

**Thurston County Voluntary Stewardship Program
Workgroup Meeting #32 Summary
March 8, 2017
Washington State Farm Bureau offices**

In attendance:

Jim Goche, Friendly Grove Farms
Eric Johnson, Johnson Farms
Jon McAninch, WWA, Cedarville Farms, TCFB
Brian Merryman, TCFB
Bruce Morgan, TCFB/UPPL
Jim Myers, Nisqually
Theresa Nation, WDFW
Rick Nelson, TCFB/Grange
Patrick Dunn, Center for Natural Lands Management
Karen Parkhurst, TRPC
Evan Sheffels, WSFB
John Stuhlmiller, WSFB
Robin Buckingham, TCD

Staff: Maya Buhler, Charissa Waters, Neil Aaland, Brad Murphy

Welcome and Introductions: Facilitator Neil Aaland and Chair Jim Myers opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda.

Public Comment: No comment was offered by members of the public.

Review/Recommend for Approval: Appendices

Charissa began by stating that the blended subcommittee, composed of technical and drafting subcommittee members, worked to address conflict in language in all the appendices through one meeting and e-mail back and forth. Appendices that were resolved through the subcommittee included A, B, C, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, M, N, O, and Q. Appendices that require discussion at this meeting include D, L, and P.

Charissa began with Appendix D – the Stewardship Plan Checklist. The confidentiality language is the only issue that needs to be resolved in this appendix. The blended subcommittee recommended striking the confidentiality language and the footnote stating that this language will be added in at a later time. The Workgroup agreed with this edit.

Appendix L was the next item addressed. The blended subcommittee came up with language on confidentiality that requests further direction from the Conservation Commission. Jim Myers states that the text in this appendix is fine for submittal, but will need to be addressed down the road. All the guidance to date has been specific to farm plans, but the nexus needs to be made between farm plans and individual stewardship plans. Jon McAninch stated that Individual Stewardship Plans are very vague and shouldn't be an issue if they are disclosed. The Thurston Conservation District stated that some farmers may be concerned, for example, with the number of animals, which could be included if a conservation practice required it (like a manure holding tank or fencing). Theresa Nation said we could edit the individual stewardship plan (ISP) to be more general so that farmers are more comfortable

disclosing this information, and withhold any sensitive information in regular Farm Plans. Eric Johnson suggested color coding for things such as animal numbers. It was noted that the Voluntary Stewardship Program will require some level of data for monitoring and reporting. Jim Goche noted that the white papers on “confidentiality” and “supplant or supplement” served their purpose in raising issues and concerns. He would like to note that, for the record, that he did not intend to imply any wrong-doing. The Workgroup did some final wordsmithing in this appendix.

Charissa addressed some small changes in the work plan. The group agreed to these changes and other final grammatical changes that may need to be made.

Appendix P on unresolved questions was addressed next. The Workgroup agreed that a memo format to the WSCC and SAC is more suitable than an appendix. The Workgroup drafted the memo, which consists of two questions: status of the Workgroup, and confidentiality. Confidentiality language was taken directly from Appendix L and references this appendix. Rick suggested beginning these questions with a declarative statement to express the importance of confidentiality. The title was edited from “unresolved questions” to “request for clarification”.

Bruce brought up the issue of whether VSP supplants or supplements current regulations (TCC 17.15). The group discussed this topic, and noted that it has been addressed in the work plan through an early adaptive management process to incorporate regulations as a backstop. The adaptive management process ensures that the County work with the Workgroup. The Workgroup pulled up statute and noted that the County does have the ability to update regulations on their own if a work plan is approved for a watershed. Bruce noted he hopes this will be a collaborative process. If the County were to make changes to the code, the Workgroup would have the opportunity to participate through the normal process and hearings required before the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners.

Some members made final edits to their affiliations in Appendix N. Language was added in that the Workgroup, at the beginning of the VSP process, assumed they were a planning committee.

Final motions were made:

1. Move to remove Appendix P from the appendices in the draft work plan. Eric Johnson moved, Jon McAninch seconded. Approved by consensus.
2. Move to forward these appendices, and the work plan as amended today, to the Washington State Conservation Commission for their review and approval. Eric Johnson moved, Bruce Morgan seconded. Approved by consensus.
3. Move to approve sending the former appendix P as revised today, as an accompanying memo to the Washington State Conservation Commission and Statewide Advisory Committee. Bruce Morgan moved, Eric Johnson seconded. Approved by consensus.

Jim Goche made three motions:

1. Moved on behalf of the workgroup to communicate to Thurston County thanking Charissa Waters and Maya Buhler for their exemplary work.
2. Moved on behalf of the workgroup to thank Neil Aaland for his facilitation services during the last half of the process.
3. Moved on behalf of the workgroup to thank WSU Cooperative Extension for the facilitation services of Christina Sanders and Mike Gaffney during the first half of the process.

Eric Johnson seconded. Motions approved by consensus.

Chair and co-chair Jim Myers and Jon McAninch will be cc'd on the submission e-mail to the SCC. The Workgroup will be bcc'd on the e-mail.

The next meeting will be determined at a later date after communications from the SCC and Technical Panel. Jim Myers will work with Charissa Waters to coordinate the next meeting date.

Bruce Morgan noted he will be speaking at Wilco Farms about VSP on March 15, 2017 and that members of the Workgroup are welcome at the event.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:57 PM.