

Thurston County Voluntary Stewardship Program

Workgroup Meeting #49
March 28, 2019, 4:00-6:00 pm
Thurston Regional Planning Council
2424 Heritage Court SW, Suite A
Olympia, WA 98502

In Attendance:

Raul De Leon, TCFB, forester
Bruce Morgan, TCFB/Violet Prairie Plantation
Rick Nelson, TCFB, Grange
John Stuhlmiller, WFB
Richard Mankamy, TC Ag Committee
Sarah Moorehead, TCD
Eric Johnson, Johnson Farms
James Meyers, Nisqually Farmer
Charissa Waters, TC
Karen Parkhurst, TRPC
Anthony Waldrop, GHCD
Natalie Osowski, GHCD
Patrick Dunn, CNLM
Brian Merryman, TCFB, Merryman Farms

Excused Absences:

Brad Murphy, TC
Jon McAninch, WWA, Cedarville Farms, TCFB
Tom Davis, WFB
Phyllis Farrell, Sierra Club

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
Eric Johnson, Johnson Farms
Tom Davis, WFB
Richard Mankamy, TC Ag Committee

Welcome and Introductions: Everyone introduced themselves.

Public Comment: No comment.

Approval of Agenda. Approved by consensus.

Approval of previous meeting minutes. Approved by consensus at the end of the meeting.

Update from TCD: Outreach continues. They are reaching out to specific producer groups. TCD held a VSP roundtable workshop on Feb 28. There were about 24 participants at the workshop. Nora gave a VSP presentation at a water forum with approximately 100 participants.

- Currently 18 completed ISP checklists
- Very successful with great conversation, many questions answered, and site visits scheduled.
- The goal by the end of June is to have a variety of ISPs with redacted information to be able to share with the workgroup to see and potentially adapt the ISP form if necessary.
- Question on ISP development process and asking them if the ISP can be shared. The technical assistance providers have been upfront with landowners throughout the process on how ISPs differ from regular Conservation Plans and confidentiality. The CD will be reporting in aggregate to the county and the workgroup. Some landowners have already written agreements that their plans can be shared in full for outreach and monitoring. Other plans will be shared in redacted form for anonymity.

TCD considered cost-share projects. There were some challenged with the short timeline for the funds from WSCC. WSCC requires the workgroup to develop policies and guidelines for a cost-share program and the workgroup would need to approve any projects. TCD and the County are having on-going conversation on where a cost-share program could fit within the VSP and how to develop standard processes in-house, what new possibilities may bring to the table and how it might change the process, policies, etc.

- Question of funds related to cost-share: The workgroup sets the parameters for types of projects, guidelines and approves the projects – directing how the funds are spent. TCD gave a brief summary of the types of projects that most frequently come up, such as heavy use areas, fencing, and manure structures. The VSP grant funding ends June 30 and doesn't roll over. The extra funds from WSCC for cost-share and outreach would have had to been spent by June 30.
- The VSP state budget for the next biennium was presented with some cost-share dollars and funded at the same level as previous years.
 - WSCC may do the same thing they did this year – present available funds for cost share projects at the end of the biennium, so the workgroup may want to be ready with policies and guidelines in place.
 - Sarah will send WSCC policies on cost-share programs.
 - General question on endangered species and cost-share projects. Need more info.

Discussion of the postcard mailing. There was an issue with the database shifting cells and some of the names were off, but the addresses were correct.

- Question on what target group they were sent to: Mostly to the rural part of south county. TCD overlaid GIS layers with ag areas, open space and acreage over 5. Most of the farmers in the room were on the list.

TCD looking to hire VSP staff soon. Their new staff and the VSP implementation will benefit from the overlap with GHCD staff still on board until the end of June to help with training.

Discussion of Critical Area Reviews and new building construction. New buildings would fall under the building code, not VSP. The workgroup wants TCD to consider any policy changes that may be needed that have become more apparent through the VSP implementation process and working with the County.

General discussion on outreach tools and the use of story maps to show successes.

- The workgroup requested someone to come talk about story maps.

Monitoring and Adaptive Management

Charissa passed out the proposal from CORE GIS for the mapping and change analysis contract. The GIS contractor may be able to help the workgroup make adaptive management decisions and find what is actually doable for monitoring CARAs and Geohazard areas at the watershed level. The mapping and aerial imagery analysis is critical to document change over time.

VOTES: The workgroup voted on the adaptive management options that the Technical Panel, at the time of work plan approval, had given until the first 5-year report to make. The workgroup voted and passed by consensus:

- Option a) *Develop a non-regulatory (preferred) approach to ensure protection, including but not limited to implementing AM actions identified in Appendix C and the monitoring matrix;*
- Motion to approve hiring CORE GIS
 - The group wants feedback from CORE GIS as they're mapping and as soon as possible to be able to adapt before the report is due.
- Motion to choose riparian area parameters for monitoring GHAs and water quality parameters (well water testing) for CARAs and can adapt as needed with new information as the GIS monitoring effort moves forward.
 - Requested CORE GIS come to the next meeting with some early preliminary results for these areas.

Discussion on reporting. The workgroup would like a list of decisions that need to be made for monitoring, adaptive management and the reports that are due by the end of June. Charissa will send a draft list to the group for feedback. Discussion on options for monitoring CARAs and GHAs. Regulations for CARAs could be incorporated at the end as a failsafe if the monitoring approaches don't seem to be working.

Next Steps:

Discuss agriculture related codes and potential policy changes needed with the VSP

Update from TCD with more information on ISPs developed - table with stats

Developing a policy and guidelines for a cost-share program.

Discussion on monitoring and reporting

Presentation on early preliminary results for CARA and GHAs from CORE GIS

Next Workgroup Meeting: Wednesday, April 24th 4-6pm at TRPC

May meeting back on regular fourth Thursday schedule: May 23rd 4-6pm

Adjourned at 6:00PM.