

**WHITMAN COUNTY  
VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP  
Meeting  
January 5, 2017  
BOCC Chambers**

**MEMBERS:**

Alan Thomson	Art Swannack (Absent)
Jeff Pittmann	Joan Folwell
Jon Jones	Kim Weerts
Nancy Belsby (Absent)	David Lange (Absent)
David Swannack	John Pearson
Larry Cochran	Tracy Eriksen

**Phone:** John Stuhlmiller, VSP Member; John Small, Anchor QEA; Nora Schlenker, Anchor QEA; Jack Meyer, DOE; Evan Sheffels, Farm Bureau.

**Audience:** Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA; Vivian Erickson, Anchor QEA; Brian Bell, Whitman Conservation District; Brad Johnson, Palouse Conservation District; Don Brigham, Clarkston; Gary Luft, Whitman Conservation District; Elinor Huber, Clerk

**3:05 p.m.** – Ben Floyd – Let’s walk through the agenda. We are going to talk today about some of the things that we heard from you about the work plan. Some of the objectives that we had to prepare this document. Then we will spend time going over the work plan; because we sent that out to you just last week we don’t expect that you had time to go over the document and have comments for us today.

So, we will talk about the work plan section by section and focus on the new content where we did additional work after we talked with you, including the conservation strategies, goals and benchmarks. We also need to talk about implementation; how that is going to work. If you have gotten into the implementation section which is Section 6, you will notice that there is discussion with the work group. Who is going to be the lead here and the lead there? We want to make sure we go through that.

We also want to step away from content and talk about the layout. We sent out the layout version as well as the actual report version that has the line numbers and so we can track the comment. We want to get your ideas about the general layout of the document and then we will end by talking about the next steps.

Is there anything else you want to make sure we cover under today’s agenda? Okay. We will have snacks delivered shortly.

Work Plan Objectives. We went with this from the group, something that in Volume 1 was easy to read. So, focus on an end-user. Either the producer that might get this program or a member of the public that might want to know what is going on. Something that they could quickly read and understand.

Avoid tech-talk. I’d be interested to see how you think we did on that because we may think that we are not talking technical and you may tell us this still sounds like a bunch of tech talk. This is one we really want you to think about. How people would read this and give us feedback on that. We also tried our best to not be too directive. Make sure we keep things open, keep things as options that there is a lot of flexibility in this program.

There were a bunch of things we discussed generally but didn't get specific on. We call those the fuzzy elements so we tried to define those. For instance, the whole goals and objectives in performance measures, the measurable benchmarks. We spent a lot of time working on that. We tried to define some of those program elements more specifically so that we could talk about how those might or might not work. Is there anything that I didn't cover?

Let's go through a quick overview. Did anybody from the work group participate in the conference call yesterday with the state technical panel for VSP? I don't know if you get those notices. Okay, good. This will be new information for you. We will show you a quick PowerPoint presentation that we shared. We want to remind you just what is in this document.

Just as a reminder, we have a two volume approach. What you have here is Volume 1. It is the user friendly version and you've got the report version but it is designed to read like the prettier version. So, two volumes. There is going to be another 150 pages of supporting information, maps, and more detailed information that will be in Volume 2.

Volume 1, user friendly, introduction to VSP, Whitman County regional setting, introduction to critical areas and functions. So that all this terminology we have definitions of what we are talking about. Agricultural viability and what that means in Whitman County, how that works regionally as well as at the individual producer level, and then the protection enhancement strategies. I like calling that the toolbox. What are the tools we are going to use to protect critical areas, what are the tools we are going to use to voluntarily enhance where people are interested in doing that?

Then goals and benchmarks and a discussion about implementation. One thing that you don't have that is under development. We are also going to include with Volume 1 a VSP check list or self-assessment so that would be an even shorter version. So, you don't have the checklist for self-assessment but you will at a future version. Probably in the next round of this we will include that as well, or we might send it out as a separate document and you can comment and we will put it together in one document. That is Volume 1.

Volume 2 is the technical assent appendices. This is really more focused on whoever or whomever you designate to be the implementers of the document and it has an implementation strategy. It will have more detail about how you actually track participation and performance as well as ways to monitor and measure and adapt the program to make sure it meets the performance requirements.

Then there is also a bunch of detailed baseline information. In this document we talk about grazing management measures. In the technical appendix, it will have a page and a half about what that means. A lot of those terms we still have to have the backup and we have on the phone, Kelly McClain from Department of Ag and John Stuhlmiller from the advisory committee and Farm Bureau.

Yesterday we heard from the technical panel at this conference call that the second volume is really important for them to see. How what we are proposing in the plan is going to protect critical areas and that there is a real clear linkage to what the way the critical areas are now, and how this plan is going to be protective of them. If we are not going to have our big monitoring program, and we don't expect that we will because we don't think the funds will be there for it, then we have to demonstrate how other ways that we monitor progress are really protective of critical areas.

So Volume 2 is really important as well. They are going to want to see the baseline conditions, enhancement strategies, the conservation practice benefits and that demonstration of how we are protecting the critical areas.

Vivian Erickson - I'd like to add that we have been absorbing a lot of information in the past work group meetings and pulling together this draft. We were trying to balance between making it a very user friendly document as well as incorporating all of the information we have learned from the work group over the past several months. So, the draft that you have now is trying to work through all that information, and create a simplified story out of it. So, if you don't see something in here this is your opportunity to make sure we capture all that, because it was probably in there over the past months and taken out while we were putting this first draft together. Which ones that are more appropriate for that volume 2.

Ben Floyd – So, we need your help in dividing this information between the two. We could go through this. Maybe we should just go to the document and go through the first three sections and tag team back and forth between the presentation and the report. So we will walk through from the beginning and share what we have.

Vivian Erickson – In the email we sent out last week, there were two versions. One was titled the report version and that has this whole content with the numbers on the side. That is the version where we receive comments. Then we also want, also wanted to show you what (inaudible) we have section 24 in the other version. When we are doing comments on the report we are asking that you do it on the report lay out version.

We've got the introduction section starting off with the definition of VSP and frequently asked questions. One of the things that we struggle with is, what does voluntary mean? It is a very tricky thing to wrap your head around so starting off with what does voluntary participation mean, what is the farm stewardship plan, baseline conditions uniquely for VSP too, because it is specifically set on July 2011 date to make it clear to where that statute comes from.

Then the protection versus enhancements goals and benchmarks that the RCW defines for us. As well as highlighting that we've got this other leg of maintaining agricultural viability. So, getting all of those questions addressed up front in the document so that the readers have a good foundation to move forward in the document.

For frequently asked questions, I think that one question that we can start with is, does the work group feel that these questions that we have highlighted here answer some of those questions? If you have ideas on additional questions that would be helpful here, please let us know.

