

**WHITMAN COUNTY  
VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP MEETING  
June 2, 2016**

**MEMBERS:**

Alan Thomson, Absent  
David Lange  
Jeff Pittmann  
John Pearson  
Jon Jones  
Larry Cochran  
Tracy Eriksen

Art Swannack  
David Swannack  
Joan Folwell  
John Stuhlmiller, Absent  
Kim Weerts  
Nancy Belsby

**Audience:** Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA, Kennewick; Vivian Erickson, Anchor QEA; John Small, Anchor QEA; Mark Storey, WC Director/Engineer; Jerry Basler, WC Assistant Planner; Brad Johnson, Palouse Conservation District, Tom Kammerzell, Colfax, Kailee Theisen, Spokane; Nancy Hoobler, Colfax; Elinor Huber, Clerk.

**Phone:** John Friel, Tom Davis, Director of Washington Farm Bureau Government Relations.

Ben Floyd – We have several items that we are covering on this agenda. I apologize, this is going to be a little bit longer meeting. We will get into a little more content. We've spent enough time talking about terminology and ground rules and getting our common understanding about what this VSP is and what it is all about. So, now we are moving on to the content.

So, we will follow up on some action items from our last meeting. Then we will go into baseline conditions, review where we can spend a little time on Agricultural Activities and then follow that up with Critical Areas. We will go down a little bit deeper in the Critical Areas information. Then we will talk about how we are breaking up the ag information and critical area information into a specific analysis unit within the County. We have a framework that we want your feedback on that we will be sharing.

Then at the last item will be the work plan outline. We briefly touched on this the last meeting and we will follow up on that discussion and go into that plan outline in more detail. John, Vivian and I will be taking turns sharing this information so we will each presenting elements and tagging communications.

Then we will conclude with next steps. Are there any questions about the agenda?

Art Swannack – Do we have a quorum here?

Ben Floyd – Yes, a simple majority is quorum. Open Government Training. Has anybody had a chance to do that training yet? Tracy has and Joan has. Any feedback on that?

Tracy Eriksen – It hasn't changed from 10 years ago.

Ben Floyd – So for those of you who haven't, would it be helpful if we offered it at the start of our next meeting or ahead of the meeting? So, it would be ahead of the meeting, we could have the training at 2:30 and give you a chance to have that as a group. Otherwise you can take care of it on your own.

Tracy Eriksen – It is very easy to do.

Ben Floyd – Okay, we will have you go ahead and take care of that on your own by our next meeting. I did want to say one of the things that struck me while I was taking that training. One was email communications that needs to be part of the public record.

After the last meeting, David sent out an email with some really good questions and some feedback on the process so far and I replied to it. After I went through the training, I realized that email communications are really part of the public record and that discussion if it just happens as part of the Work Group is not really available to the public.

So, if you have questions you would like to have us consider, email us, but then rather than me responding, or I may also respond, and say we will make sure we put the communications record and discussion topic on the Work Group meeting agenda. So, what I am going to do, Elinor, I will provide you that email with his questions, my response, and if you could put those in the minutes as attachments to this meeting, then they will be part of the record. We will need to make sure we do that going forward. I think it is probably better to pose questions by email and then we will try to put responses as part of the meeting agendas going forward.

Another thing is conference calls and webinars but we need to make sure that there is a place available for the public. So, anytime there is a conference call, we need to make sure someone can come here and log into the computer or whatever. Again, something that I highlighted, meeting agendas need to be posted at least 24 hours before the meeting, which we are doing and will continue to do.

The second item is the updated ground rules. We edited the ground rules and they were approved. Does anybody have any comments on the ground rules?

Tracy Eriksen – Since all our emails are disposable and most of them are going to be addressed to either you or Alan, I would like to see the responses done as quickly as possible like they were done with Dave. Just attach them to the record as they come and go. It is better to keep that subject of interest right up front instead of waiting a month.

Art Swannack – You are going to have some issues on that if somebody pushes you. That constitutes a meeting by itself if Ben replies to everybody else in the group it becomes a meeting. If Ben only replied to David then it is not a meeting.

Tracy Eriksen – That would be fine because that would be the person with particular interest there.

Art Swannack – When you reply to the entire group, all of a sudden it is a meeting because all of us had the information of a conversation. If anybody else replied it became a bigger meeting. But if you just reply back to the individual and then you could put it on the agenda for the next meeting as an update.

Tracy Eriksen – Most of what Dave had I didn't have a concern with but since he brought it up, of course I had an interest then.

Ben Floyd – I had a little concern when he said we were wasting time, but it was good input and you can keep challenging us on this process.

Then the ground rules we will consider those done and they are already on the website. We will refer to those and follow those as we go through the process.

Kim Weerts – In these emails, if they are just providing information and we are not making a decision, is that still out of bounds for us?

Art Swannack – What the PA told us and the trainers told us, if a Commissioner sends out information to the other commissioners and there is no response that is okay. But if anybody responds back it becomes a public meeting. So, in this case, I included Ben because he is responding back and informing. It is information contributing to a decision. You are not making the decision but information is contributing to the decision. That is where you get into all the rules and it is a convoluted subject. I just know that is the basic.

Tracy Eriksen – I think you are fine as long as you don't hit, "Reply all."

Art Swannack – If he replies to David it is not, well, one he is not a member so it is not a meeting.

Tracy Eriksen – But in your case if you just responded and you put out information and somebody responds to you as an individual, you are all right,

Art Swannack – If I have a conversation with a citizen that is not on a board, that is not a public meeting but it is all in my records.

Tracy Eriksen – But you as a Commissioner, two constitutes a meeting.

Art Swannack – Yes, and here it will be half the Work Group that constitutes a meeting. So if you reply, if anybody responds to all, it becomes a meeting. This is the convoluted thing of the public meetings act.

Ben Floyd – There is a reason why, right, because if we were all having a conversation and we show up to a meeting and someone is following an issue and there was a bunch of emails and they weren't privy to it, then they are wondering how this was decided and why wasn't I included in the communication? That's why we want to conduct as much business as possible within the meetings. If we have an issue that comes up and have a special conference call, we can do that and we will notify everyone. But I would say, raise the issues in the email, I'll respond to you directly, we will decide, maybe in coordination with Alan, if this is something we need to revisit now or wait until the meeting agenda, we will make that call with the individual that raised the concern and plan it that way rather than having a lot of email exchanges.

Art Swannack – But you can have a subcommittee that is less than half of the group. If we need to create a group of 3 or 4 to work on an issue, they can work and talk and come back, it is not a public meeting while they are working on it. Their presentation would become part of this group's official record.

John Small – I wanted to point out Tracy made a good point about replying to all, but also be careful that David makes comments, sends it out to all, Tracy has some thoughts on that, sends out another email to all and it quickly becomes a deliberation at that point and it would need to be discussed.

Art Swannack – The other one that gets people in trouble, it goes to Tracy and Tracy talks to Jon and Jon talks to Joan and Joan talks to Nancy conveying what Jon, Tracy and Joan all thought and then Nancy talks, and pretty soon you have a what is called a serial meeting where it builds upon everything behind it. That is another illegal meeting.

Ben Floyd – We just want you to be aware of these things. I want to encourage you to do the training to better understand it.

Tracy Eriksen – I've listened to it and it didn't help at all.

Ben Floyd – Talk about boring. It is not material to do late at night. Any other comments. Are there any comments for those on the phone?

Okay, so Baseline Conditions Review. We are going to talk about Agricultural Activities, then critical areas and finish up talking about key concerns. So, I will hand it over to Vivian and she will share a little bit about some of the information, build off of the email that David shared, but talking about agricultural activities.

We want to make sure that as your consultant team putting this together that we understand in a pretty detailed way, what is happening on the ground as far as ag activities, soil conditions, precipitation throughout the County and making sure we know where there are differences geographically that we need to be tuned into and some practices may work in some areas, other practices may not be applicable. So, we want to be educated and this is your opportunity to share information with each other and educate us about the nuances and details of ag production in Whitman County.

Vivian Erickson – This map shows precipitation across the County. We know the west side of the County is much drier than the east side of the County. We have cut the precipitation map up into different segments. We've also characterized ag cover across the County into four or five major groupings, looking at the cereal grains which takes up a majority of the County, other vegetables and legumes, range lands and other specialty crops. The sources for this map is from the USDA data as well as the Washington State Department of Agriculture.

Art Swannack – If you look at those squares in there [on the Agricultural Landcover figure] and some of the shapes adjacent, a lot of that is in CRP that are in there. One reason I know that, is that up there where the vertical line between Spokane and Whitman County area, just below it there is like a rectangle and it curves, that is part of my ground that was CRP that we are grazing behind the house, but it is the neighbor's CRP as it follows the road contour.

The rose color [rangelands] on the map is off in those places that look like a square; in the middle of the tan color [dryland – cereals] that are CRP pieces and then you have to look around those and irregular shaped pieces are also CRP. Especially, when you start looking out through the middle of the County and you've got obvious squares or rectangles that would be a solid indicator.

Ben Floyd – Do you think we could get a map that shows the CRP from the NRCS?

John Pearson – Which year are you going to pick?

Larry Cochran – The CRP acres are dropping because of the farm bill.

Ben Floyd – We have to pick 2011. Do you think we could get that?

John Pearson – I'm sure.

Art Swannack – I think I would pick 2011 for your baseline data, but I would also get the most recent because some of this map may have things on it that are old CRP pictures that aren't there.

Tracy Eriksen – This is probably fairly current for 2011.

Art Swannack – What is the data layer origination on this one?

Ben Floyd – This is from Washington State Department of Agriculture, I believe it is the 2015.

Art Swannack – There is some CRP that is just now going in right near me. You may want the latest one to show the CRP.

Ben Floyd – To show the difference.

John Pearson – I think it is important because the CRP in this is classified as range and CRP should really farm ground.

Ben Floyd – Or maybe we should just call it CRP.

Ben Floyd – Does this jive with your understanding with the area that you live or farm in?

Tracy Eriksen – I agree that the regular shapes are CRP.

Ben Floyd – John, do you have a sense of who would be the best person to get that data from?

Tracy Eriksen – Dave Webber from the NRCS.

