

VSP Meeting
February 18, 2016
3:00 p.m.

Members:

Alan Thomson
David Lange
Joan Folwell
Jeff Pittman
Jon Jones
Larry Cochran
Tracy Erickson

Art Swannack
David Swannack
John Pearson
John Stulhmiller
Kim Weerts
Nancy Belsby

Audience: Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA, Kennewick; Brad Johnson; John Friel; Dave Weber, Colfax; Nancy Hoobler, Colfax; Ray Ledgerwood, Pullman; Tom Kammerzell, Colfax; Tom Lamar, Moscow, ID; Elinor Huber, Clerk.

Phone: Art Swannack; Steve Martin; Bill Eller; Laura Heinse; Evan Sheffels.

3:06 p.m. – Ben Floyd opening the meeting.

Ben Floyd – I am from Anchor QEA and I’ve been hired by the County to assist you with developing your Voluntary Stewardship Program. I am excited about the opportunity to be working with you and in the Palouse on watershed scale plans. I’ve been doing consulting now for almost 16 years. I’ve worked for Benton County government for 5 years prior to that. I was a special project person for Benton County and worked a couple of years out at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation.

I am a Cougar; got my Masters degree at WSU Tri-Cities, and I’ve been involved in watershed planning here in Water Resourcing Inventory Area 34. I helped with the assessment of the watershed plan also helping the planning unit get organized. Some of you were involved in that effort and so it is good to be working with you again in that regard. I’ve also done several shoreline master program updates, not the Whitman County one, but all around you as well as critical area code updates. I am working on a project in the Yakima Basin called the Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan, which among other things is focused on helping agriculture have proper water supply that deals with drought years.

I was born and raised in Eastern Washington. I graduated from Cheney High School in 1986, I’m a Black Hawk and my mom still lives there, so I’m at Cheney quite a bit. I used to pick up hay or grain in the Rosalia area and run it back up to the ranch that I worked on in high school, so I’ve been around agriculture a lot. Just wanted you to know a little bit about me and I live in the Tri-cities so I’m just about 2 hours away from here and I am excited to be working with you. So, Alan, do you want to introduce things from the County perspective and then we will go around and do introductions.

Alan Thomson - I am the County Planner. We signed onto this Voluntary Stewardship Program in 2012. We were given an option to sign on or re-do our critical areas ordinance to welcome the farmers and landowners into the regulatory field of taking care of wetlands and critical areas. So, we signed on to the VSP hoping that we could come up with a voluntary document at the end of it. Now we have been funded

by the State, that's why we are here and we appointed a group of you, thirteen people, nine of you are here at the moment. Commissioner Art Swannack is on the phone, he is one of the members. John Stulhmiller, I don't think is on the phone.

Ben Floyd – John Stulhmiller wasn't feeling well but Evan Sheffels will be joining us in a few minutes.

Alan Thomson – Just for the benefit for those on the phone, Art, can you hear us okay.

Art Swannack – I can hear Ben better than I can hear you, Alan. You sound like you are in a hollow room.

Alan Thomson – Okay, can you hear me now?

Art Swannack – A little bit better.

Alan Thomson – Let's hope you can hear this okay. So, this is the kick-off meeting and Ben is going to lead us through this process, and enlighten us as to what we are trying to do. We have until June 2017, that is when the funding runs out to get a watershed plan created and implemented by the end of June next year. That is our responsibility with this group.

Ben Floyd – So we will go ahead with introductions. Just tell us your name and tell us where you are from and if you are a producer, what your day job is.

Larry Cochran – I'm with the Palouse Conservation District. I farm just north of here, third generation.

Jon Pearson – I'm a cattle producer and I have a fencing business here in town. I live in Colfax.

Jeff Pittman – I live up by Rosalia, wheat and barley producer.

Alan Thomson – Whitman County Planner.

Elinor Huber – Clerk.

Kim Weerts – Direct sales, small cattle producer and president of Whitman County Cattlemen's Association.

Nancy Belsby – I live north of Ewan, cattle producer, and farmer.

Tracy Erickson – Grain grower around the Ewan area.

Joan Folwell – I have some acreage north of Pullman, doing a restoration project out there and I am a supervisor on the Palouse Conservation District but here I am representing the Palouse Prairie Foundation.

Jon Jones – I'm retired from Ecology, I retired from farming and before that I retired as a Conservation District manager. So, I'm retired three times.

David Lange – I'm a producer, I live in Colfax. I'm a wheat grower, cattle, Whitman Conservation, Farm Bureau, pea and lentil grower, garbanzo grower, wheat and barley. I like chocolate milkshakes.

Alan Thomson – One person that is not present today who is on this group is David Swannack. He couldn't make it. I thought he was going to be on the phone but he is the missing member, along with John Stulhmiller, he is a member and Art Swannack. David and Art are both on this committee.

Tracy Erickson –I have a question. Everybody that that has been introduced here is a Whitman County resident, except John Stulhmiller. What is his position and why is he involved?

Alan Thomson – He is one of the architects of the volunteer stewardship program. So, he is a main character in this whole process. He was involved in this right from the get-go at the Ruckelshaus initiation so he is going help guide us through this process as is Ben from Anchor QEA.

Ben Floyd – He is with the Washington State Farm Bureau. John Stulhmiller.

Tracy Erickson – I was aware of that.

Larry Cochran- He basically wrote the legislation.

Ben Floyd – I'm going introduce those who are on the phone. Then we will get into some questions and also introduce the members of the audience. Those that are on the phone, please introduce yourself.

Art Swannack – I'm a Whitman County Commissioner. I farm in the northwest part of the County with wheat, hay, 1,000 head of sheep. I was president of Whitman County Farm Bureau for a short period of time when this voluntary steward program was brought up and I was advocating that we decide to go into it at that time so there is a little history. It seems like the best way to protect agriculture.

Steve Martin – I am the director of Director of the (inaudible) I've been involved in GMA and (inaudible)

Bill Eller – Washington State Conservation Commission. I'm the new VSP coordinator for the commission and in that role I will be working with all of the groups to support their effort and (inaudible) watershed and the work plan. I will be a (inaudible) for you in that regard and I am based out of Yakima and (inaudible)

Laura Heinse – I am with the Palouse Conservation District, I'm helping in the regional conservation planning partnership in the Palouse Watershed. I'm (inaudible) Thanks, guys.

Ben Floyd – Is there anyone else joining on the phone? Okay, then we have in the audience.

Alan Thomson – Ben please grab one of those microphones so we can get it on the record.

Ben Floyd – Okay.

Brad Johnson – The Palouse Conservation District and I'll be working with Duane Bartells in Garfield County leading the VSP process so kind of dual purpose of being here. We are from Bend.

Dave Weber – I farm between Colfax and Pullman and I work for the NRCS here in Colfax.

John Friel – I'm a micro-farmer, organic vegetables and two cows.

Ben Floyd – Okay, is there a question?

Larry Cochran – My question is in all this process, I assume we are having a tribal person on this?

Ben Floyd – We don't have any tribal people on the committee. I know the invitations were sent out so all the required participants, Alan, do you want to give an update?

Alan Thomson – I have made several attempts to contact the tribes. They have been in the loop the whole time. They have been sent all of the information that everybody has been getting and I have had no response from them.

Ben Floyd – We will continue to communicate with the tribes and let them know what is going on so they can be aware of what is happening. How they participate would be up to them. So, let's go through the agenda so that we are on the first item. We have done welcome and introductions at this point. Evan Sheffels will be joining us shortly with the State Farm Bureau and he will be giving us an overview of the VSP including some of the handouts that you have in your packet.

Then I am going to spend a little time talking about the steps and the project schedule. There will be a one-page hand-out that I will refer to during that discussion. Then after we have talked for 30 minutes together, sharing background information then we want to give you an opportunity to ask questions to give observations, to share your input, based upon what your expectations are. If you have any concerns, we already had questions on tribal participation and so any opportunity for comments.