What is the Voluntary Stewardship Program, voluntary participation? Laying it out right up front that ag landowners are not required to do anything under VSP. Critical areas on ag land are managed under VSP and not critical area ordinances. Other non-ag land uses in the County are managed under critical area ordinances for VSP and ag uses. If you want to participate, you can and if you don't, you don't.

Moving on from that to what is the farm stewardship plan? It is a tool developed by this work group to help us track participation ideas to you as well for ag producers to identify the presence of critical areas on their property and work with the technical assistance provider to identify practices that they can implement on their property that would protect critical areas and as well as promote ag viability.

Tracy Eriksen – The question I have with what you have said so far and what I have read in this document, how is this work going into help Alan and the Commissioners to deal with critical areas? Landlords don't have to do anything.

Ben Floyd – First of all, Alan and the Commissioners have empowered this group and the state legislature has empowered this work group that has been set up by the County to take care of the agricultural related impacts to critical areas within the County to protect the functions and values that exist. So they have basically delegated authority to this group to develop this work plan and oversee its implementation.

Tracy Eriksen – I see here we have nothing that requires anybody to do anything.

Ben Floyd – Right, at an individual level. However, if you go down a bit farther, is what happens we have different checklists. We have one that says that what happens if VSP fails? In other words, no one has to do anything but if we don't get participation, the program fails and it goes back to Alan and it becomes regulatory.

Larry Cochran – Is there anything in here that says we are not protecting our critical areas?

Ben Floyd – No, in fact we make the case that you are doing a lot of things to protect and in many cases enhance critical areas.

Larry Cochran – And we've got that in there, though.

Ben Floyd – Yes, we do. That is in Section 4.

Larry Cochran – So, if we just keep doing what we are doing and we are okay?

Ben Floyd – I think you can say that but you have to document it so we have some ways on how we document it. That is the crux of what this program is all about is to be able to demonstrate that we are protecting critical areas. There are a lot of measures we have identified that are in place. There are a lot more going on that we don't know about because it didn't happen through a conservation district or an NRCS program, it was just individuals doing things on their own.

It may not be exactly what NRCS field office technical guide practice says you should do, but it's protecting and enhancing resources and so there is a lot of stuff that is happening that we still need to document and that is one of the challenges. Maybe what I am hearing is that the way that is written right now almost at the beginning says, "I don't have to do anything, why do I care about this?"

Tracy Eriksen – Right, that is what I got out of it.

Ben Floyd – So maybe we need to say, "You are not required to do this, but we are encouraging all producers to participate in VSP formally or informally." Document their practices, share what they are doing to protect the environment. Maybe put more of a positive inviting tone to it as opposed to it you don't need to do anything.

Tracy Eriksen – The second part of that is you'd better let them know, I didn't know that, but it will fall back on the County if it isn't successful.

Ben Floyd – Maybe we should move it around a little and rephrase the questions.

Tracy Eriksen – The time frame involved here is?

Ben Floyd – Ten years. So, there is a 5 and a 10-year time frame.

Jon Jones – Refresh my memory, we talked about who was going to document the changes. There is going to be an office somewhere in the County that will take sign-ups and are we going to get to that?

Ben Floyd – We have and we've not gotten a direction from this group yet on what you want so that is something we are hoping to get.

Jeff Pittmann – Is there going to be funding for this (inaudible) payment like what you put for anything else. Is it just voluntary?

Ben Floyd – All of those existing funding sources, farm bill, money through conservation commission, other RCPP program that has some funding, I think there is a desire to try and secure additional funding, I think the Farm Bureau will continue to look for funding to support implementation of this plan. You can take credit for all of those other sources as well.

Alan Thomson – It seems to me the critical question of who is implementing this needs to be up front somewhere. That is missing right now. I know we haven't designated anybody but that is kind of an important point there. Otherwise, I'm with Tracy, it seems to be working fine, let's carry on.

Ben Floyd – There is some truth to that. I'm sure there are opportunities to improve. I've seen some of the opportunities around the County but I would say those practices have largely been in place probably since 2011 or those conditions, maybe. We've talked about how some people are not going to change no matter what but they will ride on the coattails of the rest of you that will make changes or demonstrate how you are protecting. How much things have to change based upon VSP? I think that is an open question.

Alan Thomson - But it has to be that demonstration some sort of evidence that we can refer to to figure out are we doing good or bad?

Ben Floyd – It is the baseline conditions that we are putting together really describes what the functions are and where you've got some impairment and functioning conditions and it varies across the County.

Kim Weerts – I see this more as a going hand-in-hand with all the programs that we already have. Any program that you are in, you sign up for is theoretically to enhance what you are doing in your land, and basically VSP would ride on the coattails of each person who signs up for each program.

Larry Cochran – Documentation is going to be the big thing.

Ben Floyd – Documentation is big. We have talked about documentation for someone who doesn't sign up for a program, but just makes some changes. Improve water supply for cattle so that they have that and not necessarily going directly to the stream to get water.

Kim Weerts – That is why you need to buy in not just put it all on the CD's but you need to buy in the local Farm Bureau, the local Cattlemen's Association, some potentially larger groups in the area that can help document what their people are doing, because they are talking about that in their meetings. They are doing tours of their own so I think it has to be a collaborative effort.

Ben Floyd – And you said we need to come up with that information and help make that happen.

Alan Thomson – There needs to be an office or a person and then coming up with the results. Just like I am the person in charge of the code. It is me that makes the determination. So who will be making the determination here?

Ben Floyd – Not the County Commissioners or the Planner. This work group is going to be recommending and asking someone to take that role. Whoever gets asked to do that there will be, we believe, some funding to at least support the first part of implementation. Who you are comfortable with and who you think is best suited to do that, is one of the things you need to tell us.

I think right now, let's go through the rest of the plan and get an idea and all of us on the same page. I like these comments and questions but I'm not going to let us delve into one thing and spend all the time on it right now. We'll keep going through the overview and then come back to hit all these questions.

Our February meeting will be a 3-hour meeting starting at 2:00 p.m. and spend more time on this, with more snacks.

Vivian Erickson – Those were great comments and as we walk through this is helpful. We did send out a comment form for you to fill out to help us compile a list of comments for our February meeting.

David Swannack – I have one partially filled out in the pickup right now. I forgot it. Some of these questions are already on that.

Vivian Erickson – If we could have your comments by January 20<sup>th</sup> so we can have a plan on how to approach them as a group for the February meeting.

Joan Folwell – I read (inaudible), I think it flows well and the language says exactly what it means. I love the question format instead of just listing the components. You are posing questions so the person reads the question and it makes them relate the information that they are getting in the answer. I think you have done an incredible job.