Jon Jones – Probably the FSA would have the best records of the CRP. They have maps, too.

Ben Floyd – We will ask for CRP and anything else that might be useful.

Nancy Hoobler – CRP is the FSA program, not the NRCS program. I've got a text to Dave Webber right now to see what he says and Dave Swannack might be able to answer this question. Can FSA release that information because the public information is private; confidentiality, would that be breached?

David Swannack – I don't know. They will probably take it from the County office to the State office and they will come back to you. But you're not asking for specific people, you are not asking for specific payments. It should be public information and it should be available.

David Lange – So, one year it will be legumes and the next year it would be cereal grain. So the maps will change every year. If you are just looking for a rough acreage amount, the vegetables are the lentils and the garbanzos.

Ben Floyd – So, we should qualify that. Maybe we should just call it cereal/legumes. That way the year rotation, we will never keep track of that but we can just note that is the rotation.

David Lange – I agree with that.

Larry Cochran – If you set it up as legumes and cereals as one category and vegetables is another category it will shake itself out because eastern Whitman County has peas and lentils but you go west to Dusty and there is very little. So I would think your maps would show the difference if you put those categories that way.

Tracy Eriksen – You're looking at canola and mustard that is covering quite a bit of this county. I think if you just put crop land, range land would probably do it.

David Lange – You see there is green west of Dusty before Lacrosse, so that has to be alfalfa which would fall into the legume again.

Art Swannack – Some of that is going to be canola from Stubbs and peas. The bigger question is what do we need for the VSP program? Do we need farm land and range land or do we actually need the brassicas, the alfalfa the other things in this plan for determining what we are doing?

Ben Floyd – It comes down to the kind of ag practices that are used to farm those crops. If there is not much difference between legumes and cereals in terms of the planting and tilling and all of that, then it is not a big deal. But there are different practices that are used to farm those crops so if there is not much difference between legumes and cereals in terms of the planting and tilling and all of that, then it is not a big deal.

If there are different practices and different associated conservation measures that go with the crops, then we need to differentiate. If it is largely the same and it is really more what you do around the stream areas the wetlands that makes a difference.

John Pearson – Yes, so we got in there with what is needed so can we come back later and split if we think it is necessary.

Ben Floyd - Okay, start out with lumping and then we will split out as necessary.

Kim Weerts – The only other issue that I see is direct seed versus conventional.

Ben Floyd – So, that is getting into a practice which we are going to categorize different types of practices that could apply to these lands based on crop type. Can you do conservation tillage with every kind of crop in the County that is grown? Yes, okay.

Art Swannack – Up to a point, when you are taking out a large stand of alfalfa you're probably going to be in the fallow.

Larry Cochran – No, not for me. But there is one term that will show up sooner or later and that's "generally accepted farming practices." That catches a lot of things.

Ben Floyd – Can you define it for us?

Larry Cochran – Basically defined, is if you have been doing it on a regular basis it becomes the generally accepted farming practices. Does that sound close, Tracy?

Tracy Eriksen – I'm not going to argue with it.

Ben Floyd – That's the way your daddy did it and your granddaddy and you are still doing it so that is generally accepted?

Larry Cochran – No, not totally. Under Equip-Program you can get paid to do something but if you've done it several times in a row, then you don't get held to Equip again because it has become a generally accepted practice.

Ben Floyd – So, it starts out as a conservation practice until you do it for so many years and then it becomes the way we do business around here.

Tracy Eriksen - It makes it very broad. I might add in on that, I'm not sure where we are going to end up with all of this but currently the standard cultivating practice is the norm. Direct seeding, regardless of whether it is grains or vegetable portion is not the norm. We'd probably have to tell ourselves to deal with conventional tilling.

Jon Jones – The idea of direct seeding or no-till is really hard to define, too. Some people who claim to be direct seeders are sort of direct seeders and some are pure direct seeders. So, you know there is a lot of room in there. I don't want to see this category of direct seeding in one bunch.

I would say if we come down to it and it is a finer point but maybe we should look at surface residue rather than direct seed, after the crop is planted. I think that might be a better way to measure what kind of conservation we are doing. Some people with conventional tillage can have work with a lot of residue and it reduces the erosion dramatically.

Larry Cochran – For me, we don't want to limit the farming practices, all we want to do is say that we want to protect the natural resource and however you can do it is acceptable.

Ben Floyd – So, options, right? So, why is there such a wide variation of conservation practices and tillage? Is it moisture driven?

Tracy Eriksen – Tradition and individualism.

Art Swannack – There is way more than that. Look at Map #1 [precipitation] that you had up a minute ago. On Map #1, you have moisture but not only that, if you go to where that intersection where I live at the top on the left, where Whitman, Lincoln and Spokane all touch, I am two weeks later in the spring with crops starting than Dusty.

Now you go down to Pullman and Colton, they are going early and they have another 5-7 inches of rainfall than Dusty does. So, you have temperature, and climate differences. If you take SR 23 and run up there you have the ice belt north of Highway 23 and the non-ice belt south of Highway 23.

Larry Cochran – You brought up a soils map. There are quite a few different soils all within the same field let alone the same area.

Ben Floyd – So, can we generally categorize practices that are critical to certain parts of the County and divide up the County geographically or is that chasing our tail?

Larry Cochran – You are chasing your tail.

Jon Jones – It is changing all the time.

Nancy Belsby – What about this map of cereal grain and vegetables? It almost looks like it is solid farm land and it seems to me it is more scab land out there than what it shows on this map.

Ben Floyd – Isn't scab land grazed and fall under range lands?

Nancy Belsby – It seems like there should be more grazed land on here; if you take the right hand side, you've got the border on the left and the bottom and it is range land and a lot of it looks like it is just solid farm land. There should be more trees in there.

Ben Floyd – We didn't necessarily put the trees and things in there. This is to give an overview of the crops. But you are saying we are underestimating or maybe under predicting the range land?

Art Swannack – I don't think it is that far off. Maybe when you get to Hay or Hooper but you are getting out of our county pretty quick down in that area. But if you drive from Lamont to Tekoa, Hole In the Ground and Rock Lake has range land but once you get out of there you are pretty much back into farm ground again. Some of it may have pasture but it is still farm ground and they chose to put it in grass because it was too wet to farm. That's just my two cents.

David Swannack – I agree with that. I think it is pretty close, Nancy. I hate arguing with you. I think it is pretty close.

Ben Floyd – I think by adding the CRP as another layer and do some bunching, crop land versus range, then we've got a base map we can use as a starting point. It sounds like what you don't want to do is divide the County up into segments and areas. What about the precipitation? David, in your email you talked about some different practices that Vivian is going to go through.

Vivian Erickson – Yes, this is a summary of the information that has been provided. I took the information from David's email and put into a table format. Regions are separated by west to east. This table is a work in progress as we try and develop our baseline characterization. We show precipitation variation from 8-15 inches in the western portion, 15-18 in the central, and 18-22 in the eastern.

Ben Floyd – Does everybody agree that this is kind of the lay of the land that David helped us put together? Is that an accurate framework for production?

Tracy Eriksen – I think it is a good start. Later on we may want to make a change on it. There is a big push to move agriculture more sustainable across the County. Where that action ends up at is too early to say.

Ben Floyd – Depending upon the practices, yield could potentially be affected but a lot of that change is due to moisture here, right?

Tracy Eriksen – Moisture and soil type.

Art Swannack – I was just thinking, you got the ag management column we've got a baseline we are working from which is 2011 and then you've got the innovation. It almost seems like you need an innovation column that says that these are the things being tried but the no-till or whatever that are adding on.

When I look at it, the moisture map, the divisions, this division it is farming rotations as much as anything to tell you what is happening. If you are in 2-year rotation whether you are in a theoretical 16-inch rainfall or 8; the reason you are in 2-year rotation usually is because you are not getting the moisture you were expecting for a period of time and you shifted practices.

Tracy Eriksen – If you use this as a 2011 baseline, I have no argument at all with it.

Larry Cochran – We talk about the ag management, we should have a footnote that says, "Mother Nature changes the rules on us on daily basis." What works today, might not work this afternoon.

Art Swannack – That is the premise behind the “maintain and enhance the viability of agriculture while protecting critical areas”. You need to have the ability for farmers to adapt to whatever change condition happens whether extra rain or less rain, heat or cool. Because it will change with what we can do crop-wise. Prices will let in, right now I can tell you one field that is going in grass and alfalfa and has been farmed off and on but it depends on how valuable the crop is.

David Lange – I think I would go back to Nancy’s comment on the north fork of the Palouse River between Colfax and the Stateline. There is probably 10,000 acres of range land and forest that really doesn’t show up. I don’t know if the group thinks that is substantial or not but from Colfax to the Palouse Falls, and I would say from Colfax to the Idaho line where Palouse is, pasture and forest is not shown on the map. There is probably 10,000 acres of pasture and forest.

Larry Cochran – If there was some way to split out our river channels.

David Lange – I think that Nancy is right, probably where Nancy lives up there, there is not enough range land showing.

Larry Cochran – Clear to Hooper you can take out that whole Palouse River channel.

Art Swannack – If you look at your map, if you zoom in, if you look at it there is a whole bunch of white in there, and I am assuming the thing showed the streams as white but it may be that is it overshadowing some of the stuff you are talking about, Dave.

Ben Floyd – So, remember when we talked at the last meeting about if we tried to show ag land and non-ag land and you said it was all ag land according to the zoning. So, we maybe embrace and show everything as ag land. But it sounds like we might need to go back and re-visit and add some vegetation and forested areas. So, these maps only go into a certain resolution but John has the underlying data that we used to develop the maps. I just apologize in advance to those on the phone, you’ll have to follow the discussion verbally because we don’t have this same information to share with you.

John Small - A lot of this smaller portion area especially along the rivers doesn’t show up.

Ben Floyd – So, is that the north fork?

Art Swannack – I think that is downstream.

Ben Floyd – So, we are looking between Colfax and Palouse. So, it is in there; it is just hard to see.

David Lange – I guess we should do like we did and table it and see if we can get more specific as we go along.

