

Thurston County Voluntary Stewardship Program

Workgroup Meeting #46
October 25, 2018, 4:00-6:00 pm
Washington Farm Bureau, Suite 201
975 Carpenter Road NE
Lacey, WA 98516

Chair Jon McAninch called the meeting to order at 4:10 pm

In Attendance:

Jon McAninch, WWA, Cedarville Farms, TCFB
Raul De Leon, TCFB
Bruce Morgan, TCFB/Violet Prairie Plantation
John Stuhlmiller, WFB
Rick Nelson, TCFB/Grange
Patrick Dunn, CNLM
Jim Goche
Brian Merryman, TCFB
Richard Mankamyer, Board of TCD Supervisor, TC Ag Committee
Sarah Moorehead, TCD
Eric Johnson, Johnson Farms
James Meyers, Nisqually Farmer
Charissa Waters, TC
Phyllis Farrell, Sierra Club

Excused Absences:

Karen Parkhurst, TRPC
Brad Murphy, TC
Tom Davis, WFB

Current Voting Members:

Jon McAninch, WWA, Cedarville Farms, TCFB
Patrick Dunn, CNLM
Rick Nelson, TCFB/Grange
Karen Parkhurst, TRPC
Brian Merryman, TCFB
Raul De Leon, TCFB
John Stuhlmiller, WSFB
James Myers, Nisqually farmer
Bruce Morgan, TCFB/UPPL

Welcome and Introductions: Any new participants introduced themselves.

Public Comment: No comment. Eric Johnson had a question about the current voting membership and the process to be reinstated after unexcused absences. The workgroup clarified that after 2 consecutive meetings in attendance a participant can be reinstated to voting status at the end of the 2nd meeting, so they can participate in votes by the 3rd meeting. Another question was asked about the meeting schedule. Chair McAninch confirmed that the meetings will be going back to a regular schedule, the 4th Thur 3-5pm or 4-6pm, which may not be every month. As stated in the work plan the workgroup may be going to a quarterly meeting schedule or meet on an as-needed basis during implementation.

Approval of Agenda. Approved by consensus.

Approval of previous meeting minutes. Approved by consensus.

Update on VSP Implementation: Thurston Conservation District staff Sarah Moorehead updated the group on VSP efforts to increase the capacity of the district, which is limited now. They are making progress on looking into hiring a subcontractor to assist in developing Individual Stewardship Plans (ISPs) and VSP implementation until they are able to increase their staff capacity. After the last meeting, with input from the workgroup members and Thurston County commissioners, they went back to other conservation districts to inquire about capacity to assist in Thurston's VSP implementation and see about the potential of contracting. Grays Harbor Conservation District (GHCD) expressed interest and capacity to contract with TCD to help with implementation. The TCD Board approved contracting for 11 plans by July 2019 and approved the MOU amendment with TC to allow subcontracting. GHCD also approved of an agreement with TC to assist in VSP implementation.

The next step in the process of getting help with implementation is to establish an MOU agreement between GHCD and TCD. They already have an interlocal agreement and this specific addition will reflect the amendment to the MOU between TC and TCD, which is not to exceed \$30,000 for subcontracting. Sarah Moorehead anticipates that it will likely not take until June to exceed 11 plans and they expect to be able to develop exceed that goal. Once the TCD board authorizes the agreement with GHCD they can begin working on developing stewardship plans with willing landowners. This item is on the TCD board agenda for October 30, 2018.

Outreach is continuing. TCD is getting the word out about VSP in-person, through other programs, workshops, electronically, and with flyers. The 1st VSP workshop is scheduled for Nov. 3rd (Ins and Outs of VSP). Sarah handed out the flyer. The intent of these workshops are to discuss the what, why and how of VSP and walk participants through an ISP checklist. Sarah brought an example of an ISP and walked the workgroup through what's in it, as requested at the last meeting. Sarah will send out a redacted version for the county and the workgroup, as well as other landowners to see what an ISP entails. Sarah reiterated that the ISP they are using is the vetted style that was approved in the work plan. Other counties have different ISPs and Sarah ensured the group that they intend to stay consistent with Thurston counties VSP work plan and ISP when contracting with GHCD.

Questions and Discussion of subcontracting for VSP implementation:

What is the pay schedule/plan for subcontracting for implementation? Up to \$30,000 was approved by TCD and TC in the MOU amendment, however the goal is to do more plans than 11 because of the need and work load. There are approximately 30 people on the waitlist for an ISP. Discussion of rate. Sarah clarified that the work will likely not be done at a per plan rate because of site-specific differences costs will vary. They expect it to be less expensive in the long run contracting with GHCD rather than a private subcontractor. GHCD charges hourly, not a fixed price, and they bill on a reimbursement basis by staff hours spent (non-profit).

Discussion of GHCD VSP and their ISP process. Jon recommended that the workgroup look at GHCD's ISP to see if they might want to adapt Thurston's ISP and tracking process because they have an online program/system that helps with tracking and monitoring. Sarah mentioned that TCD is looking at GHCD's model for tracking and what might be replicable. The group may not have to change the ISP process if they can just adapt the model for tracking. It won't have to get reapproved by the state as long as it's consistent with the work plan.

Discussion of the status of the MOU amendment between TC and TCD to allow for subcontracting. Sarah informed the group that the amendment was mailed to Cindy Wilson at TC nearly a month ago after it was signed by the TCD board. This was the first TC staff heard of this and has not received the contract amendment in the mail. Charissa Waters clarified that TC has been looking for the contract amendment and trying to contact TCD for an update on its status. Eric Johnson the TCD Board Chair can resign the approved amendment. A discussion ensued of the MOU amendment and options for contracts between TC/TCD/GHCD.

At the last meeting the workgroup approved subcontracting for implementation with a specific private contractor, however after the meeting email discussions made it clear that members wanted more options and TCD to look into the potential of contracting with another CD.

Vote to subcontract with GHCD for ISP development. The group voted and approved by consensus for TCD to subcontract with GHCD for the development of ISPs. This action also rescinded a vote taken at the last meeting to approve contracting with James Weatherford. A discussion ensued of choices for contracting VSP implementation tasks. Members of the workgroup want to have specific timelines and commitments clarified. The MOU amendment does specifically set a goal of no more than \$30,000 for the development of at least 11 plans by July, 2019.

Next Steps:

Sarah working to resolve the issue with the missing MOU (progress has continued to hire a subcontractor for ISP development to move forward with VSP implementation in spite of this issue). Eric Johnson will resign the approved MOU amendment and the county can then sign and finalize it.

The contract with GHCD has been approved by the GHCD board and is on the agenda for the TCD board to approve it next Tuesday October 30, 2018. The TCD board can request it to be revised, but the hope is that it will be signed the same day, after which it will be sent back to

GHCD for finalizing and they can begin work on ISP development. Sarah will send an email to the workgroup when it is done.

The workgroup will look at GHCD's ISP and discuss adapting it for use in Thurston. Sarah will work on getting a GHCD staff member to attend the next meeting and present to the group their ISP model and tracking system.

Next Workgroup Meeting: November 29th 4-6pm.

Adjourned at 5:55 PM.