Just so you know, to give you advance notice, I'm going to ask each one of you if you have something to say. If you don't, that's fine; nothing to ask but I do want to make sure to give you an opportunity to speak. Then after we have set the stage for common understanding what VSP includes then we have a hand-out that has operating rules, ground rules that we are going to walk through those draft rules. I want to talk to you about whether you want to have a co-chair or co-chairs for this group that Alan and I could work with in framing meeting agendas and that kind of thing. It would be an administrative function only to help in planning the meetings, making them most effective. You may not want to do that; that is fine, but I just want to put that out there as an option.

After we go through the ground rules, then we will talk about more technical approaches that we are going to be taking for putting together the Voluntary Stewardship Program work plan. So, I'm going to have an 11 x 17 handout that we will be going through that at that point lays out the steps. I also have, and I'm sorry those on the phone won't be able to see the information, but I have some information that I pulled together from watershed plan from the RCPP Grant. That is the Regional Conservation Partnership Program? Is that what that stands for? Okay, so we will share a little bit about that and is there someone on the phone who wants to say something?

So we will go through how we see this plan starting to take shape and at the scale we are talking about, how we are going to use some geographical informational system data to start putting things together. Then we will conclude with this follow-up talking about the meeting schedule for this year and any actions items, final comments you want to share and then we will wrap it up.

We are anticipating getting done around 5:00 p.m. Any questions on the agenda? Okay. Do we have Evan on the phone yet? So, Evan had a meeting with,

Art Swannack – With the Department of Ecology and (inaudible).

Ben Floyd – Okay, but he is supposed to be joining us shortly. Then let's go into the steps and the project schedule. So, the hand-out for this is a one-pager that we sent out today. It has a 2016 schedule, 2017 schedule and a work plan development schedule. I realize this is a simple hand-out but we are going to hold off on doing the meeting schedule for right now. We will come back to that towards the end of the meeting but we are going to fill some dates. But I would like you to be thinking about the date and time of month that works best for your schedule. Think about ones where you may not be available for a meeting and we are going to come back to that at the end of the meeting.

Art Swannack – Ben, was that emailed out?

Ben Floyd – Yes, it was emailed out around noon today. Maybe before noon. Did you not get this?

Art Swannack – I don't see it but I will check.

Ben Floyd – Did others see that email this morning?

Alan Thomson – Yes, I did. It was sent out at 11:27 today.

Steve Martin – Yes, I did. I will email it to Art.

Ben Floyd – You should have a hard copy.

Evan Sheffels – Evan Sheffels just also arrived in the room.

Ben Floyd – So, we got the watershed group here, we just finished with introductions and we were just going to skip over your agenda item and go to item #3. But we will stick with your agenda item now. We are looking at the VSP histories. Evan, do you remember what you sent out earlier in the week, there were links to two different hand-outs. So the hand-outs you need to have are the Process Chart, VSP and the second item is this fundamentals document with some yellow highlights on it. Okay, so I think they are all yours, Evan. Thanks for joining us.

Evan Sheffels – Thanks, Ben. I was just looking at, I understand you want to hear a little bit about the history of VSP and how we got here. The best expert on VSP history, the guy who lived through it, is John Stulhmiller. VSP was established in large part due to 25 years of signage. The GMA was inactive. Where we are now we are starting a process that was funded. One of my jobs was working with the legislative process with a broad diverse group of folks that included everybody from the farm bureau to all the big Ag groups to cattlemen but it also had environment council and other folks. All applicants are the same resources, 7.6 million dollars so we can state several groups like this and we were able to push it through the last budget despite tight budget times.

Then why was I interested in it? When GMA was initially put out it had a protect critical areas requirement in it and it took a long time for the county to the courts to figure out exactly what that meant; a lot of litigation. It also had a directive that the GMA was supposed to maintain and have that liability. But that

was over the years, even more the kind of a goal whereas protection was given a requirement. The thing that the VSP statute does, I think is the most important is the due process back together and keep them both together as a requirement, with an equal playing field that both protects critical areas and you've got to maintain that and enhance agricultural liability to be successful in developing this plan and moving forward.

The other thing that I got out of the history is they got a clear definition what protection means in the statute. That's important because they have been litigating over what the word "protect" means and (inaudible) also is what they borrowed from. The long and short of it, it just means maintains ag related critical area conditions as they list it on July 22, 2011. That is the date the bill became effective.

So you have a clear baseline date and you have clear definitions of protection and it really just means do something more than that protection baseline and that is voluntary under the VSP project and protection is also talking about that definition. It is not something that farmers and ranchers and aggregate watershed group and critical areas should question. So that was important for agriculture's way and also supported the legislation because they got those things and (inaudible) the lobby was supported by agriculture and the environmental community which is why it was able to move through the legislative process and get enacted.

The other thing was that the county talked about was the (inaudible) county. It got them off the hot seat. It did everything it could do. You can never totally take litigation risk away unless you put an incredibly high price on that. But they managed it well and WSAC was the primary mover wanting the bill. Benton County spent upwards of 5 million dollars and (inaudible) the litigation costs, just trying to defend their critical area effort to protect ag activities and other counties really didn't want to do that. They didn't want to put up with those costs and they didn't have budgets for that.

So, part of what this process is was a project that avoids a county decision with a litigation point and uses a work group as the group that will move a plan forward to the Conservation Commission and then to the technical panel to grace period with a recommendation from them and then a call can be decided and then passed onto the State advisory committee who has the final say and will make the final recommendation. If they recommend final approval the commission director constitutes a plan and we've got three years to do that. So that is kind of a really quick of how we got here litigation history. Then turning to the questions?

Ben Floyd – Are there any questions so far on the history? Do you want to walk through the fundamentals document? The key points out of the RCW? I have it up on the screen.

Evan Sheffels – I'll do the fundamentals first. So, you have the Fundamentals of the VSP Process in front of you. This is just two excerpts from a very long bill this is the heart and soul of the VSP. The text comes from RCW 36.70.725(2). This is what the technical panel, so this is what everyone actually said. This is the task that you need to reach for and build your work plan around. This is what the state advisory committee used and this is what the commission director will use in his approval of the decision.

We have been working with the state advisor committee to any agencies on a technical panel to make sure we understand this is the text of the Voluntary Stewardship Program. It is not some other text that comes from some other mission statement and some other statutory authority and every agency has a different mission. This is really something that lives only in the Growth Management Act, the vast majority

of the VSP statutory of 36.70A. (inaudible) This is dealing with what can and can't be appealed and how. You won't see that in most of what people will put forward in VSP (inaudible). This is also language about counties with what they can and can't do with regards to developing regulations in critical area ordinances. That is important as well. The question is whether at the end of ten years, so that's important, we've got a ten-year horizon and people will look at, are we setting a process in play to get us where we are supposed to get by the end of ten years?. You have a ten- year horizon to get the work done. You got a three-year horizon to get the plan through but you have a ten year horizon to look at, will this be good enough?

That starts after receiving funding, that is defined as the day the contract was formally finished between the contract commission and the conservation commission and the county. Moving forward it is not in conjunction with other existing plans or regulations, so that includes all the other regulations that are on the books and you look at those and say what do they do to prevent, so those are conversations, too. We are not entitled all by ourselves. Here is the key, we need to protect critical areas while also maintaining and enhancing the viability of agriculture in the watershed. Those two things move together in balance and both have to be met to be successful. So, that is what we call the text.

The next statute, 36.70A.720(1) is just part of that statute. That was directed to us as a work group and that has all those buckets "a" through "l," that is your bucket list. As we work through it would be good to always keep those in front of our minds that these are the same things you have to be able to check the box to say that as a work group we looked at these things, we did what each of these bucket things do and we've got a response to them in our work plan moving forward.

As you see there, *"The work plan must include goals and benchmarks for protection and enhancement of critical areas."* Those goals and benchmarks it is important that we create reasonable achievable benchmarks because if you don't meet a goal or benchmarks it adds repercussions. You can fit out of VSP and you go back into another statute which gives you four options, none of which from our perspective are as good for agriculture and critical areas either as we approach the VSP set forth.