Ben Floyd – So, just to recap what I have heard in the discussion so far, that this information that David put together that we summarized is a good characterization of practices as of 2011. There are other ag management practices that are being adopted and so this is changing right now even as we speak. But we can use this as a starting point. We aren’t going to necessarily going to depict just exactly what is happening today because I think that might be too much of a moving target. I think we can depict what we expect to happen in the future, broken down by drainage areas, or by crop types or by some other geographic distinction for the future.

David Lange – There is an economic factor, too, garbs are the big money now so a lot of the guys left a 3-year rotation and headed for a 2-year rotation.

Ben Floyd – So, they can get more of the cash crop. You said garbanzos or lentils? Okay, so is it okay as a framework to use precipitation? That's not necessarily going to determine practices but precipitation and soil both have some constraints on what you can and can't do, right? If you are in an 8-inch area, you just have a different options for crop rotation and all of that.

Tracy Eriksen – I'd say that is the general consensus now.

Ben Floyd – But it could change? Could you elaborate on that, Tracy, and what the changes are and how you see it?

Tracy Eriksen – I'm doing a little of this but it is so early in the game yet, but I believe that the west, which I am in, the dry area is going to get drier before I leave. That is going to require going into some cover cropping; it is going to be a complete change of agriculture. It's too early to say how long that is going to take. But I think I will be around when it happens.

Jon Jones – I would second what you are saying. I think with the technology we have so far as machinery is concerned, we are able to conserve a bit of moisture. It will move the effective rainfall zone farther west and that coupled with advances in different crops, more drought resistant crops, peas, lentils, we may be growing those in Hooper.

I don't think we will see that in our lifetime, Tracy. I think we already see that trend happening farther and farther west, crops that historically would not grow and if you talked to an old time farmer, they thought you were crazy for trying a 3-year rotation in Dusty. Now it is pretty common.

Ben Floyd – So, what is the practice? Is it the cover crops?

Tracy Eriksen – Those of us in the middle of it need help explaining it. We don't know. We just see it happening across the nation in areas that everybody said it couldn't be done there. We also see it from the current practices when we go to the extreme of the direct seeding, yes, we are seeing the moisture. Are we using it for the most effectiveness to the crops, no, we are a long ways off of that. We have management issues that we've got to catch up to really realize the effects.

Ben Floyd – So, conservation tillage in direct seeding is increasing moisture levels in the soil and it will give you more opportunity to plant different crops, but you haven't quite gotten to the point to maximizing the use of that moisture.

Tracy Eriksen – There is plenty of research out there indicating that we lose in the rainfall we receive about 83% of that is just lost to the environment. We only graze our crop on about 12% of the moisture we receive. So that gives us a tremendous amount of area to work from.

The northeast is about 25% efficiency on fallow. The south is less than 20%, south of Georgia, and Louisiana so they lose almost everything if they fallow. So we can improve production by annual products but we've got an issue of trying to get it started. So there is just a lot we don't know yet, and unfortunately at this point, the more we think we know, the more we find problems.

Jeff Pittmann – Not only is it direct seeding, but plant breeding too. Plant breeders are breeding different varieties for different areas to make them grow with less water.

Larry Cochran – But then on the other side of the coin we are getting so much public pressure about some of our newer technologies and wanting to do with some of our herbicides. If we lose some of those things, it changes the ball game again and I'm not sure. I sure don't want to go backwards, but it just depends on how much pressure we get on some of our, especially for me, if I lose Roundup it makes my direct seeding go away.

It only works a little bit and the EPA wants to increase the rules for that one. So, we might have to go back to tillage. Sorry, I don't want to but it just depends on how much pressure we get out there with what we can and cannot do.

Dave Lange – Once again, if they show up with the CRP program, that would buy out a bunch of Whitman County acres again.

Ben Floyd – This is very helpful.

Art Swannack – What it comes down to is you have to have a seed where you can plant the crop and have moisture for the seed to grow. If your moisture is down 6-8 inches below the top for most of us, that's not viable. If you're doing no-till, you've got to get the crop up, you got to feed the crop either as you are seeding or after. You've got to kill the weeds, and you usually kill the weeds before you plant the crop, and then you got to kill the weeds after the crop is growing.

Then you have to be able to harvest the crop in a manner that makes it a viable marketable crop. Anything that comes in to interfere with killing the weeds or the ability to feed the crop affects how you are going to farm the ground, or get the crop up.

Last fall was an example; up in my neck of the woods of no-till, I have one field that is straight no-till; gets stubble, north sides and bottoms came up well because they had enough shade to keep the moisture. The south sides didn't come up until a month and an half later. They are about 18 inches shorter right now than the other stuff is. So you have this hill that looks like a rug that the dog tore apart.

Ben Floyd – I get that concept completely. So, I'm not sure what your conclusion is to all of this, but we talked a little bit about the drier part of the County, what about the wetter part? Is there anything there, so you guys are really the moisture managers, probably the experts where you have the least amount of moisture? As you get farther east, is it more erosion issues, is it more water erosion, wind erosion what are the risks to ag viability?

Jeff Pittmann – Twenty years ago water erosion was a big deal but now with the equipment and the new farming practices, it's not bad. When you get an inch and a half of rain on frozen ground it will wash out in a half an hour, but mostly now it's not much erosion. I'm kind of right in the middle, in Rosalia, other than on the precipitation side I've only getting 12-14 inches and I'm about a 15-mile radius around Rosalia. I'm a little drier.

David Swannack – The map doesn't show it.

Ben Floyd – So you are saying the way the tillage practices occur now you are not losing the soil that you used to lose even if you had, unless it is a really severe rain on snow event. Probably in the summer you get one of the downpours and you get an inch in 30 minutes and that would cause a little erosion but typically, it is more the extreme events as opposed to more regular events that used to cause erosion.

Larry Cochran – If you could schedule the rain when we needed it wouldn't make any difference how much total rainfall we had.

Ben Floyd – Where I come from we do that regularly, it is called the Columbia River and the Snake River. Okay, so any other specific situations in the County that you think would be important for us to know about?

Art Swannack – There is a little hunk of Farmington and then there is that Colton-Uniontown area. I remember Bruce Nelson telling me they got 21 inches of rain in the Farmington ground since last October. There are spots in the County that get those concentrations. With farming practice-wise those guys have some challenges that nobody else does. I was just looking at the moisture down in Colton, in your experience is that about the same way that once in a while they get the continuous wet?

Jeff Pittmann – Yes, especially like Tekoa and just down the Idaho border they get 20-inches plus. They seed later and do the farm work later. Not every year, but once in a while.

Art Swannack – Tekoa has the wet and the cold combination issue. So, they have to be able to get the ground warm enough to grow their crop, let alone deal with planting the crop in wet conditions.

Ben Floyd – I would assume that would be the same around Cheney, too. Is it a little colder up there?

Art Swannack – Cheney is colder, I don't know that they get what Tekoa does for snow. I've been working on a combine in February in Tekoa before when everything was looking nice, and then you go home and try to figure out if there is going to be 2 inches or 2 feet of snow that drops.

Larry Cochran – I live just north of Colfax and my road is a mile and a half long and there is a 2 degree difference in temperature in that mile and a half. During the summer, you get on the motorcycle and you drive that mile and a half, there is a cold area and then a warm area and another cold area. Last summer my garden got froze out and a quarter of a mile away it didn't bother at all.

David Lange – I would say in that wet district close to the Idaho border that we are up against Italian Rye Grass. So that's created a new paradigm because the Italian Rye Grass is an indiscriminate germinator so it can germinate and come four times in a summer. That has created a lot of havoc around Pullman as far as what to raise, and if you get Italian Rye it is going to change your farming practices. You can't chase the price of a commodity. The Italian Rye Grass pretty well instigates what you are going to do.

Ben Floyd – So how do you control that?

David Lange – That is a good question. A lot of it is chemical resistant so the only thing that will kill it is Roundup. They are trying some chemicals that you can spray Roundup multiple times. I would say in the wet zone it can really grow to grass and that is kind of an unknown. Raising alfalfa is an option. A few farmers are raising alfalfa that don't have cattle.

Art Swannack – That market is getting soft too, so it becomes to the pricing thing again. It was \$310 a ton two years ago and it is under \$150 a ton now for dairy grade alfalfa. Then it is GMO so they can't export and they have other restrictions on that.

Ben Floyd – You were saying you could control the rye grass with Roundup but you can plant legumes and they will survive it?

David Lange – Just the canola and the alfalfa are about the only remnant crops that you can battle Italian Rye with. Instead of being able to break out of, if garbs are high value and you wanted to put garbs in, you don't have any grass control on that Italian Rye in the garbs.

Jon Jones – Isn't that Italian Rye showing some resistance to Roundup?

Art Swannack – It has in other parts of the US.

Jon Jones – It was one of the first ones that they noticed the resistance so it will be here, too.

Larry Cochran – We are back to there are some chemicals out there that show promise but it takes so long to get the registration and those companies have to make money too. It is a long reverse process. Ian Berg at WSU said we are about 10 years away from having any new chemistry to battle because the companies went away for a while.

Dave Lange – Maybe we were just thinking wrong, as John Pearson pointed out in a different part of the wrong, "You guys grow grass so good, why don't you just grow grass and feed that Italian Rye grass to the cattle; work with it instead of fighting it?" There must be a way to get around it.

Art Swannack – I whispered "sheep" when they said that. But honestly, if you don't have enough crop rotation to work and you don't have chemicals to kill it and you need to control it, then you are back to some type of tillage method or rotation, combing tillage to kill the stuff out to get it thinned down to where you can viably farm it.

Dave Lange – But it germinates four times a year so you are really better off to put a strainer out and treat it.

Art Swannack – I'm not knocking that, I'm just saying that if someone wants to farm and wants to get rid of it, your no-till method without chemistry doesn't work.

Jon Jones – I think the conventional tillage with that particular weed is even worse. It drags it around the field from one end of the field to the other with your cultivator and it is such a neat weed it just takes advantage of anything you give it. It is a tough one.

Larry Cochran – That brings another issue for me is we have to protect these critical areas and the habitat and whatnot and I have the deer coming through and they are packing different weeds. The one I find in there right now is called Houndstongue and it is deadly to my cattle. I can just follow the deer trails and find it because it sticks to their feet and falls off. There are skeleton weeds coming my way.

