complaints and draw on limited resources.

James also spoke about the tremendous value of relationships when trying to build bridges between regulators and landowners. In many cases there were concessions or allowances made on both sides because of the relationships built and level of trust, which benefits everyone involved. This type of dynamic will likely be of great value in long term implementation of VSP in Thurston County. Kathleen Whalen and James both spoke about the importance of working with what a landowner is willing to do to be in keeping with VSP goals initially, to gain some trust and build a relationship so that landowners

will at least begin meeting program goals. Then continue to work with landowners to accomplish the program goals over time.

Jim Goche spent a few final minutes in the meeting to begin to get the group more focused on development and drafting of a plan and asked the group for suggestions on where the plan should focus first. The group was asked to consider this request between this and the next meeting and to email Jim with any thoughts on plan drafting and suggested areas of focus, in the meantime.

Dean Pigman suggested that because we need things that people will buy into and since the work of the CD is already in alignment with VSP, the group should start with them – better understand how the CD does what they do and work it into the plan.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, November 13th from 3-5 pm at the Thurston Farm Bureau** (address included at the top of this summary).

If you have not already, please respond to the Doodle Poll to schedule our meeting for early December.