The Commissioners made a great decision to stick with the VSP and we appreciate that very much. I won't go through all those buckets in detail. It is something we can work through and those tasks in developing a work plan. That is what we have been doing with Thurston County which is the pilot and Chelan County which is the other county pilot. We've gone quite a ways to get those buckets filled and those counties are chomping at the bit ready to move this plan forward to the commission in fairly short order. That is the fundamentals. Are there any questions?

Ben Floyd – Are there any questions on the specific items here, on appropriating water quality information, watershed management, farmland protection, species and recovery data. We've already talked about questions about the tribes. Goals for participation by Ag producers, outreach technical assistance. I want to go through these because these are some of the key things that we are going to be building as we go forward. The benchmarks we have already covered. Those include protection of critical areas and through voluntary incentive-based measures. I think that is something to emphasize there. Designate entities that will provide technical assistance. I assume that is going to be the Conservation District or the NRCS. If there are others that need to be involved in that or should be involved, that is something we will be figuring out. Baseline monitoring activities. Okay, any questions for Evan?

Alan Thomson – I just want to make sure that everybody understands the framework here that this Voluntary Stewardship Program is an alternative to regulatory action with the County Critical Area Ordinances. So, if we fail in this endeavor we will have to revisit the County's Critical Area Ordinance to essentially answer the questions about agriculture and critical areas. Right now, in our Critical Area Ordinance, and that's the way with most of the counties in the state, we exempt it. Agricultural activities are exempted from the Critical Area Ordinances. So, if we fail here, that is Plan B.

Ben Floyd – Another thing to point out is the plan that you develop, it doesn't go to the BOCC for approval; it goes straight to the Conservation Commission to their review process. You are the decision makers and what we come up with collectively as the watershed group is what will be carried forth for Whitman County.

Art Swannack – I'll make this comment along with Alan's. Just after I got into office, we ended up going through the update on the Critical Area Ordinance for the County except for the Ag area, because it was pulled out for VSP. That was a very regulatory process with very prescribed requirements for anything that hits a critical area. It is much different than what we dealt with in agriculture that has been talked to with NRCS and get their okay and then go do it.

Critical area ordinances talk about having a wetland biologist come in and evaluate and have consultants in order to meet the requirements. Then we've gone through the Shoreline Master Program update, too. This is going to be much better for our County if we can have a program that meets the requirements of the State Conservation Commission and is voluntary instead of having to go through that regulatory nightmare for lack of a better term.

Ben Floyd – Thank you, Commissioner Swannack. Okay, Evan did you have any final thoughts? Or is there anyone else on the phone who want to share?

Steve Martin – I have a question for Evan regarding the baseline monitoring requirements. Does implementation of the VSP activities include funding for any of baseline monitoring? Is monitoring an eligible expense under VSP?

Evan Sheffels – Baseline monitoring is something that will occur as you get a plan adopted, right? For the three-year timeline, I don't know if there is anyone from the Conservation Commission there, but that is something that we have been talking to Ron Schultz in the Conservation Commission about that would be part of the next, looking at in the coming biennium budget. So, we are aware of that, that activity is needed, and that implementation dollars are going to be in need as well. I figured it will look like the dollar figure from the last biennium budget a little bit more than that.

Bill Eller – Evan, you are right on with that (inaudible.)

Evan Sheffels – The other thing we are trying is to design a plan that is attractive to producers. It is something that the buzz around whatever organization they belong to is that this is a good thing to do; a good thing to participate in. If you need an eye for participation rates or would like to get higher participation rates because it is much more likelihood to be a successful plan. It is not just to get your plan adopted, get developed and adopted and also got chickens down the road, and evaluations and you keep implementing the plan you bring forward.

So participation rates are one way to show the voluntary projects, to get more participation because it is good for farmers and ranchers because it helps the bottom line and it helps the bottom line of the County. They are more likely to have a conversation with conservation district staff up to speed or WSU Extension person and then they'll come to learn what programs are available. Many of those programs that the NRCS has in place will help farmers and will help viability. So it is not just the NRCS, it is something that those critical areas, many of those things are designed and dialed in to help the producer as well.

Ben Floyd – Thank you Evan and everybody for their questions and comments. I would like to spend a little bit of time talking about outreach and in terms of how we would get additional participation. Can someone share what buzz has gone on in Whitman County related to this and what are you hearing from your peers?

Dave Lange – So there is quite a bit of CRP that is coming out right now so they are having a hard time getting the CRP back in. The rates are lower, the rules are complicated and confusing; there is a little bit of confusion on what Whitman County is, because if you look at the salmon NOAA maps Whitman County is not a tributary.

Ben Floyd – Okay, so we have a risk of CRP coming out that has helped with erosion, water quality and but now those lands could go back into production and potentially impact critical areas. Is that what I am hearing? Any other thoughts or observations.

Larry Cochran – I have a question for you, Alan. The County has a critical area. Do you have a physical map of what is considered a critical areas of Whitman County?

Alan Thomson – We have national wetland inventory maps and we have FEMA floodplain maps. Those are the maps we go by. So, if someone comes and wants to build something then we check the FEMA map for floodplain and we check the NWI map for wetlands. So those are the two primary maps that we use. We do not have GIS so we don't have that capability.

Larry Cochran – One thing I would like to see for this committee is exactly what that ordinance says.

Alan Thomson – It is online.

Ben Floyd – Could we send the link to everybody?

Alan Thomson – Yes, I can make sure you get that, Larry.

Ben Floyd – That brings up a question. Does everybody know what the five critical areas are? I'll just share with you. So, wetlands, we've already talked about frequently flooded areas. Critical aquifer recharge areas. Those areas I'd like to see who can tell me with all the PhD's between U of Idaho and WSU, exactly where the critical aquifer recharge are in this County. If they knew, they would be recharging the Pullman-Moscow aquifer.

Critical recharge areas, geologic hazards. That is like steep slopes, areas that might if you have an earthquake you can have liquefaction where the soil goes, does this back and forth and acts almost like a liquid. Steep slopes, soils areas where you might have landslides, that kind of stuff that all falls under geological hazards.

Then the fifth is Fish & Wildlife Habitat Conservation areas. So, that's like you talked about the national marine fish service and their evolutionary significant units for critical habitat for listed species. That is one example of the Fish & Wildlife Habitat Conservation area. Other are just like riparian areas along a stream. Riparian areas provide protection for fish that are in the stream and also provide corridors for wildlife moving up and down to access the water. The riparian areas provide a lot of function. You might have other habitats that are important where you have hawks or other raptors that nest in those areas. There are about 40 different primary habitat and species that are identified by the State that can fall under the Fish & Wildlife Habitat Conservation areas. Perhaps at our next meeting we will go through Critical Areas 101 to show you the maps we have. Alan mentioned the maps that they have here at the County but you also have other maps from your Shoreline Master Program update that and associated GIS with that?

Alan Thomson – Yes, that process is not completed yet so we are not in possession, we are in possession of that material but it has not yet been adopted yet.

Ben Floyd – Okay, but we can use the base GIS,

Alan Thomson – Yes,

Ben Floyd – Data sets to support these mapping products. We have an extensive GIS data set as well that we are actually assembling for Whitman County. We have been under contract for about now, a week?

Alan Thomson – Yes.

Ben Floyd – So we are just getting started. We will be pulling that information together. Any other questions, comments about background, baseline process?

Jon Jones – The baseline monitoring that we are going to use are we talking about water quality monitoring or is it photo monitoring or is it air quality monitoring? Are we locked into one type of monitoring?

Ben Floyd – We are going to develop a monitoring program as part of the work plan so you will get to help shape that and the components that are included. There is already a lot, a fair amount of monitoring that Ecology does. Are you are aware of the conservation districts that might have water quality monitoring stations that they are pulling data from? All of that will be considered but we will also look at the work plan and say that we have a drainage that we don't know much about.