Ben Floyd – We will try and take this information and this is where the detailed notes will be helpful. This is part of the ag viability and establishing the ag baseline conditions so we will summarize this information and it will go into the work plan. You will help us to further detail it out and we want the conservation districts, FSA and others that will be participating in this to help round this out. We will pull in some data, too, about crop production and that kind of thing. But you have given us a start on the ag baseline information.

So, we will focus back on critical areas and what we have on baseline conditions. At the last meeting I gave you a quick overview and power point of the critical areas and the different types of critical areas and how they occur as examples within Whitman County. Now, we have more detailed mapping

information that John will share with us. Just to check in with those on the phone, is there anything you want to say or comment on?

John Friel – No comment at this point.

Tom Davis - No comment at this point.

Ben Floyd – Just didn't want you guys to feel left out.

John Small - Here we have a great deal of mapping information about these resources. When you are looking at Whitman County, there are a lot of mapped small streams and intermittent streams based more on a mathematical calculation based on the drainage. One of the challenges we are going to have is understanding the nature of these smaller stream resources and understanding functions that they provide. Breaking it down fairly simply, we are looking at a little bit of water landscape, with sediment that the water is carrying.

Most water bodies are generally low on organic input as nutrients or suffer from too much as a result of fertilizations or other sources. But all of those things provide some key thoughts. This slide is looking at fish habitat which is one the critical areas that the Growth Management Act and the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Area, so that pulls in any fish bearing stream. The water is key as it also helps support vegetation which has its own functions by providing shade and keeping the oxygen levels higher in the water.

The problem of too much sediment is you will have big depositions. When everything is equilibrium, you tend to have more stable channels.

The interaction between the organic influences are really key, primarily in fish habitat because of the source of mostly insects provide the basic food chain in aquatic systems. Then vegetation is really key in maintaining water temperatures that fish can survive. Above 22 degrees Celsius there is not a lot of fish who can survive in the water.

Ben Wolf – Cold water fish. Other species that thrive, like bass.

John Small – The wetlands are pretty hard to see at this scale. This is an area that the DOE has laid out the key processes but again it is water quality of habitat as they see it. Wetlands provides two benefits, one is reducing peak flows when you have a big rain on snow it can absorb some of that water potentially and then release it later on. We will see there are wetlands in the watershed, need to explore how to maintain that base. They are great at water quality; they will really do a good job absorbing the nutrients and help in the growth of the plants.

They sequester some of the toxins and that gets into a whole other issue of water quality because it moves about food chain and the birds. Wetlands are very effective in catching that sediment and keeping the downstream water bodies clean. There are a lot of species that really depend on wetlands for their primary habitat either because of the food source the refuge in predators or other specific habitat species. I'm trying to keep this at a very general level but these are the kind of considerations that we will be taking into account at the intersection of ag liability.

Art Swannack – There is some of the data in that map that I can tell you is not accurate. We need to note that, however, we are going to incorporate this map into our process to say that we know there is a

bunch of this data that has not been ground proofed. Because in that same area where I live there is one there showing a fish bearing stream. Sorry, I know what that is like and the fish can't get up to it let alone it is dry 2/3 of the year. This data we have to be careful about putting it in, as too much of a guaranteed baseline, saying it is good.

John Small – We are hoping to do at this point is look at the potential intersection of agricultural activities and where these various critical areas are. I think you make a good point if we are looking at fish habitat way upstream where there isn't really any documented fish use at this time, then we are not going to be targeting potentially the appropriate conservation measures without starting from the appropriate baseline.

Art Swannack – You've got on that map for example, north of Garfield it shows fish bearing habitat above stuff that isn't fish bearing, in a drainage.

John Small – WDNR has mapped anything that they consider to be potential fish habitat rocked by or don't consider a fish barrier. So that is getting into the politics of what is a fish bearing steam under the Growth Management Act but the reality is that there needs to be consideration that those barriers are either scheduled for removal or need to be removed at some time if anybody ever touches that culvert.

Art Swannack – If you look at those roots it looks like a root drawing, from there and look at a lot of the root drawings up north and those areas, those are simply draws and notches in a farm field.

John Small – That is just the Palouse. It is shaped that way.

Art Swannack – It isn't a stream or a habitat bearing area.

John Small – Topographic lows.

Art Swannack – That is a good way to put it.

Larry Cochran – One of those blue lines goes through my mother's house. She's not there anymore anyway but the house is still there.

John Pearson – Is this part of the baseline? If it is part of the baseline the potential doesn't enter into it. The Fish and Wildlife potentially was going to have fish in it, what it was like in 2011 or not.

John Pearson – I'm going to say some of these blue line are tile lines. So, are we going to say it will stay tile? So it is the baseline so this map is not representative of the baseline. So, what is the use of the map?

John Small – The use of the map is to tell us where to look, and what the conditions are. Tools that we will be using are more looking at aerial imagery, looking at crop maps that we have, understanding these ditches through the field that help with drainage, are they just non-existent topographical flow. The very real topographical picture is probably no sign of erosion, no sign of water that you can discern, except right after a rain on snow type of event. As soon as it is forked over again, it's gone. So that is the base line.

Ben Floyd – This information is what we have to work with. All of intricate information sources are going to have varying shortfalls and shortcomings and limitations. So, we could spend some of the money on putting the plan together to try and better improve this and may be that this is a good

investment. I'm not saying it isn't but we want to start off with just identifying what the limitations are and cover that in the text and then decide that maybe this is tripping us up every time we start to work on this.

So we do need to define that. I'm just flagging this map in particular as one that we need to see whether we need to do some kind of different variation or qualification that goes along with it. We aren't promising that we will change anything on the map, yet, because to make it accurate throughout the whole county it may be a \$50,000 exercise. I don't know, I'm just throwing that number out and that is probably not the best use of \$50,000 of this project. But maybe there is something we can do. That is one example of probably all the data sources that we are going to have limitations on.

Mark Storey –In most of this data, it says DNR but I am assuming that at least in part comes from the PFLD as well. Because the two of them get together on things.

John Small – DNR is the official keeper of the data.

Mark Storey - I've stood toe to toe with many biologists arguing about whether the drainages on potential fish bearing and what they will argue when looking at a dry channel and I want to put a new culvert in is that if it has enough flow to support fish wildlife 2 weeks out of the year, then it is potentially fish bearing. That is what they will quote to me. I agree this is a really crummy map.

We need to put something in there that qualifies why some of these streams are considered fish bearing. It's not because they have fish in them, it is because they might have enough flow to support fish life for 2 weeks a year and that is even a stretch for some of these.

John Small – There is a lot of work around the state that actually documents. There is actually a new relatively low cost technique where you take a water sample and test it for DNA and see if any of the potential species are there. DNA is relatively inexpensive and that has helped to really identify where fish bearing waters are.

We need to describe that base line condition as there is potential that this might support fish up to two weeks a year, under certain conditions with the removal of barriers and currently it looks like this. That is how we establish our baseline. It's not to say this is a fish bearing stream because DNR's method as such.

Jon Jones – I don't want to argue with anybody, I just want to throw this out just for information. I lived near Oakesdale in front of a little stream that dried up every year. Dry as a bone but the bridge we crossed to get into our home, it was dug out a little bit so the water would stay under the bridge all year. There were fish there and they stayed there. They were little fish but they were fish and that is what Fish and Wildlife considers a fish. So some of the argument about fish, maybe it is just a misunderstanding or a lack of communication between Fish and Wildlife and the public. You know, what they consider as a fish, a lot of people don't.

John Small – Another point I'd like to make is under the VSP at times guys like me who want to do GIS analysis will find buffers to understand ag cover but there is not regulatory buffer associated with these water bodies. We need to understand what is going on around them to understand the baseline condition. But that is not saying you have to be 25, 50, 100 feet away by regulation.

Some of these stream definitions are going to come into play when you start to look at that but the baseline conditions of July 2011 is really important because it is going to establish where we are starting from. That is a very different approach than the rest of GMA.

Art Swannack – My concern is conveying, making sure we convey in the plan that just because this map may show some type of a diagram claiming an unknown or a known stream, doesn't mean there is one that even exists. In 2011, it was actively farmed through that whole area and there was no stream present so that is the baseline, not what the map may claim for an area.

I don't know how we do that in this plan but it is one of the key protections for ag, that if they are out there farming and the guy is running his tractor back and forth normally, then somebody else 10-20 years from now comes in and says that there is supposed to be a stream there.

Ben Floyd – And it has fish in it.

Art Swannack – And your baseline shows a stream here that has fish potential and the guy is going, "I've never seen a stream here, I was born here 40 years ago," we shouldn't put him in a questionable position.

Larry Cochran – If you could take this map and take out the light blue crow's feet, then the rest of it would have a better chance to protect. Because most of those crow's feet is all farmed ground and we are protecting agriculture. If you could just take that layer out of there, the rest of it, I can understand we could save.

John Small – It has our logo on it but it came from the DNR.

Ben Floyd – We can still choose not to defend it and say that we didn't depict the unknown streams because much of that is in cultivation.

John Pearson – It may be outdated but once we put it in there becomes our paper.

Art Swannack – But we get to choose what data we wish to incorporate in this. It has to be reviewed by the State but we get to choose what we believe is valid data for the purposes of this plan. So, what Larry was suggesting could be one of our methodologies in this plan saying that there is all this unknown and it shows up on the map as crow's feet but we can then choose to not have that.

John Small – Or we can intersect this map and eliminate a lot of those unknowns.

Ben Floyd – I think we are hearing we want to spend a little more time refining that map.

Joan Folwell - Would it be easier to change the map or to make our own definitions for what we consider that should receive protections. What kind of stream or waterways should, how closely do we have to adhere to other state agencies designations or definitions?

Ben Floyd – I think there is a risk if we try to start changing definitions. I think we can qualify or determine that these resources are more applicable and so we under use or discounted but not using what these smaller streams, intermittent streams because of the knowledge we have about the ag land. I think we can qualify rather than try to come up with a new definition. If we do, then people are going to lose the issue and start attacking our definitions. So my suggestion is just to qualify.