Ben Floyd – Thank you. We appreciate that feedback. I want to introduce Laura Floyd, my wife who provided the snacks.

We are going to have to track how we perform in this program. When we get into that we will talk about participation is the way we see the main way you track and then translate that with participation. Those practices and measures that are implemented into here is what we think that does for protecting and enhancing critical areas and we describe it that way. I would just say when we get into the goals and measurable benchmarks let's talk about that more in detail and see what you think how that is going to work.

Yes, people will have to self-report and know that they should be sharing this information and have confidence that it will be confidential that whoever pulls that information is going to roll it up to a county wide level so there won't be any names. It has to be confidential just like other programs that exist. We can find out what practices are happening in the County, but we have no idea whose property it is when we get the data from NRCS.

David Swannack - I look at that as average or generic. Tracy has more experience than me. I was wondering why farmers are going to be documenting since the conservation districts have an idea already.

Ben Floyd – So, I wouldn't say that farmers necessarily are going to be self-reporting like filling out a report like a survey although that could be a method. Whoever is going to be the lead will be responsible for documenting it. How that works, I assume it works the same way it is already working.

Joan Folwell – You can also document something like water quality by measuring certain elements in the streams, and I know Palouse CD has a program that is going on now. So, rather than just doing individual producers that will look at the watershed or part of the watershed.

Ben Floyd – So, when you get into Section 5 you will see that there are goals, performance-measurable benchmarks and then indicators which are those data sources you are talking about. In some places like on the North Fork of the Palouse we may have a program where we can actually use a physical measurement. Other places we don't have that same information so what do we do there?

Larry Cochran – We need a clearing house for everybody to put everything into.

Jon Jones – It becomes even more important to have folks gather the information and make sure all the information is there. It is not just sitting in an office waiting for information to come. They need to call the cattlemen, the wheat growers, the CD's unless it is a CD itself and compile the information.

Ben Floyd – It is going to be a big job. What is being documented right now is just a small part of what is actually happening. How do you get that information when someone does it on their own, self-funds an improvement or just works with a private industry rep and does a few things on their property and they know about it but no one else knows about it and can take credit for it?

Larry Cochran – Some of that is there are some things out there that nobody wants anybody to know about. They are good things but may not meet specifications and may not meet total,

Jon Jones – I think that is in the plan if a farmer wants to put in strips on his place, strip farming, and the strips don't meet the NRCS specs, they miss it by 10 feet, each strip. He's not getting paid for it so, he probably, it is a benefit, this group should get credit for it.

Ben Floyd – Absolutely, the County should get credit for that improvement.

Jon Jones – I don't see why a farmer wouldn't say that I'm doing something good. I don't agree with the NRCS text just because I missed them by this much doesn't mean I shouldn't get zero credit for that or somebody should.

Larry Cochran - So we're having that problem with Ecology right now. We've got (inaudible) guys doing some things on their own, no money taken, doesn't meet specs, doing good things but doesn't quite meet Ecology's standards and they are still getting in trouble.

Kim Weerts – I'm not sure it is going to be as difficult as we think it is. I think it will be a lot of work but we have to remember that we go back to July 22, 2011, and if you look at the CD's and the programs that they are doing and FSA and NRCS, there are always people doing things. Those are all enhancements. All we have to do is meet that and show a progress.

I think tracking it might be a little more difficult but I think if you educate people and it is up to the smaller groups where people trust. If those groups are educating their members and the people who trust them and tell them that all we want to know is what you have done, no one is going to tell you have to do more.

Ben Floyd – That is through a regulatory program, not this. You used the word, "trust," several times. That is what we want to do. We want to tap in to those trust relationships and use those for communications because then we will get the information. I think if you try to do it in a different way without building that trust, I don't think you will get that information as easily.

Vivian Erickson – So, we will go through the rest of Chapter 1. We have provided a brief background of purpose going back to the resolution adopted by the County on why the County opted into VSP. Making sure we cover the fact that this work group meets the criteria as described in the RCW, by meeting the elements defined as required in the work plan in a slightly more digestible set of bullets that what is in the RCW. Then roles and responsibilities that we have for the work plan development is a little bit different for the implementation of the work plan which we talk about in Section 6.

For Section 2, we just wanted to set the regional setting for what is going on in the County. We talked about our water resources and our precipitation profile.

Ben Floyd – Does anyone on the phone have any comment? Okay.

Vivian Erickson – For this section we have a lot of the maps that you have already seen that we developed making sure we are characterizing the County in a way that speaks to the ag community. So, we have our three WRIA's and a precipitation code from 8-14 inches in the southwest corner to 22 inches along the eastern parts of the County. Our soils and terrain where we have our soils and scabland and the Snake canyon. Land use and land cover are all agriculture. We have our categories in dry land cereals and legumes and other crops, irrigated and range. Also, highlighting here that soil erosion is a major resource concern in the County.

We also wanted to talk here about what we have heard through the work group where there has been changes in practices that are occurring in the County to manage moisture and nutrient in the soil. Then we go into what the percentage of types of ag activities in the County.

Ben Floyd – You guys have hogs and pigs in the County? Good. We want to make sure that we get that clear.

Vivian Erickson – So there are 33% in range and a small percent of irrigated lands. The economic value of ag in the County, either hogs or pigs.



Ben Floyd – Do you have a preference as to what you want them to be referred to, hogs or pigs?

Jon Jones – Hogs is probably more acceptable.

John Pearson – We are the highest producer for hogs in the County?

Ben Floyd – Nora, can you confirm this data?

Nora Schlenker – The data says, “Hogs and Pigs.” Your expertise is more reliable in that category.

David Swannack – Just to say hogs and pigs, one is breeding stock and the other one is for slaughter. If we are going to get down to worrying about it just put, hogs and pigs down there and it covers it.

Vivian Erickson - After framing the ag economic value in the County, we want to introduce what critical areas are in the document. We talked about and we noticed that these acronyms might not be familiar to the ag folks so we created these icons that we can keep putting in the document. Just briefly providing a description of our critical areas and for geologic hazard areas as we discussed. The landslide seismic concerns are still under the purview of the County’s critical area codes as it pertains to structures. So the work plan is focusing on erosion where it intersects with a lot of the ag use in the County.

Ben Floyd – Let’s just confirm that assumption. So, I came into this process with the orientation that building permits for barns, other kinds of out buildings that might be used for ag. Okay. Do you think that if a barn is going to be built next to a wetland or a stream that it should go through the traditional building permit process and also conditions associated with that that might come related to a critical area?

Alan Thomson – There is no exception to farming activity when we are talking about a building. It goes through the planning department and the building department.