So we may recommend additional monitoring in specific drainages and specific types of monitoring. Yet in all of that we will go through as a watershed group to develop the monitoring program that will be used to monitor the baseline and how we are performing through that implementation phase. It's that seven years of implementation or in our case, it may be eight and a half because we are going to try and get done in a year and a half. We have up to two years and nine months to do this but the budget and the contract that the County signed is for a year and a half, so we are going to try and make this more of an intense effort; knock it out and do a good job. We are not going to rush the science or anything but we are not going to dilly-dally.

Jon Jones – Does this group have the funding available to do monitoring that whatever we decide to do?

Ben Floyd – So, that is something that we will figure out in the implementation phase. So as far as the work plan, we will identify who is responsible for what. So, this group is not going to, I don't believe is going to have your own staff and become the ongoing entity that becomes another organization within the County. But it is going to help focus the resources and provide direction on how things could be implemented. Then conservation districts and others will probably be on the front lines for the implementation as well as individual producers. Right, in terms that you may sign up for in your drainage practices, best management practices that you may implement to be able to meet the performance objectives that you come up with.

Alan Thomson – So, Jon, the money that we are using right now from the Conservation Commission is purely to put this work plan in place. At the end of June next year, that money goes away, if there is anything left.

David Lange – Don't we really have to grade ourselves right now, because we have such a short year and three months. We can't grade ourselves in a year and three months. Let's say, I think we are doing, agriculture is doing, let's give them an "A." So if we are going to improve ourselves over the next ten years it is trying to go from an "A" to an "A+" and maybe Jon thinks we are a "D." So if we are moving from a "D" to a "D+," don't we have to grade everything we talked about so far at present situation before we get to monitoring and have the monitoring back up what we are thinking?

Ben Floyd – Yes, and I am glad you brought that up. So you remember Evan mentioned that July 22, 2011, date? That is the baseline. So when we pull information you may have 2015 aerial imagery available, we will look at that but the baseline is going to be based off of what we see in 2011; and as close to that date as we can get. That will be the baseline of conditions as they are. Then we are going to have for what projects have been implemented by the conservation districts, NRCS, and others between 2011 and present and we are going show those as improvements already towards us meeting our goals.

So you get credit for that and then we are going to identify beyond that what else could be done to either protect or enhance conditions. So, all of that. So, July 2011 is our baseline, then we are going to have progress at the end of the work planning process that we've made towards meeting our goals. Then what is left beyond that for those next seven to eight years. Does that make sense?

Jon Jones – It makes sense and I really like David's question because what happens when you establish a baseline monitoring and we put in all the projects we recommend are implemented, they are put in and we don't see any improvement in our baseline monitoring. Is that going to become a new standard that the state will accept?

Evan Sheffles - Could I respond to that? We pretty quickly came to the conclusion that you don't want to pick any kind of a metric that is not within your control. Water quality is generally not a good backer because so many things affect the water quality, temperatures, things that are outside of the control of agricultural activities. So, generally where we have landed is that the monitoring is more a question of, in terms of grading, if you are a "D" student with regards to this critical area as of that baseline day, the definition of prevention is you need to maintain a back seat. That is a requirement of VSP. That needs to be maintained not farm by farm in the aggregate so that is the definition of the factors indicate why it is a VSP statue.

In regards to baseline monitoring, one approach is to use the monitoring approach that the NRCS uses which is (inaudible) presumptions about, if you do this then the outcome is that. So, they are just monitoring to say, okay, somebody said they were going to do this kind of a project, with this kind of a program, did they actually do it, are they monitoring to see if they did it and then they are aggregating soil erosion and those kind of things. They know that their program is kind of a slowed deliberate kind of an outcome. So it is not really, it gets down to actually monitoring and monitoring equipment in the watershed in stream that gets to be a very heavy financial lift, and that is not an eight million dollar biennium, that's a fifty million or more biennium. Who knows how much their budget is? So, we do have to be careful with the design plan that we move forward.

Ben Floyd – Any comments or questions for follow up? That was very helpful.

Jon Jones – Good answer.

Larry Cochran – So, in other words, they want us to (inaudible) out in time, which is 2011 and as long as we don't backwards, that would be no?

Jon Jones – What I was getting at, when we developed total maximum daily load, (TMDL), we struggled with temperature was the biggest issue. Because the only thing we could do to control temperature on streams was to provide shade; other than putting a tarp over the stream we would plant along the stream. We knew what was going to happen in five years but that was when the TMDL will be revisited. We put it out fifty years which in a group like this it would be very helpful. We are looking at a shorter term. So if we are going to monitor for temperature we probably should do something else; look at a GIS map and see what implementation projects were done.

Ben Floyd – Someone is put on hold.

Art Swannack – I was thinking if you are looking at a local amount of money to implement, and the numbers are floating around like \$150,000 a year per county. So, keep that in mind when we are looking how complex to make this because \$150,000 disappears real fast when you are asking four conservation districts to implement the plan and you have to do monitoring with those dollars.

Ben Floyd – I think that is a point well emphasized. Thank you for doing that. I just have a couple thoughts here that I want to share. So part of the baseline is just describing the conditions and there are actually a lot of documents that describe conditions in the Palouse, in Whitman County (inaudible) stream, poor water quality, (inaudible) temperature, sediment loading, habitat, all of that, right?

That is kind of a baseline background, but then we are going to narrow it down to, what impacts are ag lands having on critical areas specifically? Then that is what we are going to build on monitoring around. The other stuff is background context, but the focus is going to be on impacts or benefits already being utilized from ag production related to wetlands, related to streams, related to steep slope, erosion hazards, and that is what our focus is going to be and the measures that help protect those functions going forward from those impacts.

Jon Jones – We are getting ahead of ourselves maybe. But do you think the direction we might be headed is to develop a comprehensive GIS layer for these ag practices, riparian practices, layers for each of those? That could be the baseline we start with and that would be in concert with the NRCS idea.

Ben Floyd – Yes, as long as they will share their information with us.

Larry Cochran – But I want a baseline from about 1980.

Jon Jones – It wouldn't be a bad idea.

Ben Floyd – That would be ideal but we have to stick with July 2011. That is our starting point. But like, so, if this is the subset of all the issues that are impacting critical areas then I realize this, (I am creating a rectangle with my hands,) the ag piece may only be this much. Right, what we actually have control over. That is going to be our focus, just what we have control over.

Okay, let's go to agenda item number #3. So, we are going to go back to the VSP steps and project schedule. I really just want to give you a quick overview of the schedule for the project. So it is the bottom third of the page. In developing the work plan we are going to build basically three different sub products. I have it up here on the screen and for those of you on the phone it is the file titled "Schedule."

So, one of the things we are going to do is do a baseline existing conditions report and data sets, which is taking all of the information. We are going to intersect ag lands with critical areas to show the geographic areas within the County that we are talking about, which there are a lot. If you look at the stream map that the NR has for the County, you got ag land all around all these intermittent streams. We are going to filter some of that out, but we want to identify what the baseline conditions are.

Then while we are doing that, once we have the baseline information we are going to move right into developing goals and benchmarks, just to outline some concepts and ideas. We are going to give you options that you can review and respond to and say, "That makes sense, no, it doesn't make sense and we need to get more detail." We will just tell you that everything is going to be geographic based. So, Union Flat Creek is going to have different potential objectives from Rebel Flat or some of the other water bodies that are in the County.

We will be specific, the benchmarks, goals and objectives will be specific to the ag operation and the impacts or the conditions that are already in play. So, those watersheds and sub-drainages that are in pretty good shape, maybe there is nothing more that needs to be done. Then maybe there are some others that need some additional improvements that need to be made. Maybe some of the ag practices are effecting some wetlands in certain areas.

But again, the goals are going to be specific to each geographic area so that you can then monitor. If it is going to be some improvements on Rebel Flat Creek, for example, related to wetlands, then we know that the measures we are going to deal with those wetlands and there is going to be monitoring around that and that is what the program is. Again, trying to get drilling that into specific geographic areas.