Joan Folwell – Changing the map, we need some basic knowledge of what is there, before we can change it, and as you said it will cost a lot of money to investigate that.

Ben Floyd – We can do something fairly quick, like overlay the crop types with these water bodies to see how they match up. Or just turn off the unknowns and say there are topographical lows throughout the County that at different times many are under cultivations, and other times are in range land. Because of this activity that occurs around we decided they are really not relevant for depicting, they demonstrate way more streams that do exist in the County.

Jon Jones – I think that is a good idea; we have to do that, I can think of Willow Creek as a good example. It used to be a creek and it isn't anymore because of a combination of direct seed, sediment dams, CRP, the creek is farmed now and there hasn't been water in that creek for 15 years now. The crops are using the water now. There is no run off. We can come up with probably a dozen examples of that same thing.

John Small – In order to improve the ag practices, attempting to infiltrate more of that water, less of it is running off, there fewer surface water bodies as of 2011, that might be a different reality than what was mapped. These maps go back to the 70's, I believe, so it is a difference in ag practices.

Jon Jones – I think we could make a disclaimer and not call it a disclaimer but because of changes in practices.

John Small – I wanted to speak of Joan's comment as well. Vivian and I were at a VSP workshop. We discussed what we define as our baseline conditions, not what it actually looks like but what is the definition that we are going to use? Potentially, there will be money available in the next biennium to establish that baseline with conditions.

So, we look at the satellite imagery, look at the conditions on the ground, map it and establish what that 2011 baseline was under that definition. I think we have to be careful that our definition doesn't stray too far from the Growth Management Act and the hydrologic existence is just going to open the door to a law suit.

John Pearson – The other thing is water temperature and there are basically three types of fish; you got the warm and cold here and I think Rock Lake has some trout.

Ben Floyd – You've got one really big fish passage barrier. You have Palouse Falls.

Art Swannack – We know there are 239,000 steelhead that were dropped in there two years ago, but the intent of putting them there was because they couldn't get back up the falls and establish a run. Your shoreline plan didn't it take in and cover a lot of the major streams plus show up stream what was actual water areas. That is solid base data for in here.

Ben Floyd – We've got that Shoreline of the State, all the watershed GIS data.

John Small – That darkest blue layer is pretty well established including the hydrology. Where that 20 CFS annual flow starts, goes around a lot in the last 30 years based on better data and changes in precipitation.

Ben Floyd – So, we will probably touch bases with Jason, the Fish and Wildlife biologist who was here at our last meeting, and get his information and get his input and share that back with you. Just so if he has issues or comments or whatever, we want that to be elevated early enough so we can in some cases challenge him on some of these items and well as better understand his perspective.

Tracy Eriksen – If this data is accumulated clear back into the 70's our climate is much different than it was in the 70's. The 40's through the 60's particularly we had a lot of snow and winter runoffs that we don't have today. In 1984, our region was declared a drought and I don't think that has ever been pulled. If you look at the puddles on the west side of the County they haven't been brought back up for the most part to stay any length of time since the early 80's.

Ben Floyd – So additional qualifiers are included in this discussion.

John Small – What is labeled here is potential intermittent streams and I think, especially in the Palouse that is a very small potential. Maybe some of those show a small sign of erosion but a lot of those are just the shape of the hills. We debated whether or not to show all of the little spider webs but I want you guys to be aware that is the data that is out there. That is what we have to describe either what the 2011 conditions are or if we are not, why we are not describing that because they are defined in the GMA as critical areas.

Ben Floyd – Now we have the hydrology nailed down. Let's go to an easier subject. The Fish and Wild Life Habitat.

John Small – One data set that it is very rarely updated. A lot of it was established shortly after the Growth Management Act was developed and in the case of these larger, big brown areas of bird, mammal migration corridors of habitat, that's based on a series of surveys.

Also individual observations of endangered species and species of concern, those tend to be the most difficult to deal with. That could be somebody saw something in the 80's and now it is still considering that species to be present in that location. But nobody has seen one for 30 years. So, the most critical here is to look at the ones that we show here the steppe habitat is one that DFW have been wrestling for a number of years for appropriate protection measures for steppe habitat.

Art Swannack – Are you talking the prairie and steppe? The yellow area; that is all pasture ground. Some of which I own. There are native prairie up there. I'm sure Joan wants to come see it sometime. It is scab rock pasture. It is what we run cows, sheep and whatever else. That little area south of Ewan, isn't that the salt flat area?

John Small – Most of this area is all in ag. What I've observed is that this gets the least protection. (inaudible) The biggest concern that we have is deer moving weeds through it and is threatening ag liability. What are management options and conservation measures, otherwise that need to be available to maintain ag viability? I don't think fencing works out a conflict from the deer's point of view.

Joan Folwell – I need to speak to the Palouse Prairie, which is a type of the shrub steppe habitat that is a priority habitat for the state. As far as Whitman County is concerned, the Palouse Conservation District is in the process now of doing an inventory of prairie remnants and people don't have to get too excited about it because there is less than 1% of the original prairie left.

Most people think there is less than one hundredth percent of the prairie left and besides our areas that have not been farmed, that's why there is still prairie there, so they don't pose a real threat to farming operations. But as I said the Palouse Conservation District is in the process of mapping remnants in the County. We've done last summer, most of the respondents that would write in the inventory in our particular conservation district and this summer were conducting inventories of the rest of the County.

This has its limitations too, because we wrote to all the landowners that had potential spots, remnants on their property and asked them if they would like us to come and have an inventory done. So, we didn't get 100% response from that. But Palouse Prairie Foundation in the past has gone to the County and as soon as we get all that information established the County, Alan Thomson, has told us that they will accept that as an official county map. So that information will be available to the public.

Ben Floyd – So will the map be available in the fall of this year?

Joan Folwell – I'll have to check on that schedule.

Ben Floyd – It would be great if it could be so we could pull it in.

Joan Folwell – Brad, have you heard anything from James?

Brad Johnson – He just started a week ago. He is making contacts. I would think it would be by Christmas and we would have it.

Joan Folwell – This is being financed by Fish and Wildlife so it is a legitimate inventory done by a botanist with PhD qualifications. There is a regular protocol. Idaho in Latah County has done the same thing and we are following the same methods that they used.

John Small – It would be helpful but I don't think we will have that direct overlap with ag. It is going to be, how are small remnants being affected by adjacent agriculture use or just by being so fractured that they have one bad year and there is no seed source to re-establish. So, I'd be curious to get that contact information so we can understand how to deal with that overlap.

David Lange – Does livestock kick out a step of piece of property if it has had livestock on it, if it hasn't been farmed?

Joan Folwell – The botanist that is evaluating these sites goes to each one of them and the State Natural Heritage Program has come out with a qualification chart where there are so many natives in a particular area, means it is high quality versus something that has been grazed and has a lot of invasive weeds on it, and is going to be of the lower quality. So he is making that kind of assessment, too.

David Lange – I thought it was interesting because Steptoe Butte looks like a primo piece of property. We used to run cattle on Steptoe Butte for probably a decade all the way to the top. It is fenced. I was just curious what the qualifications were.

Joan Folwell – It depends on how long did you do it, and what time of the year and see what is affected with that kind of activity.

David Lange – Once again, I would say this map is not very accurate.

**Break -3:52 p.m. – 4:06 p.m.**

Ben Floyd – So, let's keep going through the rest of the critical area. After that we will jump right into the watershed drainage after this.

John Small – Next is the critical aquifer recharge areas. Those of these which are circular in nature are based on very simple ground water management. Generally, these are just covering well head protection areas, for Class A water systems and these maps are fairly accurate. We are talking about the intersection of agricultural activities.

Most of the herbicides and pesticides that might have been a concern years ago are not being used today so there may be some today that would be a concern but I think it is primarily going to be oil spill, gasoline spills, having spill prevention plans in place. We are generally not going to affect the infiltration rates. For the most part, it is going to have a very limited intersection with agricultural activities.

Ben Floyd – Does everybody agree with that? When you think about wellhead protection and drinking water impacted with some type of contaminant or petroleum product, from an agricultural standpoint is there anything else besides spills that might potentially impact a ground water supply in Whitman County that you can think of?

David Lange – I think the city residence, it has been proven that they have over fertilized more than farmers ever thought of.

Larry Cochran – Considering they can't even decide whether or not we are part of a sole source aquifer or not, how are they going to determine whether recharge is close to here or where our recharges come from?

Ben Floyd – That is not important. What is the intersection between ag activities and drinking water supply and maybe we talked to someone at the County Health Department. Do they work for you, Mark?

Mark Storey – They don't work for me; all I would say is the vast majority of these circles on this map are drawn as a regulatory exercise, not as a physical exercise of connectivity. Because, for example, Pullman quite well demonstrated that there is no recharge occurring in the Pullman wells and yet they are showing on here with green circles around them as well as protection areas. It is simply not true.

The only ones that look really big and out of place, is Palouse and Lacrosse, they are really large for what they should be and they might intersect ag grounds because they are so large. But, again, there is no science in this map, none.

Larry Cochran – The one that is in Glenwood is the Colfax wells and it is an aquifer well, and I asked the Health guy, "How do you contaminate an artesian well?" His response was, "Don't you think you can?" I told him I didn't know, I was asking him. He couldn't answer the question either.

Mark Storey – It is somewhere in the recharge area upland that could be anywhere.

John Pearson – What are the ramifications of putting this in? But you are saying there is no connection between ag and breached out areas, so it is a toss-up.

Ben Floyd – It is the information that we have.

Mark Storey – Whitman County to date has not identified a critical aquifer recharge area in its own critical area ordinance.

John Pearson – This would be a good one to just leave out.

Mark Storey – You are right, there is no intersection with ag, but why would you put it in just to confuse people? I would suggest efforts by people such as PBAC are probably way more detailed than anything you are going to come off of this exercise.

Larry Cochran – But it is nice to know that this is out there so if it does come back and somebody tries to use this information against us, it won't hit us in the back side.

Art Swannack – All these comments would be a good way to list in the plan; why we didn't use this map because it is a regulatory map based simply on site location. The assumed distance from site location you could have infiltration with no actual scientific investigation. So, we didn't believe this is valid data.