Ben Floyd – I just heard other planners from other counties that have said that is an ag activity so I think VSP should cover that. Maybe it could but it seems to me it is already an established regulation process. So right now we say that building permits and conditions for building structures go through the traditional permitting and regulatory process. I just wanted to verify that you are comfortable with that. That is this says right now.

Alan Thomson – Agricultural buildings are ag exempt. If it is purely for ag purposes only, it is exempt from zoning but not exempt from critical area ordinances. I don’t have a permit that you need to go through but if there is a critical area nearby, yes. That is part of the building permit application, as well. We have to sign off on the building permit and there are categories in there for critical areas. So, if there is a wetland and you are building within 200 feet you are subject to the County’s Critical Area Ordinance.

John Pearson – Is that to protect the floodplain or the building?

Alan Thomson – It is both. Yes, to protect the floodplain and the building. It is to protect the critical areas.

Ben Floyd – So that is one distinct, that is an ag activity the structural part of this that is currently regulated under the County’s Critical Areas Code. Does anyone think it shouldn’t stay that way?

Alan Thomson – It depends on what you have to do. It's either you have to abide by some sort of setback to a critical area or not. I would not be in favor of you building in a floodplain just because you are an agricultural operator, if you are in or within 200 feet of the critical area. The 200 feet is something that has been established over time and that requires an evaluation of what kind of wetland this is.

So, a wetland specialist has to go out there and identify it. The buffer may be 50 feet but just because you are in that 200 feet we have to make the effort to look at what it is. It may not even be a wetland but we have to find that out.

Ben Floyd – Okay, so we have confirmed that.

Vivian Erickson – So, Section 3, we talk about the baseline and existing conditions for potential critical areas and where they intersect with ag activities, highlighting the fact that the maps we are using are for planning purposes only. It tells the story of how ag activities are intersecting with critical areas, however, actual critical areas presence is determined on a case-by-case basis through farm stewardship planning.

Also noting that historic conditions, we are not going back to pre-development conditions here for baseline, July 2011, and illustrating the fact that what the historic conditions were in the County where we had a lot of the Palouse Prairie in the area and currently we have less than 1% of the Prairie remaining.

Joan Folwell – That is a picture of my pond. (Inaudible). This was in the very early stages and we have been doing (inaudible) for ten years.

Vivian Erickson – So, establishing the baseline conditions we go through some of the data sources that we relied upon. Also, noting that VSP applies to privately owned ag lands only and we are not addressing any sort of leased lands for grazing activities or any other ag activities on public lands. Generally, providing an overview that our critical areas intersection with non-ag lands are pretty small county-wide, aside from water erosion hazard areas. You can see that most of them fall within 3% or less intersection. However, on the flip side, because 94% of the County is in agricultural use most of WC critical areas are within agriculture.

Alan Thomson – How do you verify this 1,815 acres critical aquifer recharge? This mysterious CARA.

Ben Floyd – If you add up all the Group A water systems throughout the County. That's like the City of Colfax water system, Pullman, they all have wells and they all have wellhead protection areas that are associated with them. The 10-year time of travel for a contaminate potentially reaching that aquifer. I know it is voodoo science but it is what we got. We also qualify that the aquifer recharge is not very well understood in the Palouse Basin and where the recharge actually occurs is not understood. But this is our existing information and that map shows you that 1800 acres, if you add them up in aggregate.

Alan Thomson – So, then with Pullman's wellhead protection is they would be within the City of Pullman which is not in the agricultural lands.

Vivian Erickson – We (inaudible) so the extent of the protection areas go outside of the city limits so those acres are just the areas that extend. (inaudible)

Alan Thomson – I know that Colfax has a well, but it is way outside the city in the ag land.

Ben Floyd – You have seen all this information. We showed you all this in the power point presentations, now it is just text with the tables. Same information.

Vivian Erickson – For the critical area streams that are occurring within the County, we noted the length of unknown streams which was all the spider webs, tiny light blue streams that people have houses on. We note that the miles that are mapped within the County but we did qualify that based on a lot of the aerial photography imagery that we looked at are largely dry and not intermittent waterways. It is still accounted for but it is not, it is not really focused on highly accepted documents. But we still discuss it.

Ben Floyd – The same with game species. So, you got priority habitat and species data base for the State shows deer and chucker habitat over 75% of the County. It shows cultivated land as well as draws and everything is all included in that because there is migration and other things that are happening. But this critical area, Alan doesn't tell them they can't build because they have deer next to their house. The deer move around and they are flexible. We also backed out those game species habitat areas.

Vivian Erickson – We have about 600,000 acres of deer habitat which would which would (inaudible) 40%-70% intersects, so when we take out bird game species it is more of (inaudible).

Ben Floyd – So, what is left is like threatened habitat, species like cliffs and bluffs, and prairie and the giant Palouse earthworm. Has anyone seen one of those earthworms?

Larry Cochran – If I had seen one I wouldn't tell you.

Ben Floyd – Good point, they don't exist. We don't have those around here.

Vivian Erickson – Then we did half-page for each of the critical areas to help characterize what are the intersects? Typically where do they exist in the County? Where did they intersect with agricultural land? We have our critical areas (inaudible) to go with it to illustrate the composition in the County.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat conservation areas, we discussed into two categories, one with the stream and riparian vegetation and the other with the priority habitat species. Noting here that the game species are being the numbers that (inaudible) and also highlighting that a lot of species are compatible with land uses. We did include the mapping for our game species which under DFW it is defined as species of recreational commercial and (inaudible) which includes the mule deer, the chucker, elk, moose, white tail deer and (inaudible).

Ben Floyd – Have you seen many moose in the County? It is showing up there just off of Hangman's Creek.

Joan Folwell – We had one by the pond for over a week last summer.

Jon Jones – Yes, at my place, too.

John Pearson – Is there no white tail deer habitat?

Vivian Erickson – There is some up here.

Ben Floyd – So, maybe critical white tail habitat? That’s a question. The mule deer, this is also showing migration. So mule deer will come down and go along the river and then they head back up north. White tail deer tend to be more, maybe stick around the same area and migrate the same way.

Vivian Erickson – Frequently flooded areas, critical aquifer recharge areas, also qualifying that this is the data that the CARA’s in the County are not well documented or are understood but we’ve got the Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee to help us.

Ben Floyd – When this new information comes available we will consider it through adaptive management in the work plan. You may actually be recharging aquifers in this County that are being used by Adams County. A lot of the basalt recharge happens from here and east or north and so CARAs is not a big deal in many ways for this VSP program but we have to document it and explain why that is the case. We provide a little information but we don’t really say too much about it.

Larry Cochran – It would have been 20 years since that group tried to have it declared a sole source aquifer?