The second part in parallel with that goals and benchmarks is the drainage areas, sub-basin framework memorandum. So, we will be putting that together and discussing that with you in June through September and beyond. Once we have those three products, the existing conditions, the goals and the benchmarks and we've got our framework for the drainages and we are starting to get into the objectives, then we will actually start drafting the work plan.

We will start out with a very detailed animated outline that shows all the geographic area of what we plan to address; then get consensual agreement on that outline with this group so that we don't go and write something, we don't want to write a 50-100 page document and then have you tell us that we missed major pieces. So, that's why we are going to go through it in an outline level, so we can talk about it conceptually, get everyone on the same page before we actually put the pen to the paper. Then once you bless the outline, then we are going to draft pieces of it and bring it back to you in bite-size pieces in different meetings and you will get a chance to shape the draft. Then you will get a chance to review the whole draft, give us another set of comments, if needed, and then that will be our final draft to be ready to send to the Conservation Commission and the review panel.

David Lange – So can you clarify a drainage area that wouldn't be specific Union Flat Creek or Rebel Flat Creek?

Ben Floyd – Yes, or it could be even sub-drainages in there if it makes sense to drill down even more. So there are hydrologic unit codes that are, are you pretty familiar with that term? But you can take Rebel Flat Creek and that's one drainage, or you can break it up into pieces where you might have some tributaries that come together, and those tributaries may end up being like four or five pieces. We can break it up as fine or we can roll it up if it is all kind of the same conditions depending on what we find on the ground. So, we're going to get as precise as we need to but no more than that.

So, we don't need to break up a drainage into ten pieces because it is all largely homogenous and the impacts, it has grassy areas in the steep parts and the water quality is largely protected and we've got, it is just basically weed land impacts, that's probably going to be more homogenous we can roll it up. If we've got wheat and then we have cows and sheep and some other unique crop situations or unique wetlands, then we will get more specific because we are dealing with what the impacts and conditions are from ag land. Does that make sense? Okay, it will make more sense when we actually start putting maps in front of you and what we propose is geographic areas that focus within a drainage and among the drainages.

Larry Cochran – So when we start looking at these maps, can we take Ecology's maps that has a blue line that says if there is a water course that goes through my mother's house, can we move that line?

Jon Jones – We can move the house.

Ben Floyd – So, we will be using existing information. But what we can do is filter out some of those secondary streams that don't really make sense. Any area where you've got the hillside and then a draw, the State DNR map and it is probably based on some USGS data shows that as an intermittent stream. If it is grass and there's no evidence of any channel we are going to do a filter with the GIS and just take those off. There's nothing to do there. So we are not going to include those areas unless there is a potential impact to a critical area specifically. So there will be some filtering that we plan to do to narrow it down to the geographic areas.

The work plan development will go from fall of 2016 through March-April of 2017. We are going to have a busy fall, winter and early part of spring. But I hope that the timing works well with your production schedules, your growing schedules. Typically, I understand that you have more time in the late fall and winter so that is when we are going to do some heavy lifting. Initially, we are showing every other month

meetings starting now through the summer. We will skip August, which I assume will be harvest month for almost everybody and then in September we will start hitting it hard.

That is the general framework and take that through March and April and hopefully be wrapped up and ready to submit to the Conservation Commission and have this thing approved by you in March-April, and approved by the State by June and then whatever changes that come back from the Conservation Commission and the State review panel, you give that your blessing. So that we get the local blessing and the State blessing on the work plan by the end of June 2017. Any questions on that schedule?

David Lange – You don't show March, next month. Is there any reason?

Ben Floyd – Yes, so if you look at the meeting schedule I'm showing every other month, February, April and June to get started. That allows us to pull the information together, get familiar with it. If we have a particular area that we have some questions about and we happen to know that you live in those areas, there may be some individual follow-up with meeting with conservation districts to get some of their information at that time. But we are promoting just an every month schedule until July. Maybe we don't need the July meeting or maybe we will have two in June. You set the schedule.

David Lange – Let's have one in March.

Ben Floyd – You want to have one in March? I'm just not sure we will have enough topic material to pull together by March.

David Lange – The later we go into December the tougher it gets.

Ben Floyd – That's a good point. We will come back to that. Do you have any questions or comments before we jump into the ground rules? Okay, let's go through the ground rules. I apologize about not getting these out earlier to you. We have been on a fast track schedule this past week, but everyone should have a document titled, "*Whitman County VSP Watershed Ground Rules.*" These are the ground rules we will use going forward in our meetings. I am the facilitator and also the Project Manager for Anchor QEA. We will be responsible to make sure the ground rules are followed as well you as participants. If something gets out of order, if it is not going quite right, please bring it to my attention and we will address it.

Decision-making. *All members are expected to participate in all phases of the discussions and decisions.* We hope you will work together to achieve consensus on the work plan. What do we define "consensus?" Consensus is something that falls between an endorsement, like, "This is the greatest thing since sliced bread," to, "I'm not really comfortable with this but I'm going to hold my nose and I'm going to go along with it because I think you've got the basic expectations."

Evan Sheffels – I'm just curious what the origin of the ground rules are because they look different from the ground rules from the other pilot groups. We worked those up more organically and had the group help figure out the ground rules they wanted to live with.

Ben Floyd – Okay, we're taking a more expedited approach here. I'm giving them something to start with and they can tell me what they like and don't like and the origin that I used is the Thurston County Ground Rules but I stripped out a bunch of stuff and just made them simpler.

Evan Sheffels – I can't remember what Thurston County plan they landed as, consensus being defined as, "Number of work group members minus X equals good enough," to make a decision. So, you need to be able to apply quorum at some point.

Ben Floyd – Okay, we haven't gotten into quorums or whatever but we are hoping you are all going to be here through the duration of this. Is there anyone who is not sure they are going to be able to participate through the whole process? It looks like we are good on that. The definition of "consensus" that I put on this hand-out, this is something that I have used from the facilitators guide, the participatory of decision making. We have used this in some of the other planning efforts I have been involved in. Again, that range of endorsement, "I'm not happy about this, but I will support this decision." So you can fall within this continuum and as long as you are there as a group and you have that consensus and each person within this continuum, we are good to go and we can go forward.

Joan Folwell – I have a question. Is there any opportunity for a minority report?

Ben Floyd – Yes, there is an opportunity for a minority report. If we get to the point where this is what the majority of the group or even you will support the consensus but you want to offer a perspective that gets included, that can be included. Does anyone see it differently? These are your rules; I am just proposing the starting point. Do you want me to add something specific that, "A minority report may be developed?"

Joan Folwell – Frankly, for the good of each one of us, I think that is a good idea.

Ben Floyd – I'm not seeing that anyone disagrees with that. Do you want that to be included as a bullet in your ground rules? I will go down here and put language around that.

Ray Ledgerwood – I'm from the Conservation Commission. Ben, you have thought this through when you don't reach consensus with a group like you are working here today. Speak to the group about that; it may have an impact on what type of ground rules if they cannot reach consensus what occurs.

Ben Floyd – I am an optimist; I very rarely go with the "What happens when we don't reach consensus?" I understand you are committed here. Do you have something to say, Sir?

Tracy Erickson – A question relating to the minority report if that is adopted. What value would this have in terms of the process; who would be reviewing and where would that impact be?

Ben Floyd – I don't know exactly how the minority report would be included. It could be just an additional opinion or an opinion different from the rest of the group as far as how they feel a certain issue should be addressed and they just want to have it on the record even though they may be supporting it. So, the question that Ray asked about, what do you do if you are not able to achieve consensus? I hope that each of you as you participate in this process if you have issues with anything that we are doing, please don't wait until the end of the process to bring those up. Share those as we go along so that we can work them.

My experience is that if you are able to share those issues ahead of time and as long as it is not just a fundamental like just a position regardless of what the information is, if that is your position as long as there is an opportunity to work an issue, we can usually get to consensus. I've been able to do that effectively in most of the planning efforts that I have been involved in. If we can't achieve consensus there

is an opportunity to do a minority report to have a (inaudible) and go with a two-thirds majority. Frankly I don't really want, I would recommend we don't try to go to that point unless we are forced to it.