Mark Storey – Yes, that's all it is.

Art Swannack – Besides I can tell you there are other irrigation wells that are not on that map.

Ben Floyd – Irrigation wells are not subject to this.

Art Swannack – What is east of Winona that is a circle?

Ben Floyd – There must be some Group A systems out there.

Art Swannack – It doesn't seem like the right place for Endicott but maybe it is.

Ben Floyd – So is there anything else from an ag perspective that might impact drinking water? I do think we have practices that are in place to protect drinking water. Is there anything besides spills?

Art Swannack – The challenge is, are you talking all shallow wells and everything else in the County or what are you saying? Because that is a different statement than a critical aquifer recharge. Shallow wells can be contaminated by the owner of the wells for improper care in their place. Or my septic system is 50 feet from my well. Not a good combination. I just mean in terms of this critical aquifer recharge section of our plan. What we learned in PBAC is there isn't a recharge that we can identify.

Ben Floyd – So then it is not a critical and we can stop there.

Joan Folwell – So you are going to include the PBAC data to refute or ignore, or whatever?

Mark Storey – PBAC has been studying this for a lot of years and they have yet to identify a critical aquifer recharge area in that part of the County.

Larry Cochran – So that is what you put in the plan.

Ben Floyd – So that is a small portion of the County. I can follow up with Steve, who is the executive director who is working for us on the contract and see if he can help us to tie it down.

Art Swannack – That doesn't mean that sometime in the future you wouldn't amend the plan to show something like Rock Lake is actually a recharge versus an outflow, but we don't have data to say that one way or another right now.

Ben Floyd – Can we at least say something about conservation practices that are used? If you have a spill, do you let it sit there, do you clean it up? I know most of you that are larger farm operations have a spill prevention counter measure and control plans that are federally required and you have fuel storage that is greater, than,

Art Swannack – They are still in debate for what the rule is for ag on the spill storage requirements. There are requirements if you are so many feet of an active stream. I think the farmer is going to do the best not to make a mess in his neighborhood. But in terms of critical aquifer recharge areas that is a different subject. What are we recharging?

Ben Floyd – You don't know for sure. You don't have science that says you're not and you don't have science that says you are. So, there might be some suggested practices that are recommended for dealing with the spill.

Art Swannack – There are some state laws regarding a spill of a certain size, you have to report to the Department of Ag and they report to the DOE or both. So I'd just say we follow state law in reporting based on what the law requires in order to protect the resource.

John Small – The next one is Water Erosion Potential. This is the NRCS showing the different gradations mostly from severe to slight. There are a few areas around the Snake that are very severe. Obviously, there is a huge overlap with ag viability in maintaining soil. Water quality and also the impact potentially on stream habitat quality. So this is one that, aside from the accuracy of this map, which I'm not qualified to comment on, I think it has a lot of overlap with the conservation measures.

Ben Floyd – Does anyone see it differently?

David Lange – Kim pointed out that the bright orange spot up there where Steptoe Butte is, is a severe or very severe erosion potential. They must be going off the slope.

Jon Jones – It is slope; soil type and rainfall in the west part, it is wind, too.

John Small – Usually the rock out crops are not showing the soil.

Jon Jones – This is also showing water erosion potential. It doesn't show what water erosion actually is.

Art Swannack – Part of that state park is up by Tekoa. It is Tekoa Mountain and Skyline Drive.

David Lange – Even though it is covered in grass.

Art Swannack – It is potential, it is not actually happening. What are the red parts on the Snake River towards Columbia? Is that just steep bluffs?

John Small – That is those steep bluffs that does not have a lot of vegetation.

Art Swannack – It is range but not farmed.

Ben Floyd – But if you get thunderclouds that come in the summertime and dumps a bunch of water in that area, that's where you can big erosion. If you look at Benton and Franklin County they have in these areas, steeper soils there is red all over. They've actually had in the irrigated causing sluffing, and then the summer thunderclouds that come in and all of a sudden you have a stream that doesn't flow any water and it is full of a bunch of water and soil getting washed off.

Mark Storey – There are several canyons in Whitman County that are subject to that every several years and we have flash flood events that generate 5-10 feet wall of water.

Jon Jones – We need to define what severe, moderate, and slight and define it in quantitative terms like 15-18 tons per acre potential loss, or 5-6, I don't know how we would do that.

John Small – We can provide more information on that. It's just a calculation of slopes, soils, precipitation, basically, it has units and has categories.

Tracy Eriksen – Just from the history, I would move the color arrangement one up on everything. But depending on what they use for categories. The slight would be less than 5 tons an acre. I think that is historically what NRCS has always come out with as being slight. Moderate, severe and very severe I don't know where those lie but we certainly in my area don't meet the moderate. If you are cultivating, you're not a moderate. If there is much rain involved, it's going to come off.

Dave Lange – What is the definition of erosion? Is it moving this soil particle from the top of the dirt clod down to here, or is it moving the soil particle; does it stay in the field or does it leave the field? What is the definition of erosion?

John Small – This includes primarily by slope and a little by precipitation.

Art Swannack – I'd put that comment in there if this map is part of our package when we are done, that says water erosion potential. This does not mean this is currently occurring; it means the potential to occur if improperly managed.

Jon Jones – I think the definition of erosion might be, I think this is probably what the NRCS uses still, is the soil leaves the field and it can be measured by the size of the ditches. You can quantitatively figure out what the erosion is.

John Small – Figure 7 is a little bit, is just a straight slope analysis without any other consideration. There is a little different gradation but you get the idea.

Larry Cochran – So can we put something in there that Mother Nature creates these little thunderstorms that no matter what we do or how the land is protected,

Jon Jones – I think what we should say is we recognize that erosion is a natural process and as good stewards of the land our job is to make it as near what nature intended it to be as could be.

John Small – All this soil got here from wind in the first place. It is part of that natural process. In terms of the impact on critical areas, it is pretty minimal. This is more ag viability, there is some small fraction that will end up in the water but that is not wind driven. Sediment is not a big driver for water quality. I don't know what level of concern there is for wind based erosion. Out here, that is something we want to consider in terms of looking at conservation measures strictly to enhance ag viability.

Larry Cochran – I'd say the County has made great strides because we don't have the wind erosion like it used to be but I'm not sure if it came from Whitman County or the counties to the west of us where the dirt came from.

Art Swannack – There have been wind events there about 5-7 years ago that started in Benton County for Seven Hills and came clear across the state before it got to us through a giant storm. The only place you have a little bit of wind based on the map is the LaCrosse areas where you get real light soils if they over killed, but most guys don't want that to happen anyhow because they don't have to deal with it when they make flour out of it.

David Swannack – I've got some heavy tillers that are close to me and I get a lot of their stuff about every time it hits 30 mph which seems to be more and more in recent years. I think we get more wind erosion than what we are willing to think that we have. But we have had more wind in the last three years than we normally have. It is coming from a different direction. We used to never get anything out of the northeast.

John Small – Do you believe that it is predicted to increase or continue to increase?

David Swannack – If we pass over this quickly, is that going to cause us a problem? Wind erosion on the west part of the County, I can tell you that Art and I are in a bad spot. You get a couple miles east of us it drops off but we have pockets throughout the County that don't match any of these maps. If it is not important, let's move on.

Larry Cochran – The biggest thing is I would say the County very seldom has PM10 issues because of wind erosion; so as long as they don't go to 2.5, we are okay.

Ben Floyd – Air quality is not a critical area, it is not part of the scope of this.

Art Swannack – That makes David's comment then, that it is not really relevant to this?

Ben Floyd – We brought it up in terms of ag viability and are there practices relating to preventing wind erosion and water erosion? Do we want to make sure we include it in VSP strictly for ag viability?

David Swannack – From that view point I can pick on Tracy. Yes, as you get into minimum tillage of whether it is no-till or whatever that helps with water erosion. If you are connecting them then we need to give it some consideration.

Ben Floyd – That is your choice but it seems to me to make sense that again from that ag viability.

Larry Cochran – The ag viability piece we have learned the more residue you leave on a surface, the more viable you are going to be. But then when you do one thing that causes other problems, then you have to learn something else too. If you do one thing there is always something else that goes along with it.

Ben Floyd – We can generally identify wind and soil and water erosion as ag viability risk and that the conservation tillage and minimum tills measures can help with that. That's maybe all we have to say. Then we want to encourage that from the ag viability standpoint. We have some goals related to that. We are going to have goals related to try and promoting conservation tillage measures throughout the County and so if we do that we will capture the benefits for that.

John Small – Maps 7, 8, and 10 all deal with other specific critical areas. Steep slopes, I think, is covered under the water and wind erosions. Liquefaction and seismic considerations not generally a big driver for agricultural practices that I am aware of.

David Swannack – What is liquefaction?

John Small – Saturated soil that become like gelatin when they get shaken. Not good places to build on.

Ben Floyd – That is one question that we had. Maybe this is for Jerry or for Mark. I'm going to build a barn or a shop and does it go through the regular building process? So, critical areas and all the geological hazards gets covered through permit process? Okay, so we don't have to deal with any of those. We just know that structures related to ag production are covered through the building code and the critical areas protections come through the regulatory process.

David Lange – Just a question on the percent slope; greater than 40% slope so that would mean 4 feet arise and 10 feet of run? Seems like the County is a little more orange than I would guess. Just another note, no reason to visit it.

Tracy Eriksen – I'm looking at four colors and your legend shows three.

John Small – That is scale on this map versus the scale of topography of the Palouse makes it hard.

Larry Cochran – That is why they say our yields are better because we have more surface area than what it shows.

John Small – This last one is the FEMA flood plains. In terms of ag viability, a lot of this as we are looking at the crop map in the riparian areas, the big impact would be the structures that are being covered under this. The question for you, are there observations that should be taken into special consideration for ag in areas that frequently get flooded, regardless of whether it is a 100-year flood?

These aren't flood insurance maps. They aren't related to ag practices but for the VSP it makes more sense to just talk about where there is flooding and whether that affects ag practices or whether it should affect ag practices. I'm not learned enough with that part of the ag in the County to know if that's something we need to make clearer.

Larry Cochran – This map looks like what I suggested for that other map.