Ben Floyd – Yes.

Vivian Erickson – We also talk about it in the next section the key critical area functions for each of these critical areas so that is how we are tying a lot of goals and benchmarks to the key functions that these critical areas provide. We have our geological GHAs, geo-hazard areas focusing on erosion and this was a point that we wanted to check with Alan and the work group on a lot of those structures are covered under the building permit and the (inaudible) contract.

The top map here is our water erosion potential map and then the bottom one shows erosion sensibility map. Key critical area functions and values. We discussed this as a work group at the last meeting where we talked about we have our five critical areas but what is the key function that those critical areas are providing. We identified the four key functions, water quality, hydrology, soil health, and habitat.

Ben Floyd – John has a technical background, others of you may have experience with some of these different critical areas or components of it. So as you review this information if you have questions or something doesn’t make sense, or you think we may have missed a key function under water quality, hydrology, soil health or habitat, we want to hear about that.

We are also expecting similar input from conservations district folks as well as the state agencies that are participating in this process. That is ultimately what the tech panel focuses in on, so they will be looking to make sure the detail behind it demonstrates how we are documenting and protecting the functions through the measures that are being implemented.

John Small – One question I would have for the work group is about soil health. Understanding the soils in the Palouse are quite deep and soil loss is not really the great danger to agricultural viability. Any comments you have to help define the functions and values around soil health that affect ag viability. If you see things that are missing, please note those because I think we are trying to understand not just what are the impacts of that soil ending up in wetlands and waterways but also how are you managing your resources in order to protect the long term ag viability?

Jon Jones – John, I think there is a big difference between soil loss and soil health. Maybe we could make that distinction somewhere. You can have a lot of soil loss and still have good soil health.

John Small – That is unique to your region. That is something we need help to develop and understand some better metrics.

Jon Jones – The tour that we took back in the Dakotas, it showed 2 feet of soil. After the 2 feet of soil they were done farming and they could see in one storm where they were losing half of their livelihood in one storm. In the Palouse we don't have that part.

David Swannack – The viable part of the Palouse is 40% of what it was at the beginning.

Larry Cochran – The problem that we have is the mixing of our soils. The clay is starting to mix with our good soils and creating,

Tracy Eriksen – Making different layers of soil so the bad soil is on top now covering up the good soil. That is unique to the Palouse.

Ben Floyd – So, clay is coming to the surface or is it when you cultivate and work your way down you get into the clay and then you when you till it,

Larry Cochran – The clay is moving in and covering up the good soil.

Tracy Eriksen – The productivity of that soil becomes a worse soil. So, you have a layer of clay and a layer of loam and another layer of clay.

John Pearson – I agree that soil health is (inaudible). If soil moves on your farm from one strip to another because you strip farm, I don't think that is the responsibility of this group if it doesn't leave the farm.

Tracy Eriksen – I am 100% behind soil health. I think we've got a real issue in this County.

John Pearson – I don't think unless it leaves the farm, it might blow somewhere. We are crossing the line here, I think.

Tracy Eriksen – From a regulatory standpoint it has to stay on the farm, in terms of what I see out here, we are destroying our ground pretty fast.

John Pearson – I agree with you but I don't think it is this group's,

Tracy Eriksen – I agree.

Ben Floyd – I'll challenge you on that because in our critical area protection we have ag viability. We are not just, even though we spent 90% of our time talking about critical area protection, we have ag viability that we have to care about as well. So, soil health may be primary under ag viability and it may be an issue for you even if things are moving on your farm but your overall productivity is dropping down.

John Pearson – I'll agree with that but I think we won't get any buy in from the producers if we go around and tell them that they have to no-till or,

Ben Floyd – So you are making a leap there. I didn't say anything about you,

John Pearson – You've got conventional problems with the soil and no-till, in my opinion, unless you plow up hill.

Kim Weerts – I agree with John. I think it has to be very carefully worded because obviously one of the groups that VSP will focus on are the conventional farmers. You want them to look at alternatives and that is what, but you have to be very careful how you present it. You want them to sign in.

Alan Thomson – If there are drainages on your farm and the erosion gets into the drainages then its downhill and goes to other drainages and you've got a water quality issue. So, if it stays on the farm, I am in agreement with you but if there are drainages present, it might not stay on the farm and then it becomes an issue.

Tracy Eriksen – Wait until spring. Wait until it warms up. This is going to be a bad year.

Ben Floyd – For erosion?

Larry Cochran – My neighbors, we told him there was a concrete slab out behind his barn and he said there was no way it could ever be. We said there is, and we took our excavator over there and dug down and there was a concrete slab behind that barn. There was about 5 feet of soil that has moved into that area over the last 50 years.

Joan Folwell – Would you be mixing apples and oranges by adding to that list farm profitability in the way of higher yield from less input of better soil health?

Ben Floyd – It may be this is more the critical areas functions and values discussion. But in the ag viability we do talk about that.

John Small – I think that has been very helpful ideas that the work group are providing on the work plan. That is an area I feel we could really use your expertise.

Larry Cochran – The soil has to (inaudible) situations. You don't get changes immediately overnight.

Ben Floyd – I want to go back to what Kim said. So how do we handle this carefully? Do we just basically touch on it and then the implementers really handle the communication and we don't say much more than that in the work plan? What do you mean when you say handle carefully?

Kim Weerts – Well, I think it depends on who your target is. My target is the producer. I don't care about the public reading this. I don't care what they think. You want producers to buy into VSP and you have two different styles and you are trying to convince conventional farmers to work their way over into a different style and, "I've done it this way for 5 generations." I have some friends who are conventional farmers and I don't know how to do it but you have to be careful. You are preaching to the choir.

Larry Cochran – I disagree with Kim because as far as I am concerned this is for the consumer not for the producer because it is the consumer that we have to convince that us producers are doing okay, leave us alone.

Ben Floyd – It is a PR piece as well as a communication tool for producers. How about that?

Kim Weerts – I would agree with you. Looking at it that way, I didn't look at it that way. I looked it at as a producer looking at this and saying, "I know this stuff; I've lived here."

Larry Cochran – We are looking at this and someone can look at this and say, "You're doing okay, we will leave you alone." As far as I am concerned as a consumer we're tailoring this for telling them the good things that we are doing. We are doing what we need to be doing, go away."

Kim Weerts – I like that.

Jon Jones – I think what we are asking, though, we are not suggesting that anybody goes to direct seed. That's the small alternative but we are going to say that here is the result if you can do it, do it, regardless of how you do it. So, maybe we could look at the outcome not a method.

Larry Cochran – The appraiser will probably agree with me, we are direct seeding but we are changing that on a yearly basis.