That we say, our commitment is to operate by consensus; we are committed to doing that. If we get to the point where we don't have consensus and we can't resolve it, then we will decide at that point how we are going to move forward. I realize that is kicking the can ahead but I want to aim for something higher first. I get the sense from this group that you can work together and that we can achieve consensus 95% of what we are going to be working on; maybe 100%. Particularly if we listen to each other, if we understand what the purpose is behind what the concern is. If we are committed to try and resolve it, if we need to do some additional education, some additional understanding we are willing to work that out.

Larry Cochran – My concern is what this group comes up with the State won't approve.

Ben Floyd – Let me just quickly address that. So, one of the things that is already happening is we are getting the State participation. So we have Conservation Commission staff that are here, we want to get Fish & Wildlife, Ecology, I can't remember who are the four agencies on the panel? Ag, Commission, Ecology and Fish & Wildlife. Thank you. So we want those folks to be involved with what we are developing as we go along. We have an Ecology representative that couldn't be here, but is willing to review information that we put together. Fish & Wildlife, we can get them involved so again, so we will hear their issues and their concerns early on as well and have a chance to work with them. Art, did you want to say something?

Art Swannack – In regards to that decision making process and your statement that if we got to that point we could have some process where we decide what to do in terms of going on and making consensus, you ought to write something in the ground rules that state that so everybody agrees it is part of the ground rules.

Ben Floyd – I think the elevator music chiming in was a big “yes” that everybody agrees with that. If we don't achieve consensus the group will define a process that will allow the VSP to move forward through the review process. Okay, what do you think of that?

David Lange – Consensus as google says, “agreement, harmony accord, unity,” so I think you have to put a number on it.

Ben Floyd – No, that's why I use this continuum because if you can endorse it or you can endorse it with a minor point of contention, or you can agree with the reservation, or you can just say that you are abstaining, I won't lend my support or lend my objection, I will remain silent or stand aside or have a formal disagreement. That's that continuum that I think we can use. I hope we all fall into 1-3. I hope that is where we get and I'm confident that we can make good progress in that. I may be a little bit optimistic; maybe the issues are different from other areas I've worked in but I think there is a commitment to make this happen and I think we can work it out. So that's what I am proposing as the definition of “consensus.”

Alan Thomson – I just want to address Larry's comment about the State agencies. I've got an arrangement with them. So I've got Fish & Wildlife and Ecology and the Army Corps on speed dial kind of, so we have minutes that we will generate from all of these meetings and they will be getting the minutes. If they cannot come here in person, which most of the time they won't be able to, Ecology, Jason Kunz, said he

will try and make it here from time to time. They will know exactly what we are talking about because they will all receive the minutes. They will be involved in this process the whole time. That is an important point because they are the decision makers at the end of this road. They need to be involved in this all along the way and if there is something that they are objecting to along this road, we will find out about it.

Ben Floyd – I wouldn't say they are the decision makers,

Alan Thomson – The four entities are; then the Conservation Commission ultimately but the review committee, those four. So they need to be involved in this; they need to know what decisions we are making.

Ben Floyd – Absolutely, and we want again to get them involved early on, keep them involved. If we have specific needs and we need to meet with them, we want to invite them to come to these meetings so that we foster that participation.

Alan Thomson – I've got all their email addresses here and they will get an invite every time.

Ben Floyd – So, any other comments on decision making?

Evan Sheffels – The other two groups you are inviting, the state agency folks that have been there and are very helpful in figuring out the plans and how does that help the group where they might want to focus on technical assistance and those kind of things? But on the technical panel, so far they have decided they don't want to be deciders. They want to help inform define in the process, but because they have that role with the first review and the technical panel they didn't want to be actual, have votes reported. So that's something maybe each group has to look at but so far decided that they don't want to be in voting capacity. But we will have to talk with them about that.

Ben Floyd – I think that is the case. They haven't been invited to participate in a voting capacity.

Alan Thomson – They are not voting members. There are 13 voting members. Ecology, the agencies are not.

Evan Sheffels – When we were trying to force a decision that's what they decided anyway, so I think we are in the same place.

Ben Floyd – Okay, moving to the second point.

Respect for Interests - *Watershed Workgroup members represent a full range of interests related to protecting critical areas and sustainable agriculture in the County.* With that, every idea has merit and you want to show respect for the ideas that each of you bring forward at different times, as well as the ideas, if we have ideas from conservation districts or from state agencies that come and share their perspectives, even if we don't necessarily agree with them. We still want to show respect for that and also suspending assumptions and listen carefully and speak to educate. I will keep going unless you say you have a question or a problem. Okay?

Creativity - *The members commit to search for opportunities, options and alternatives. When we are dealing with a solution or an issue we are looking for opportunities, options and alternatives.*

Open Dialogue – *The members agree that they responsibility to discuss the issues and plan development and use open and candid communication with each other. I don't think anyone is shy in here from what I can tell.*

Open Meetings – *All Watershed Group meetings will be open to the public. Observers are welcome to attend the Watershed Group meetings and provide public comment at specified opportunities during each meeting. Written comments are also welcome. Summaries of each meeting will be shared with an Interested Parties email distribution list. Alan, do we have a VSP website that we will put information up on as well?*

Alan Thomson – We don't have at the moment but we can probably put something like that together, yes.

Ben Floyd – What do you think about that? Do you want to have a website that you can just put everything on so it is just a central depository of information?

Jon Jones – It is a great idea but it is really up to Alan. Let's heap a bunch of work on him.

Alan Thomson – Yes, thank you.

Ben Floyd – That's something we can do above and beyond. This says we will at least share information and go from there.

Alan Thomson – I will look into that and we can probably find a compartment on the County's website somewhere.

Jon Jones – Is it going to be advertised in the paper somewhere?

Alan Thomson – We haven't discussed that as of right now, we are not advertising these meetings. We didn't think it was necessary to do so.

Ben Floyd – It is not required. It does provide additional cost. Most people email and communicate that way. Maybe when we get closer to the approval process we might want to advertise some of those meetings when you are going to be making some decisions.

David Lange – We seemed to have a little communication problem on what you mailed at 11:30 this morning so it might be good to have a central point.

Ben Floyd – I will say the practice won't be to email prior to the meetings at 11:30 in general but because we had to get the contract and pull it all together, so it was not the ideal way to communicate. I apologize again for that.

David Lange – That's fine.

Kim Weerts – The only thing I see that open meetings is that if we are going to have agendas in the back that we specify when the public can speak because speaking from historical meetings around here, if we want to expedite this you will have to limit the amount of time that people can talk.

Ben Floyd – That is a great suggestion. In fact, that is what I was going to ask. Right now we don't have on the agenda a specified amount of time for agenda item for public comment. We've allowed some comments from the public today that part of the process anyway, so that's why but would you like to schedule a time on the agenda, like three-fourths into the meeting in the future where we just give ten minutes and tell people they have no more than three minutes to comment? Then we can decide if we want to let it go on beyond that but, one, you want to have opportunity for public comment and, two, you want to limit it.

Art Swannack – At the risk of speaking out as far as the Wolf group, each day had a designated time at the end of the day for the public to comment because when we really got working through the issues during the day it wouldn't work to have the public chime in every time you turn around to get into complex discussions. That seemed to work pretty good because most people were there to observe and then they threw in their comments at the end.

Ben Floyd – Thank you, Commissioner Swannack.

Kim Weerts – I think that setting a specific time would be good. I think we have to be careful about making arbitrary and capricious decisions to allow things to continue during any specific comment period. So, what I'm suggesting is that we have the comment period and if people want to say more, they put it in writing and email it to us. Then you can see who really has something important to say.

Ben Floyd – Okay. How do you feel about that and what about instead of three-fourths into the meeting just at the end of the meeting? Make it the last agenda item?

Jon Jones – I think it is a good idea; we could get a chance to see if they are in the audience then we don't have to give them time. If there is a whole bunch of people then we need to give them more time. That is the way the grass burning rule came about, too. There was no public comment until the end of the meeting and by that time the people who were emotionally involved with the issue usually calmed down enough so they had pretty good public comment. I agree with that; Kim is right.