Art Swannack – This map is a pretty good reference of actual fish and streams.

Nancy Belsby – Yes, this is a better one, to go back and look at Figure 3. That’s where we started? This map is much more accurate.

John Small – These are all the larger systems I think most of us identify as streams.

David Lange – They are actually full of water.

John Small – Generally year around.

Art Swannack – That wind erosion potential up there that red area looking at, I believe, are all pasture ground. Whether or not you have grazed it, when it is dry nothing is there.

John Small – The way it is mapped here is for the 100-year flood plain.

Mark Storey – FEMA is updating all of their maps as we speak. Is this data based on the new maps that were just draft published a couple of months ago? Or is it based on the older maps which were very inaccurate? They are hopefully going to be going final on them soon and it would be nice to upgrade and reflect the new maps.

John Small – This would be the older maps, I believe.

Ben Floyd – We got this from the Shoreline Master Program update. Do you have the data layer?

Mark Storey – I have a link and I actually have the data somewhere. They sent me a link so we have been checking what we could. Alan and Jerry both have these maps and so does engineering. It has been about 2 months since they put out the new stuff.

Ben Floyd – We should include it in our map atlas for sure. I guess the question is whether it has a place in VSP.

Mark Storey – FEMA gave us permission to use those maps as the best available data.

Ben Floyd – So that does raise a larger question than what I am mentioning here. What kind of ag impacts are there on frequently flooded areas? You have grazing activities that might create erosions, so if you do get a big flood then you could have more scour, more bank cutting could occur. That is kind obvious one for me.

Art Swannack – Some of those areas, guys don’t intentionally farm and they do fence off a pasture as a method; basically, they don’t feel like they can get the tractor when it is stuck. So, we ought to recognize that the baseline in those areas is active pasturing livestock or whatever other uses there are of those bottoms as the best method of agriculture. We should protect that baseline even if somebody is trying to come in and tell us that we can’t do that and we can tell them it is part of our VSP plan.

Maybe they have to manage it but this is the baseline for what was done in those areas. I was thinking about driving from Oakesdale to Tekoa and some of those bottoms in there where there is quite a bit of

rainfall. I'm sure it is all over Farmington, Garfield and that area has that. The bottom is too wet to farm so you are using it for livestock grazing to produce revenue off of that ground. You're not going to build a house in it.

John Small – The rest of those farms large enough to include critter pads. That is a huge issue is some of the floodplains.

Larry Cochran – Critter pads are just elevated areas. If there is a big valley wall to valley wall of flood, in order to get his livestock up out of the flooded area.

Art Swannack – We don't run into flooding like the Monroe, Washington, flood where you have to figure out how to get the boat to get to your house and how to ship the livestock to the top of the dyke so they can survive. We don't really run into that issue.

David Swannack – With our hills we already have our safety patch.

Tracy Eriksen – Is this where we get into a discussion about buffers? Or agricultural buffers?

John Small – When we were at the VSP workshop they were talking internally about what is the existing level of the riparian buffer around streams and wetlands and how do we make sure that that existing level of function as of July 2011 is either maintained or improved. I think the challenge is, if we are using a voluntary program and people don't want to be recorded and we don't want to know which neighbors are volunteering and which neighbors aren't, how are we going to measure that and show that progress?

There was nobody on that panel with a real strong remote sensing background, but I can tell you that satellite imagery is getting better every year. It is getting easier to do those measurements and that is where we are tending to think of instead of trying to record every easement and everyone who enrolls in the program you're in, or you're out. It might be easier to take the measurement of what things looked like in 2011 and just continue to do that every 5 years and see if we are making progress. But riparian buffers and riparian vegetation quality is going to be the nexus of all this discussion.

Art Swannack – But we are going into an area there that is actually the improvement of habitat versus a baseline discussion. If I was to ask what is the current buffers in 2011 around most area? I'd say up the point the guy can farm. In 2011, most farmers farmed within reason up to an area that was fairly near the edge of where they felt they could farm. I don't know that there were a lot of buffers in the county in 2011 and that is our baseline point.

The rest of it maintain and enhance ag while protecting the critical area and enhancing the critical area is an option and you go forward and you start, that is when we get into what buffers would NRCS and others recommend? But the baseline is most likely there aren't any and in some areas, you might consider a buffer as a pasture. That's what we were just talking about those areas that are wet. Yes, they are grazing those areas but it is most likely not an active stream.

John Small – And then it might be too wet for even a cow to get down in there.

Kim Weerts – You have to talk about the viability of the living river or stream that it is going to move anyway. So you may have some kind of buffer but over the long haul it is not going to stay. It is going to move.

John Small – Some of those streams are going to be much more dynamic than others. That does play a little bit into the farmer practices and the output if there is a huge sediment because of over tillage. Or something that is coming out that is going to cause that stream to move forth quickly, than if there wasn't a huge sediment coming down without water. We want to give the conservation districts and farmers a better understanding of what they can best be doing if they are interested in stewardship.

Mark Storey – I'm not going to dispute how to measure it but somehow or another we are going to have to figure out how things were in 2011. That is going to be the hardest part and I can't help very much with that but the County just did a 6-inch slide of the whole county in 2015, which is only four years removed from 2011. So I guess the question I have, is how much different would be the buffers and/or farming practices in four years and would that be a good way to help establish a point in time?

John Small – Or compare that with how things are in 2011. We can see that something happened here, and 99% of the County is going to be the critical area in the same condition it was in 2015, we could use the calculation more effectively. I don't know if the time frame but there is also, if they haven't already been executed is quantify the riparian cover and habitat. We get the elevation at the top and vegetation and the ground and we can compare the two and say that was grass. Then we impact the grass and use the computer to define what that shape of that corridor is in basically three dimension.

Mark Storey - Who is planning that?

John Small – DNR is the lead and you guys are not in a huge landslide risk so I think you will probably be towards the end but it varies statewide. I haven't been keeping track of it.

John Pearson – I need a little more definition of the word “buffer.” So, this is being thrown around as exclusion and I think we need to call it something like a change of practice or change of management or I don't know if we need to come with a different word or just use buffer. I don't like the word “buffer.”

John Small – I don't like it either because it means something really different in the critical area ordinance but I've also argued it should be vertical and not horizontal.

John Pearson – You could have a spray buffer around the city and those wouldn't need to be a regulatory buffer.

John Small – When I worked in Australia working with buffers a little more areas than this, but the science is pretty clear. The first couple of feet from the edge of the stream is pretty critical and so they just say to draw a line based on a map from the 70's and you can do this on this side and not this side.

I think we should get away from quantifying it and get more serious about qualifying about what is beneficial, and what is stewardship, what constitutes stewardship in the critical area and what constitutes responsible ag practices in conflict with the very best thing we can do with the stream but it still is ag practices. This would be a lot more flexible than what that distance is.

John Pearson – I'd like to incorporate if someone is going to grass a draw that is one of those feeds that doesn't actually have water but could potentially have some runoff that would catch sediment that wouldn't go into the river.

David Lange – My dad put in grass waterways in the 60's-70's and the farm program comes along and he said he had a grass waterway and the FSA and the NRCS says it isn't farm ground. So he was penalized for being a conservationist.

Jon Jones – I think we need to remember this is a voluntary program. If we make a recommendation and that is what we are doing is making recommendations, that doesn't mean the people have to do it. They are still subject to the agency laws. So we should try to make the best definition and the best choices we can. But it is still up to the individual to take our advice or not.

Ben Floyd – I think we could spend a lot of time on buffers but we are just at the beginning of this process. Let us think about it more and you think about it more, and we will talk about buffers or riparian areas and how they are managed throughout this whole process.

Larry Cochran – I just think it's worth pointing out that a lot of our water issues come from another state. Our Palouse River run that all feeds out of Idaho a lot of time the water, so we are fighting inches, not just our own. When the Palouse River floods most of that water came out of Idaho and not our own.

Ben Floyd – So we only focus on the things we have control over. That is my short answer.

David Lange – The farm program makes an interesting scenario. The closer you are to the creek the more valuable that is for ground to go into the farm program. So if you are talking buffers, the buffers are worth \$150 an acre. So, until you are ready to sign that contract for that buffer, the closer you farm to the creek the more ground you have to put into that program. The farm program is to blame too, in a fair bet.

Ben Floyd – There are not always the right incentives. So we can identify practices of things that can improve that but we are still dealing with a large system that we may not be able to change. We are going to transition into the second to the last topic before we get into the work plan outline. So we are going to talk about drainages and how we suggest, we have some ways that we can organize some information based on drainages. You have Figure 11 that correlates to this.

John Small – So, we are talking about the right unit to measure the protection between 2011 and future date every 5 years, potentially. We talked about watershed or sub basin scales realizing that the conservation districts have their own geographic breakdown of the County. Boundaries don't follow watershed boundaries and so it creates a complicated mix of different methods that are available to us.

Certainly what we are tending towards, most of the County drains to the Palouse although some of it drains to the Snake and then you get WRIA 56. But that's not going to be very meaningful in terms of measuring the water stewardship at a more local level. We are leaning at the moment and this might be hard to agree, is looking at a little bit finer scale of hydrologic level.

This is part of the USGS of watershed basins, but looking at some of these smaller basins partly because the critical areas that we are getting, we are going to get the most pressure on, the most interest is on streams and wetlands and these represent those smaller basins.

So we can see how well conservation measures are being implemented in a slightly more applied (inaudible) in the County but keep it generalized enough that we are not pointing the finger at one neighbor and raising another hand and creating a lot of animosity, nor having to compromise anyone's anonymity as to whether or not they are part of this VSP. This is a very reasonable side view of starting to look at what the baseline of 2011 and then move forward.

Again, we'd be looking at what is the condition of riparian vegetation, and I would argue we are not looking at what that 100 feet looks like, where is the riparian vegetation, how much is there in 2011, and then we will use a similar methodology to move forward. We may use 2015 in our baseline with better data, make some adjustments as to how we will interpret that was in 2011 based on 2015.

Then I mentioned earlier the resolution of the imagery that we get for free or Italian Rye. It just gets better and better every year and gets cheaper and cheaper as well. I have a lot of confidence as we move forward those tools will be available and enhanced to help us understand what these conditions and systems are and to measure some of the dynamics like Kim brought out.