Jon Jones – There are different levels of direct seeding, too.

Ben Floyd – Will you entertain a comment from one in the audience?

Don Brigham – If I may, I think the beauty of the work plan that you have put out is, it needs to be a little bit more overt that shown this way. You make a case that here are the functions and values that critical areas take care of. I think it is in the next chapter it shows you do these individual projects programs, etc. that you have all been doing since the '40's and it protects these functions and values.

So, to me there is an inherent logic there that is beautiful and make it attractive on both sides. The producer, the consumer, the tree hugger, whatever, that these things all tie together and you just keep doing it or even do more it is taking care of it. That to me, my big thing, I never did like critical area ordinances so that means you do this well and you get rid of the critical areas that the carrot, I mean you have the carrot instead of the stick approach.

So I think I just saw the work plan this week and haven't had a chance to digest it but maybe it just needs to be made a little more obvious how these all intertwine. The order in the plan makes sense, maybe just need to be put forth a little bit stronger that this is the reason we are doing it this way. Having sat in on these and looking at what Chelan and Thurston County and some of the others, it doesn't hold a candle to what you guys have put together. This makes sense. Thank you for listening.

Ben Floyd – We'll get you that money after the meeting. So, we are taking some notes and Elinor is taking detailed notes to capture this. We will make sure that we summarize the key points out of this, what we heard. You won't have to repeat the comments that you shared here today. If you want to, that's fine but we will produce some high cliff notes of what we discussed today.

John Pearson – So, when this conversation first started, the term used was, "soil health." I personally don't think we should put that in.

Ben Floyd – What would you substitute it with?

John Pearson – One of the issues and I will give you an example. One of the reasons is there is some information out there that nitrogen is lowering the PH. If that is the case, that is a soil health issue. But that is not an issue that should be, we can't say that we are going to. Soil health has nothing to do with pollution or anything like that at this point.

We don't want to tie so much to PH levels. If there is PH levels going down we don't want to say that, because that is soil health in my opinion. PH levels and organic matter that is soil health. I don't want that coming out 5 years from now and saying we wrote a deal here that you have to maintain your soil health. I want the term, "soil health," out at this point.

Larry Cochran – Yes, but soil health so much is just those two things.

John Pearson – I know it is, but it those two things.

Ben Floyd – Or would you just say I want to have it just be strictly tied to ag viability that we continue to manage?

John Pearson – I don't think you can regulate someone's viability. We are putting this in and then we have to go out and monitor and we can't monitor the viability. We aren't the council, we aren't the keepers. If someone is going to come in and say, I'm going to put on so much nitrogen because I'm going to get his yield that it might cost me one tenth of a unit of PH that I think I'm still viable, and then you come along and say, "No," you got to cut back your nitrogen use, you got to stop putting lime on because, so we can't,

Jon Jones – I don't know if we want to get that specific, but we could monitor organic matter, increase or decrease. I can't see any reason why we couldn't do that if we wanted to.

Larry Cochran – Most of this is the biology of the soil and talking about the other stuff.

Jon Jones – The microbes of the soil.

Joan Folwell – There is no baseline for that. You have photographs but you don't have data on soil health.

Ben Floyd – Let's pick up this topic at the next meeting but you've given us enough for now and challenged us by even taking it out. So you think about it and we will think about it. We will probably come up with a couple of different options at the next meeting and you can tell us what you like or what you don't like and we will go from there. I want to get to the goals and benchmarks; you might not like those either. So, homework assignment is soil health for all of us to think about.

Vivian Erickson – We've talked about ag viability and I know that some of you have contributed content on ag viability. We have presented some of these tables before, and if you have additional comments please let us know.

Protection and Enhancement Strategies. This is where we visited that matrix toolbox that we had presented. We are not including that in the work plan in Volume I but it may be included in Volume II but we wanted to highlight some of the practices that are being implemented.

Ben Floyd – This section out of all the sections is the one that could be a PR piece. If you want to toot the horn in Whitman County at the producer level, the more pictures of projects and practices that we can



include in here to demonstrate all the good things that are happening, and it doesn't have to be seeding projects. It can be things that you have going on in your land that you have done on your own. The more we can highlight those efforts in here, the more people can see what is happening in WC.

So we have data, descriptions, we don't have good pictures of projects or practices in place and we would like to put 15-20 pictures in here. Maybe some of these could be sprinkled out throughout this document. Homework assignment. Get us pictures with a brief description what it shows and we will try and work it into the document.

I took a bunch of pictures throughout your County. That one is looking up a tributary to Union Flat Creek. There is a grain elevator and a road, if you go up there is a wetland and then that draw. That is showing eaten down weeds and other weeds that are growing.

John Pearson – That is just old skeleton weeds.

Ben Floyd – That one won't stay in there. If you go to the end of that pasture, down on the highway where most of the cows sit, there is no vegetation, looks like dirt. No weeds. So, get us some pictures.

Vivian Erickson – This is where we've got these practices that are good for ag viability and practices like cover cropping, tillage and residue management are hitting protection criteria for all of our key critical area functions. It sets the foundations as we move into the goals and benchmarks part of the work plan.

Here we also wanted to highlight that participation in government funded programs can be taken credit for other VSP but at the same time they don't have to be part of a government funded program for you to participate in VSP. Some of the data that the Grant County Conservation District has helped us pull through their NRCS contacts, we were showing the practices that we know have already gone into place on the thousands of acres of practices since 2011.

Ben Floyd – We showed you the top ten lists last time we just turned that data into a flow chart.

Vivian Erickson – We've also been working with the conservation districts to help pull a lot of the projects that that they (inaudible) the NRCS programs that we had already summarized. Thank you guys for the data and I think we are just checking that to be sure it is accurate and we will have that in our next version coming out. We've got the rest of the document in the report version that you guys have. Then are we ready to go into goals and benchmarks, John?

John Small – The first thing we heard from you was to account for the work you have been doing since 2011. This is primarily work that did receive some kind of subsidy because that is the only work that has been tracked. Self-funded conservation practices we have less understanding of but we were able to get data on subsidized work through the USDA that has been done and quantify all of those efforts which has been helpful in showing improvements since 2011 already.

We had discussion about whether benchmarks should be solely focused on participation or focused on participation as well as physical indicators. Are the stream temperatures going up or down or staying the same or wetland functions and values increasing decreasing? We have taken some of that back to the tech panel and heard from other groups and have effectively determined that the benchmarks under defined in the RCW we would like to propose be entirely based on participation and implementation of these conservation practices. Ultimately as producers that is what you have control of is how you manage

your land. The net result how that ultimately affects the critical area functions and values can be very difficult to tease out.