Alan Thomson – I would think if we have a large audience, that definitely is something we should do but I'm thinking of the situation we have right now. We have a few members in the audience and if someone has a point to make right there and then in the middle of the discussion if we only have a few members present, can we be flexible enough to allow that person to speak? If it drags on and on we're going to have someone facilitating that can say that we need to cut it short, thank you very much. So, just depending on the number of people in the audience.

Ben Floyd – I'm fine with being flexible with that. I prefer flexibility as long as people are not abusing it and using it as a bully pulpit and trying to dominate. So maybe we need to add a little bit about flexibility can occur based upon issues at hand and participation by the audience. Something along those lines.

Art Swannack – Are we subject to the open public meeting act rule with this group?

Alan Thomson – Didn't we cover that question, Art? And we were told that, yes we are.

Art Swannack - That's what I was thinking and if we are we probably need to do that training at one of the first meetings so everybody understands how that works because you don't want a quorum that is getting together that has an issue that is subject to that rule. I'm just bringing it up that maybe we need to watch out for it.

Ben Floyd –Evan, do you know the answer to that? Does this group need to worry about quorums?

Evan Sheffels – I hope not because we the other groups haven't. I think that the commission of the administrator is, would have something (inaudible)

Ben Floyd – Bill, are you thinking no on that?

Bill Eller – Yes, I'll check that down.

Ben Floyd – I think these are all public meetings but I don't think like the BOCC having coffee making a decision about how much they are going to cut the Sheriff's budget or something, I think that is different from what this group is doing. Ultimately you are recommending a plan for state approval.

Alan Thomson – This has nothing to do with the County Commissioners; we are not a decision making body for the County.

Ben Floyd – So, we will try and get an answer on that. Okay, speaking.

Speaking - *One person will speak at a time, and Facilitators will make every effort to assure that everyone will have an opportunity to speak. As I get your names down, I'll be able to say your name and I've got them all written down.*

Attendance – *Attendance is critical to the success of this planning process. Each member will take the responsibility to get the information they missed. So if you are gone you'll get the information from us. You could waive the opportunity to participate if you don't attend.*

Responsibility to meet needs – *Each member will take responsibility for getting their needs met, for getting the needs of those they represent met, and for getting the needs of the other members met. You'll also be responsible for statements that you made to other Watershed Group members as well as the public regarding the work of the Watershed Group.*

Start on time – *Watershed Group members agree to start the meetings on time and end them on time.*

Humor & Miscellaneous – *We agree that humor is appreciated and welcome. I have some dumb jokes on occasion that I drop in without thinking about them, so it is all good. We should have some fun while we are doing this and I think we need to figure out a way to have some snacks. I'm not sure how we are going to do that.*

Larry Cochran – The Hyde-Out is across the street.

Ben Floyd – Some coffee snacks?

Use of cell phones – *Unless there is an emergency, responding to pagers, cell phones, telephone messages, etc., will wait until the members are on a break or the meeting is over.* Also along this line if you can silence your phone if you are getting a message we don't all have to know about it. That would be helpful.

Kim Weerts – Or music?

Brad Johnson – What happens when the facilitator does need to use his phone?

Ben Floyd – Well then, so whatever the facilitator says that's what you do.

Jon Jones – Where was that in the ground rules?

Ben Floyd – It was unwritten, that is at the bottom of the page. Then under the decision making I'll add something related to the minority report and also it will define the process for advancing this if we don't achieve consensus. Does this look like a draft set of ground rules you can work with and work from going forward?

Nancy Belsby – Yes.

Ben Floyd – Is there anything that is not on here that we need to include? Those on the phone feel free to chime in too. Okay, is there anyone willing to block consensus if we have consensus that we are going to use these as our operating rules going forward? Okay, I will update them, I will track the changes I will put tomorrow's date on them and I will send them back out and that will be our ground rules.

David Lange – Just a clarification on the cell phones. I feel like we should be able to use our cell phones just as long they aren't disruptive. Is that different than what you are thinking?

Ben Floyd – I think we'd like to have everyone's full attention. If there is some business you have to conduct, I just guess you could take it outside the room.

David Lange – So much of what we are doing, we can Google and use it that way.

Ben Floyd – Okay, if you are using it for the business yes, absolutely. Does anyone see it differently?

Jon Jones – You were playing solitaire.

Kim Weerts – I only used mine because Nancy wanted to know where the meeting was.

Ben Floyd – Cell phone uses relating anything to our meeting business is okay. How's that? Do you want me to add that in the notes?

Kim Weerts – No.

Tracy Erickson – In the future what is the time frame you expect these meetings to be; two hours, three hours, or are they going to be variable?

Ben Floyd – They will probably always going to be at least two hours. When we get into some meaty content and I'm bringing a couple of people with me, like a scientist or a biologist with the travel expenses and bringing them from Seattle and the Tri-cities, it would be helpful and efficient in the budget to have longer meetings in those cases. I haven't figured out the times but they could be as much as maybe half day.

Joan Folwell – So, could you give an example of a scientist or an agency person you would bring for what purpose?

Ben Floyd – So, John Small who is our science lead for AnchorQEA, he has a GIS background. He is also a landscape architect and an ecologist so he is a person I would likely bring when we start getting into the baseline information, and we show how we organize the geographic area, and we start looking at wetlands and what is happening in the riparian along the stream and that kind of thing.

I know a lot about that stuff but just enough to be dangerous. He really is the expert on that. There are other folks who work with John that also might be involved. We also have another planner named Vivian Erickson, who is helping behind the scenes putting a lot of the materials together. She will likely be attending some of the meetings as well.

Alan Thomson – Ben, just one note on the meetings. We have to make sure we can get his room so that is another wrinkle in the plan here to make sure this room is open. So, whenever we come up with some proposed time and date I need to check to make sure the room is available.

Ben Floyd – Is this the only room that has the phone?

Alan Thomson – The phone is mobile; it is the recording system. The only other alternative would be the BOCC chambers and it is a smaller room. This is really the optimal place to have it.

Ben Floyd – Okay. I was thinking we would just have some tables, maybe four tables put together and be able to sit around them initially.

Alan Thomson – We can do that.

Ben Floyd – Actually, this can work too, so then it has the recording system, which I think is important. Okay, so we will factor that in. I want to talk about and we don't have to decide this tonight but I would like to get some initial feedback. I want to talk about a chair, a vice-chair or two co-chairs that Alan and I could work with to frame these meetings, to plan the agendas, to be involved in helping the planning of the meetings. Just so we have someone with the local pulse of what is going on.

It would be an administrative function; it wouldn't affect the work plan development process at all, it would be someone that could help with the meetings and give us some feedback on the process outside of the meetings going forward. What do you think of having that? Is it necessary? Do you think it is a good idea? What are your thoughts?

Jon Jones – I think it is a good idea except I don't want to do it.

Tracy Erickson – I think it is unnecessary.

Ben Floyd – Any other thoughts?

Joan Folwell – We could always institute it at a later date if we found the need for it.

Jon Jones – Maybe you could just have someone kind of run point but don't call him the Chair.

Ben Floyd – We have had like steering committees where we plan a meeting and we invite a few people to be on that committee that helps plan those meetings. We might not even need it but if someone was looking to help with that process, we would be happy to have that participation.

Jon Jones – Why don't we wait to see how it goes and if you think it would be beneficial then you could appoint Larry.

David Lange – Or maybe someone wants to volunteer.

Ben Floyd – You can think about that but wait and see and we might re-visit it.

Alan Thomson – I think it sounded like David volunteered there.

David Lange – I was looking at Kim.

Ben Floyd – David, are you volunteering?

David Lange – That's a no.

Larry Cochran – I think that is an Alan job.

Ben Floyd – Let's just look at the agenda.