If you have a real migrating stream systems, it will be very dynamic and suddenly will jump its banks and have no record of vegetation. That is something we can describe and analyze with the baseline analysis and say this is a geometrically dynamic breach, and the stream currently has a healthier vegetation but it's also has gentle migrations and goes all over the place. That is the baseline right now; it is over here by the cobwebs. Forty years ago it was over here in this meadow and it could be back there tomorrow.

So we have to be careful when we are characterizing that baseline condition to be clear about that broader picture but also responsive to looking at what is there on the ground and the riparian buffer and not trying to use an arbitrary distance and say it is 90% agriculture and 10% riparian. Our baseline is what is going on.

Ben Floyd – So if you look at those names the Lower Rock Creek, Upper Rock Creek, Pine Cree, Cottonwood Creek, Silver Creek, Palouse River, South Fork of the Palouse, Union Flat, Willow Creek-Palouse, Penawawa, do these seem like good systems in terms of organizing information? When you think about critical areas and also farming, crop size and that kind of thing, will this work for us to be able to characterize the critical areas? Do you think it is the right level of detail?

Art Swannack – I have one question before I take off. What do you do on those edges like if Negro Creek, Hangman Creek that are going outside of the County? Does there have to be consistency between those or is it all in our County?

John Small – I skipped a step. One of the reasons I would be using these nuances is because breaching the watersheds on the watershed plan would identify living factors, things that can be improved. So, one of the advantages of using a watershed base approach is to look at, okay, what conservation measures best address those particular factors?

So, Hangman as a whole, if it had a different suite of problems and a different suite of conservations measures to better protect those there is no reason that we would use the same structure and

recommendations and structure for the Palouse and Hangman. They will be all relatively simple because of the same topography and vegetation and dynamics. But it will allow us to, some of the areas have 303 listings for mostly temperature, fecal coliform and also a few hits for various chemicals.

So, if we want to be charging for these sub basins for something that is out there, because there is a problem there, it allows us to tailor the recommendations for stewardship around that specific issue in that specific basin without making a blanket determining recommendation, if that was something that is out of the ordinary for the rest of the County.

Art Swannack – I appreciate that, but I was thinking more of what the Spokane, Whitman County, and Prosser ground in both counties with the line in the middle of it. Does there have to be consistency in VSP on those two areas?

Ben Floyd – You would hope and I can tell you we will do everything we can to make sure that the Lincoln County VSP program which we are also working on, is consistent between Whitman and Lincoln. I would just say if you look at the issues of Negro Creek or the Hangman or whatever and what your practices are and how they may or may not contribute to that, then the measures are what we focus on that can help improve or protect the functions that are already there.

So, it really comes back to the functions. We still look at that in Negro Creek and this is the Whitman County portion of it and these are the likely potential things that could be done to protect and enhance and that is where we stop.

Larry Cochran – Spokane River keepers are suing DOE over Hangman Creek.

Art Swannack – In Stevens County there are some political issues on what legally you can adopt if you are not consistent with the adjacent counties under the Growth Management Act.

Ben Floyd – So, this one has about 16 different drainages.

Kim Weerts – If that is the case, then when there are improvements that are made, are they only counted for that drainage or is the improvement counted for the whole county?

Ben Floyd – Anything that happens as far as improvement in the County gets counted for the County but when you go to measure the improvement or you hypothesize what the benefit is, it would be characterized in terms of that drainage and then downstream drainages. So, Union Flat Creek and the Lower Palouse, for example. So, you would say particularly the water quality benefit. That is going to work its way down the stream, but you would characterize it based upon that (inaudible) affect.

John Small – Maybe the answer is different, the same question a little differently, if 13 out of 15 of the sub basins showed a marked improvement and two showed a slight decrease in buffer quality or some parameter, I think that the way I read the VSP, it would be based how the County is doing. The reason we want to subdivide this is so that we can make more specific recommendations, track in the more reasonable scale without getting down to the individual landowners scale and erase the anonymity of the programs that people are enrolled in.

Kim Weerts – But ultimately the County would get the credit because that is the way I read VSP also.

John Small – Yes, the County has to show it county-wide.).

David Swannack – So, going back to concentrated pieces, but you will take it as a county average when you are done.

John Small – Yes, at the end of every 5 years we will see what the County's score is. Is it 2011 plus X or 2011 minus X? That will be the determining factor as to whether or not VSP has been successful meeting the requirements of VSP.

John Pearson – In the discussion we had at the Farm Bureau, we talked about improvements on the watershed, labeled as part of the individual. Are we still going to get smaller than these or are they going to be multiple watersheds? Are we going to define watersheds? They still could be quite big. If you look at Union Flat, there are a lot of people at Union Flat.

Ben Floyd – We can go to that next level (inaudible) for implementation like enrollment. There might be, if you take that hydrological unit, you might break that up into 3-4 segments and you're going to have different emphasis depending upon precipitation and crop size and all of that but you could still maybe pull it up to that level.

John Pearson – Do you have to, I think I am jumping the gun, to implement this? It is still pretty much, it is still voluntary but you still have to get the word out.

Ben Floyd – You still have to get the word out. That is one of the things I was going to raise here. What else do we need to get started, involved in it, increase the education awareness of this effort? We can always have the smaller units. We can organize the information at a finer scale for implementation.

But there is some benefit for having it be a little rolled up in terms of communications outside the County. There may be the mapping used internally and then there is the map that is in the VSP work plan and it doesn't have to be the same exact map. It can be a break out in terms of implementation. I think we can figure that out I don't think it is bad to start raising those questions.

Mark Storey – I can't imagine a smaller or larger unit than what you are showing that makes sense.

Ben Floyd – We felt the same way.

Mark Storey – The only one that is really drawn out is Union Flat Creek is very wrong.

John Small – In terms of implementation it is in two different conservation districts.

David Lange – You think of Union Flat Creek and it buffers itself very well for miles. I can only think of a couple instances where there is year around creeks that are farmed right to the border. One is between Colfax and Pullman. Spring Flat is one of the few creeks that really doesn't have any riparian vegetation. On the South Palouse River is well vegetated, the Dry Creek Road and Garfield has tough spots but that would be areas for improvement. From the group's standpoint what are those creeks doing? They are moving water. Does the creek between Colfax and Pullman show erosion?

Jon Jones – I think the sediment, you could measure erosion with that. The one of the things streams do is they move sediment. That is what they do naturally.

David Lange – Tom, is your pasture getting taller?

Tom Kammerzell – It really is, from that first pasture that I used to have all the way to town, it is grass and trees all the rest of the way. From there on, very little.

Nancy Hoobler –Above where Tom’s used to be is pasture for a couple of miles then it goes to crop land and watching that, if it was moving they would have lost a lot of that crop land.

David Lange – They have a great petri dish out here behind us in the flood control. You’d think it would just be full of dirt drifts like snow drifts from the floods and the sediment drop.

Jon Jones – It moves fast enough to carry the sediment through. But there is a lot of sediment that goes through there. The stream is trying to meander through those ag grounds and that is where it picks up the sediment. It doesn’t pick it up from the fields especially.

David Lange – So, that is my beef between Colfax and Albion, natural vegetation and very little livestock and so in the winter time it ices up and freezes and it will rip out huge chunks of soil on that thing. So, it is the same thing. Just because it is all natural doesn’t mean it is not going to erode.

Ben Floyd – You’re right, erosion is a natural process. It is whether we are doing things to reduce that erosion or increase it. So, it is 5:15, we had this work plan outline on our agendas and I’m feeling that I am going to let it go by again. You have the outline, you can see how we organize the information, and hopefully, as we talk about the different topics I would use that outline as a reference, to see where that information is going to be placed. Some of the details are going to go in the appendices, another places it will be we were talking about baseline conditions and ag practices and conservation measures, all that is going to get folded into that plan.

We have covered a lot of information today, good conversation, I appreciate your attentiveness. So we have another meeting in July and then we take off August and pick back up in September. At the July meeting we are going to take some of these concepts that we discussed today and we are going to put them into a more local context.

Whether it is John Pearson’s farm or the upper part of Union Flat or Rebel Flat or whatever we will work with the Planning and Public Works Staff to figure out a geographic area and we will walk through that in more detail. In the July meeting we can go back to a 2-hour meeting so it will be from 3-5 again. Then when we pick up in September. We are going to have draft elements of the work plan and will start building this document through the rest of the year.

I would like to know if there are 6 members of the work group or less, which means we don’t have a quorum, we don’t have a meeting, who would work with us to develop this plan over the summer. It doesn’t mean that you have to spend a lot of time. I know this is a busy time for you but we’d like to have a sounding board where we can share some thoughts.

Is there anyone that would be willing to participate up to a couple of hours a month in July, August and maybe a little bit in September?

David Lange – I nominate Jon and Kim.

Ben Floyd – No, you have to nominate yourself so it looks like you are in.

Mark Storey – Can I nominate Alan Thomson?

Ben Floyd – Alan Thomson is a given. So that's two.

Nancy Belsby – I'd like to ask Art if he would do it.

Ben Floyd – John Pearson just got added on.

Tracy Eriksen – How about Jon Jones?

Ben Floyd – If you want to be involved, send us an email and we will include you. We may do this in smaller groups. We are still trying to figure this out.

Mark Storey – I'm not part of the group but I'd be happy to participate, if I can help.

Ben Floyd – So, here is the last thing I want to talk about. I do want to talk about this at the July meeting. Think about enrollment in VSP. Once we figure out the work plan, you know people who are involved in farming practices that could improve their operations. You know people that are already doing a lot of good things but don't know much about VSP. How do we get those individuals engaged in this process? When do we do it and how do we do it? That is something I want you to think about and I want your ideas.

I'm just giving you a heads up and we will go around the table and everybody has to share at least one idea on how they would suggest we go about this outreach at the next meeting. This will be a 30-40 minute discussion. We don't have to discuss it now. How can we increase participation? Who do we get involved and how do we get involved? I would like to thank Vivian and John for their great work in preparing for this meeting. Lots of good discussion.

**Adjourned – 5:20 p.m.**