In Whitman County most of that is going to be related by ag activities but they are also going to be related to some global climatic conditions that could be related to air pollution from other counties. It is really hard to tease out exactly what the direct effect of ag and we recommend using these indicators more to refine whether or not the benchmarks are adequate. Are we targeting enough conservation tillage, are we targeting enough riparian fencing to provide this protection at this 2011 level or not?

Ben Floyd – Grazing management.

John Small – Grazing management. You are talking to a riparian ecologist; can't use the right terms. So, as we discuss about the monitoring that term indicators is really important in the way that the plan becomes managed over time. If the indicators show that the participation benchmarks that we've established are adequate then we don't need to make any adjustments.

If we find that most of the indicators are showing that we've met this protection level, that's great, but if we find that maybe for one type of habitat we are potentially losing ground, then we can make some minor adjustments to the benchmarks. Maybe focus on a couple of conservation practices that weren't as high a priority originally. This will all occur over a longer span of time. Five years between adjustments.

I think there is time to review the data that is collected, make adjustments based on changes to data sets that are available. Obviously, we are not asking you as the work group or even the County to do this monitoring necessarily. I think there is a lot of discussion at the state level right now about the monitoring that has been done traditionally and what might need to be included going forward in order for VSP to be successful statewide. I think we may see some new data sets available over the next decade or so. They are very useful in understanding the levels of participation that we propose are adequate to protect critical area functions and values.

So we have looked at the level of participation in implementing various conservation practices, and made some assumptions about how much of that stays on the landscape every year, and developed some goals going forward around how much participation in various conservation practices would be required annually to maintain the level of function value that we are seeing in 2011, maintaining our baseline.

Then additionally, looking at what do we see as the things that are most important to improve? Some of that information came from you, some of it came from the watershed plan and targeting those conservation practices that are most likely to affect those changes. Again, livestock management might be one of them in terms of improving riparian cover.

We also have developed some benchmarks for or some goals around ensuring long term ag viability. Some of these are going to get into this discussion around soil health but also other issues that we can effectively tackle through a county-wide process. Obviously, there are issues especially with wheat prices that are global in nature and well outside this scope of this plan. Unfortunately, I don't think we can help with that much.

We established these benchmarks initially based on some work that has been done by the USDA to look at the physical effect of the various conservation practices that we see as a (inaudible) being effective in the County. We are not throwing the entire manual of conservation practices at this, we are looking at

what we see producers enrolling in within the County. So, what is working in WC and trying to figure out what might be the right approaches to not only make ag viable in long term but provide natural resource and critical area protection and enhancement.

We also understand that not everything that gets implemented stays on the ground indefinitely so we have built in an understanding that within a year if 20 acres goes into conservation tillage it is possible that 5 acres has come out. So we have built that into these goals in order to capture this notion that we are protecting that 2011 baseline at a minimum. That is really key because that is the requirement that we have to keep this VSP in place and avoiding a regulatory approach.

Ben Floyd – There is a certain amount of participation and maybe coming out, contract is ending and someone may say that they need that riparian area that he had in CRP and he is going to start grazing that again. Or change something else so we want to account for those drops. We still want to have things overall be protected but recognize there is a certain level of new going in and a little bit coming out every year. We picked 20% in a given year. We don't know if it is right or not but we wanted to show we thought about it and put a number in there for people to consider. If you think it is 10% or 5% or if you think there is a different number, let us know and we will use it.

Joan Folwell – So, these are the 2011 baseline. We can't (inaudible) that. So what is wrong with there being peaks and valleys of best management practices or conservation management whatever it might be? However we are calculating the number or acres in that particular practice, what is wrong with there being variations?

Ben Floyd – There is nothing wrong with it. We just want to make sure we stay above the line. You may have some fluctuation but overall it is a county basis we should be demonstrating. We have to demonstrate that we are protecting conditions as they existed in 2011 or making it better.

John Small – One thing I should clarify. Our conservation practice by conservation practice basis would be around each goal. For instance, one of our goals is to maintain or improve surface water quality. We are not necessarily saying that we are only, that whatever is done in terms of a specific best management conservation practice that level of enrollment needs to stay at or above that level. We are looking at that goal in its entirety. We are looking at the benefits of the conservation practices that are put in place in the County and are in place since 2011 on a whole basis and showing that net increase.

It's not that a specific conservation practice needs to stay in place and this needs to be adaptable so that as new techniques are developed or refined we are taking full advantage. It also needs to be adaptable if somebody is self-implementing some of these practices but they are not necessarily meeting the NRCS specifications that, we have a mechanism to at least understand that the effectiveness of that and include it in our county. Maybe there is a small discounting if we don't feel like filter strips are smaller than NRCS standards, maybe we discount that effectiveness by some percentage.

But I think it is important to include not just the subsidized work but also the truly voluntary implementation of conservation practices that may or may not be a specification. Specifications are helpful because we have some data and analysis from NRCS as to effectiveness on physical environment. That is why we lean so heavily on it but we are hoping to give the party responsible for implementation some tools to include all the other work that does get done.

Ben Floyd – Does that answer your question?

Joan Folwell – I guess I had better read this more closely to see why you are even incorporating this recidivism rate.

Ben Floyd – It is more of a CYA thing. Someone comes in and says you just can't be rainbows and unicorns, there has to be some practice. Someone drives around here and say that they see this or that happening and we have accounted for some level of, we don't think maybe 20% is real conservative; it over predicts what is happening. But we have accounted for that in our goals so then we demonstrate that we are accounting for some function decline even though the trend in the County we think is very good.

Vivian Erickson – So, these benchmarks then are looking at participation that meets certain objectives. I can't remember the data we got from NRCS but I think it was for the past ten years. Taking that average and then accounting for using that average to pretty much our goal is going to be (inaudible).

Ben Floyd – Basically accounting for recidivism rate is holding the line on the kind of practices that were in place in 2011 and stay in place with the hope that you guys are going to blow away past that. A lot of additional practices that we haven't accounted for we don't know about, that we start collecting information on and so we had a really low goal and these guys beat it by 300% and we have accounted for that. That's the hope that we can build this around. It is a pretty modest amount.

Larry Cochran – The biggest problem with this is us producers have a boss who doesn't care what this thing says. When Mother Nature decides to change the rules, she isn't going to care what this says. Then she can change it tomorrow.

Ben Floyd – That is what that drop so you might have something that happens and it affects the function. That is seasonally variation. That is climatic conditions. You don't have control over that. That is why we are not saying that you have to maintain a certain temperature in the stream regardless of what happened. We are not saying that.

Larry Cochran – There has to be flexibility written in here somehow that says under certain circumstances.