Art Swannack – When we did the Wolf group the facilitator basically ran the meeting. We didn't have a chair or a vice-chair. When we got into two groups with different opinions it might be one person that was the lead but I don't think the chair or the vice-chair is absolutely necessary.

Ben Floyd – Thank you. I think we will just table the idea for now and we'll, if it makes sense down the road we will do it. We will just work with the outline here. Okay, Framework for Plan Development and then we are going to get into the dates and time at least for the next couple meetings.

So, everybody should have received this 11 x 17 flow chart that looks like this. It has a one and a half year schedule. This is basically just taking those steps for the work plan development process and just putting it on a time line. One thing I want to highlight and we are going, the 60 days we're already organized and we are getting underway. But if you look here in the first three or four months, we are going to be pulling all the information from the Shoreline Master Program, from the State databases, from NRCS, from farmers of Ag, I don't know if there is any FSA data that might be helpful.

All of the imagery, pulling everything together. We are also going to be, one of the things you were blessed with in this area is that you have this regional conservation partnership program which is implementation money, but not everybody in the State has. It is federal implementation money, being managed out of

the Palouse Conservation District, the implementation of it is. One thing I look forward to is just exactly what the resources are, what is already planned. We need to fold in as much as what is already going on so that we make sure we take advantage of existing efforts, existing funding opportunities. That is something we want to make sure we pull in and we'll probably get a briefing on that perhaps at the next meeting. Is everybody familiar with that grant? Okay.

There is also information in the Watershed Plan. I was going to show some figures and things but I think in the interest of time, I'm going to skip that. But the Watershed Plan is broken down by drainage areas and they have identified where we have water quality issues, or habitat issues. So, we will be using information from the Watershed Plan as well.

David Lange – Can you give an example of that if you have it?

Ben Floyd –Yes, I can.

Steve Martin – I have to sign off.

Ben Floyd – Okay, thanks, Steve. I appreciate your time. I look forward to working with you on this one. Okay, so you on the phone won't be able to see this, but what I have is a map of what we call in the Watershed Plan the Central Lower Palouse, part of the basin. So, you can see all the different streams. A lot of this had to do with water supply, but it showed that we wanted to have like, there was some fecal coliform issues down below Hooper.

There was some opportunities for maybe doing some irrigation efficiency along the area where you have irrigation in the lower Palouse. It identified areas where we could improve water system storage. So, this was just the summary of the actions out of the plan and so we have these maps and we also have these tables that go along with it, that showed management action. So, dealing with, you know here is a bunch of BMP's it is kind of hard to read but in this area here, review pesticide fertilizer use, identify ways to limit waterfall impacts, where equipment is clean, alternative solution control. So there are a bunch of different actions.

Nancy Belsby – Where did this information come from?

Ben Floyd – It is from the Water Resource Inventory 34 Watershed.

Kim Weerts – That's what I thought because I saw it today.

Ben Floyd – It is in the Watershed Plan.

Kim Weerts – We call it WRIA.

Ben Floyd – Well, then I do too, just in case you didn't know that; I was defining it for you. Yes, this is the Watershed Plan. So, it's got actions broken down at a certain scale and we are going to likely get more specific than this. But it is a starting point and it has objectives and we want to take, you know, this is what Evan talked about taking all the existing information, pulling it together and getting it into our framework so it makes sense. This watershed plan is available on the Palouse Conservation District website, I think. It is also on Ecology's Watershed Planning website.

Kim Weerts – Do you print copies?

Brad Johnson – I was looking for them, Kim, I have seen about four or five. I don't think we've got more than that. Probably we want to keep one or two but we can provide. I know we have one copy of the detail of the implementation plan and I apologize, I was going to bring them today. But yes, we can probably come up with two copies.

Tracy Erickson – You can email it, can't you?

Ben Floyd – We could email the link. We could also take that document and break that into pieces.

Brad Johnson – The Palouse CD has some copies and I will find out how many I can bring to the next meeting and get you a copy. We will get the link on the Palouse CD website.

Nancy Hoobler – If you go to your local conservation district they will probably have at least two or more copies, so check your local district and they might loan you one.

Art Swannack – We can't hear what she said.

Ben Floyd – So what she said was the conservation districts have the watershed plans available. We will make that available.

Larry Cochran – There is another process whether or not it will fit into this group. The EPA is forcing the DOE to go back out and define Best Management Practices out on the countryside again. That process is going to come out, too. Whether we can dovetail that into this discussion, I'm not sure. If we are going to talk about Best Management Practices here, it should dovetail with whatever that process with DOE and DOE's is trying to get the process to do that right now.

Ben Floyd – That is for water quality related BMPs? Okay we will follow up on that, too. So once we've identified the baseline and we've got all the documents, we are starting to get our strategies identified, we will identify against specific objectives for ag liability and for critical areas, start involving goals and objectives, measurable benchmarks, and frame work for implementation, monitor adaptive management. This just takes that process that we just went over earlier and puts it on a time line. Any questions about this? We are plowing up ground that we've already tilled, so to speak. We are doing direct drill seeding in some ground that we've already seeded.

Okay, so let's go then to meeting dates. We are meeting today on the third Thursday of the month. So, first of all, this is the third Thursday. Is this a day that typically works for everybody? I'm seeing a mixed bag. Okay, what days are best and what weeks and what time?

Brad Johnson – Palouse CD, Mondays will eliminate the BOCC in this room, probably.

Kim Weerts – Thursday is okay, maybe the first or second Thursday of the month.

Nancy Hoobler – You've got conservation district meetings for Palouse and Whitman the second Tuesday and Thursday of each month.

Brad Johnson – The fourth Thursday of the month.

Art Swannack – The fourth Thursday definitely doesn't work for me.

Ben Floyd – Wednesdays? What about the first Thursday of the month? I'm thinking we may have a winner here. So, I realize it will have some impact but we are going to be meeting every other month initially.

So, if we can say, April 7, June 2, July 7, then we will skip August and we will start September 1, the Thursday before the Labor Day week-end. Then we will go to October 6, November 3, and potentially December 1, depending on how we are doing.

Nancy Belsby – Is November 3rd election day?

Ben Floyd – November 1st is Election Day. Meeting time; 3-5 good? Anybody want to meet earlier or later?

Tracy Erickson – When you extend the meetings would it be later or earlier? I would prefer earlier.

Kim Weerts – If you're not serving dinner, earlier.

Ben Floyd – Alan?

Alan Thomson – I would have to consult the budget.

Ben Floyd – So, 3-5 is what we will plan as a starting and we may adjust the starting time as early as 2 or 1. So, would it be helpful if I sent you a calendar that showed all these dates on them? On any of those dates, it could potentially be longer. It might be longer if we get into work plan development.

Alan Thomson – We have to check and see if this room is available.

Ben Floyd – Okay, so if we don't have this room, we just want to get another room rather than try and adjust everyone's schedule.

Alan Thomson - We will try and arrange this room; let us work on that one first.

Ben Floyd – That is our first choice. If we had it start at 5 or 6:00 would there be a conflict with the time? Would you want to go earlier in the day or later in the evening for flexibility? We'll just plan on later if it came down to having to push it off we might want to start at 5:30; maybe we would have some light snacks. Okay, I think we are done with the meeting.

We've got our dates, I will send out the revised ground rules. I'm going to be meeting with the conservation districts and getting information from them. I will send out the appointments for the meetings for calendars, and I think any comments or questions we need to address? So, shall we take public comment?

Tom Kammerzell – Will you be emailing the same information out to anybody that has signed up on the list and given the email address?

Alan Thomson – Yes, you are on the list, Tom. We wouldn't forget you.

Tom Lamar – I'm the director of the Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute, I am also a Latah County Commissioner. I apologize for being so late that I am here five minutes before the end of the meeting. I also participate with the Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee and their meeting was this afternoon. So I came over as soon as it was done. I am interested. The organization I work for does a lot of stream restoration work and education and we would love to be engaged as it is appropriate. Thank you.

Ben Floyd – Okay, if there is nothing else. We are adjourned. Thank you for coming and to all those on the phone.

5:05 p.m. Meeting adjourned.