Ben Floyd – Yes, we have been mindful of that. I just want to say that that is why we are focused on measures. Things that you can do. You may have implemented all these measures but you may have had three out of five years you are dry. That's why flows went down and temperatures went up. There is nothing we can do about that.

Jon Jones – The recidivism issue sometimes because a conservation practice is abandoned doesn't mean there won't be another one to replace it that is better. In the western WC at one time there were a lot of strips divides that looked great on a flyover. You could say we were doing great stuff. Then direct seed came along or variations of that, those strips divides went away. Probably the end result is better, even though there was some slip back in that one conservation practice, another conservation practice took its place. I don't know where that will go in the document.

Ben Floyd – So that is why we have the practices. Those numbers are an amalgamation of practices and if there are other practices that are similar to do similar things to get to that objective those get factored in. Those are not to try and hem anybody in a box, those are just to give an illustration of the practices that as we know today to achieve that objective. As things change we will update that and reflect in the telling of the story how a new practice is superseded that with still achieving the same result.

John Pearson – I grew up in a socialist country that gives lots of subsidies. One year a new government got in and axed all ag subsidies, cold turkey. If that happened here, I'm just wondering, I don't think it will but with this new administration should there be something in here that addresses the huge (inaudible) should there be something in here if something radical changes beyond our control.

Larry Cochran – One think I would like put in here, it says special land (inaudible) sits on water courses (inaudible) south of the north fork of the Palouse River starts in the middle of the State. I would want that in there that says this river we can do certain things to it but it comes to us from Idaho. Good quality standards are less than ours just like as soon as it hits the border, is it supposed to get better?

Ben Floyd – You are responsible for everything that comes in and goes out. Both points noted.

Larry Cochran – Cow Creek and Rock Creek, I don't know where they start from.

(Everyone is talking at once.)

Vivian Erickson – Do you want to talk about indicators and how that ties into adaptive management or go to implementation?

Ben Floyd – No, we already talked about implementation. We need to talk about who is going to lead this thing.

John Small – I think we have a great segue that indicators that supports the Palouse coming in from Idaho. If the water coming into the County is loaded with pesticides or gets warmer and (inaudible) stations we are seeing that affect. That is fine as far as not kicking WC out of VSP. We just need, we are using that data to understand two things. One is the good work being done by the producers in WC maintaining the function and values of the landscape in WC as of 2011. That could be occurring despite water quality getting worse because water quality is getting worse outside the County.

It is easy to say, it may be a little harder to tease out especially given the amount of data that is currently available. It may be something that we need to work with the tech panel and other state agencies to try to up the effectiveness of the water quality monitoring in teasing out these specific impacts. We want to use the indicators to understand, have we set the bench mark high enough? Is the level of participation that we are seeking enough to protect and enhance critical area functions?

Not necessarily to show that water quality hasn't changed or gotten worse but is the effectiveness of ag practices in protecting and enhancing those functions at or above the level it was in 2011? It is a strange dichotomy because you could be providing more benefit in WC and still see some of these indicators indicating that things are not getting better, they are getting worse. But if we could understand that that's not a result of ag within the County and we can demonstrate that, then it will help us to help you to show that these benchmarks are adequate, if you have met the compliance with VSP and don't need to do any more than that.

There is still a regulatory backstop especially with water quality and some of these others where other regulations may come into play. But as far as critical areas and (inaudible) and GMA you would be in compliance as long as we can show that the protection is in place that the conservation practices that are in place are providing that adequate level of protection. The indicators are used primarily to make any adjustments that are necessary to this work plan.

The work plan is a living document that will be moving forward and there will be formal attachments on a 5-year basis. There likely will need to be adjustments as good a job as we think we did. Probably some things that you or whoever follows along is going to make to this document but having this monitoring system will help guide those changes and adaptations so that this framework can continue to be used.

Ben Floyd – Are there any questions on that discussion? He covered a lot of different points there. There are existing data sources out there, we think we can take advantage of them. Whether we agree with well head protection areas or not all of the Group A water systems monitor water quality so as long as nothing is showing up that is an issue, and the data suggests that and they have to collect that data every few years and report on it. We can still gather that information and say that we are protecting drinking water and we have the data to show it from these water systems so things look good.

There is nothing that shows an alarm there. If you saw a bunch of nitrates coming up and it was in an area that only ag was affecting, then that might be a concern. We are not seeing that and levels are staying where they are, so it is not a big deal. So all of these monitoring indicators are basically existing data sources that we will just look at and try understand the story. It's not going to say, it is not what we are using to measure to see whether we are performing well or not. We have other goals those participation goals, but it is a backstop and another way of looking at things that can demonstrate or maybe that we can learn from and maybe adapt a program a little bit based on that information.

I think we have reached a saturation point. Let's go quickly through next steps and where do we go from here? This has been good discussion today. We are going to spend a lot more time talking about many of these topics we covered today. Briefly lay out, photos, also at the next meeting we may come back to look and feel. You have given us some initial feedback that has been positive. We want to know more about that and get feedback on that. We are hoping to get your comments by January 20<sup>th</sup>.

We'd like to have it on the line for the comment, but if you want to do a hard copy or something else we will work with you. We will take those comments and put them together and figure out a way to organize our meeting and have further discussion about soil health, who is going to lead this thing. I'd like to hear your recommendation as to who should be put in charge of this for implementation where you would serve as a board of directors to oversee and provide direction to implement this.

Brian Bell – How would the monitoring be done? This specific question, increase speakers, manage under chemical, etc., how are you going to measure that, who is going to pay to monitor that?

Ben Floyd – We know there will be a little money from the conservation commission for implementation to help track and collect that information. That is my initial answer.

John Pearson – Before we name an entity or a person, we should probably come up with a job description and see how much work it is going to take.

John Stuhlmiller – Just wanted to share what Thurston and Chelan is going to do the same thing. In the monitoring side of things, in the plans we write down who is responsible. So as much as possible look at existing things like in this case, this issue is being monitored by Ecology and this one is the CD is doing, etc. So whoever is responsible for flagging that at this point in the plan so you assign that. You figure out who is going to fund it is a different issue. It is, who is the likely person who would do it this is normally what our road department would do or whatever. So I would encourage you to think that way for the monitoring side of things.

Ben Floyd – Thank you. With that we will wrap it up. The comments go to Vivian. The next meeting will go from 2-5 in our February meeting. We will have more substantive snacks. So it will be a 3-hour meeting and then we will let you know for March and April.

By the March or April meeting, that is when we will bring in Volume 2, which you may glaze over. We will give you more detail. Keep focusing on comments. Any final comments?

Jon Jones – It is still a little foggy.

Ben Floyd – It is a good start. Thank you. Thanks for all those on the phone.

David Swannack – If you are in a floodplain.