

**WHITMAN COUNTY
VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP
Meeting
February 2, 2017
BOCC Chambers**

MEMBERS:

Alan Thomson

Jon Jones

Nancy Belsby

David Swannack

Larry Cochran (Absent)

Jeff Pittman (Absent)

Joan Folwell

Kim Weerts

David Lange

John Pearson

Tracy Eriksen (Absent)

Art Swannack (Phone)

Phone: John Stuhlmiller, VSP Member; John Small, Anchor QEA; Jennifer Boie, Palouse Conservation District; Jason Kunz, WDFW; Art Swannack, VSP Member.

Audience: Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA; Vivian Erickson, Anchor QEA; Brad Johnson, Palouse Conservation District; Elinor Huber, Clerk.

2:09 p.m. – Ben Floyd opened the meeting. Thanks for coming at 2:00 p.m. today. We are going to talk about work plan comments. What you have shared with us. We won't cover every comment but we have a catalog of every comment. We have a tracking sheet. We have a suggested response to that comment and then we have notes or follow up. If you said that this is wrong or if you said "hogs or pigs," some of those things, we didn't think that merited a full group discussion. If it was a no-brainer comment we just updated it.

At the last meeting, we talked about goals and benchmarks, we will come back and talk more about that today. John Small is on the phone and he will walk us through that information. The latest thinking on goals and benchmarks is in the form by a tech panel presentation we gave yesterday. So, we will share some of the things that we heard yesterday and how it fits in with what we are sharing, the direction that we are proposing that you go in terms of developing goals and benchmarks based upon that feedback.

Joan Folwell – On those presentations that you emailed to members, I was looking at them but I couldn't print anything off. I went to look at the minutes and now they turned it into a webinar and you get more comments than you do with written notes but you don't have a hard copy. There was a lot of discussion about benchmarks from agencies that we are talking about and what they consider a good benchmark.

Ben Floyd – So, you did listen to the call yesterday in the morning?

Joan Folwell – I listened in the afternoon. I was listening to the woman from Fish and Wildlife talking about benchmarks. Since I didn't have that much time I was learning from the discussion.

Ben Floyd – We have every presentation that the tech panel has and the meetings are posted to the website within a day or two.

Joan Folwell – Actually, the reason I didn't listen to you is because that line at the bottom of the (inaudible) to where I thought you would be, I wouldn't get anything. That is why I am wondering if Bill Eller and the committee can't send a more useful or the original of the presentation.

Ben Floyd – I know they do get posted. We had to do a little clean up on one of our slides and then we were going to send them an updated version, so my guess is those presentations will be out there later today or tomorrow.

John Small – I gave it to them yesterday so they have a copy.

Joan Folwell – But they stream them all together. There is no menu.

Ben Floyd – There should be in a separate part of the website. There should be just an agenda. We'll send out a link. We will talk about goals and benchmarks, and then we have a couple of round table discussions or I like to call these consensus workshops. We are not leaving today until we have at least one or two good options for implementation. Who do you want to lead VSP implementation?

We aren't answering that right now but we will work on that later. If we need to we will write down comments and talk about pros and cons, but we do need to figure out who you want to assign to coordinate implementation of VSP that would be under the direction of this work group. You are still going to continue as a board of directors once this plan is developed and approved in perpetuity. Or you can say you only want to participate in this part and then the County may have to reappoint someone else. Alan, quit giving me that look.

Alan Thomson – That's how I look, Ben.

Ben Floyd – So we will come back to that. We also want to talk more about the work plan. Are there things that are in the draft work plan now that are still too detailed, that a producer doesn't care about and we want to put into a technical appendix as opposed to keep it in the work plan? Think about that and we will come back to that later on. At the end of the meeting we will cover our next steps. Any questions for the agenda? Okay, Vivian will lead us through the comments.

Vivian Erickson – Thank you for providing comments. Like Ben mentioned, we have them all cataloged in a single response form and we will send that out after our discussion today with updated responses. This first line is big picture comments of what we heard. Editorial comments, thank you very much. We needed those. There was a lot of clean up to make sure we had accurate wording and contents.

Last month we talked about adding a FAQ to encourage participation by ag producers. We have a section dedicated to that in the beginning of the document. We are going to work on expanding the characterization of riparian areas because Nancy was talking about the channel scablands having a unique characteristic in respect to the riparian areas and make sure that they are characterized differently from other types of riparian areas that we see in other parts of the State.

We also got a comment about the erosion potential map. In the work plan it shows a lot of moderate to very severe risk through the entire county. We received a comment where the much higher risks really are and make sure that is part of the discussion, and that being one of those cropped hill slope areas and less in those areas where there is not much soil left to (inaudible.)

Ben Floyd – These maps are basically a formula, slope, soil type, and then if you had rain on snow where you would see the erosion. It showed down in the Snake River, the breaks, all these erodible areas but it is all range land. It is really more based upon slope and some unstable soils, hardly know whether you are necessarily going to have erosion in those areas. So it doesn't accurately reflect, it shows potential risk areas. If you had a rain on snow event or a July two-inch in 30 minutes precipitation event, those areas would erode. But is that really something from an ag activity that we really care about? It is really more of a, this is what Mother Nature shows could be in Whitman County based upon some kind of extreme event. Brad, do you want to share what is going on with the water center at U of I?

Brad Johnson – John Bull is working with the conservation district. They are doing some modeling in the Palouse Watershed associated with the RCPP. John Bull is working with Ryan Boilin with the Palouse CD with the RCPP and the Palouse Watershed and they are doing a hydrological characterization tool that utilizes the water erosion prediction project used by NRCS, predict any run off erosion. It might be a tool that we have available for this depending on the time frame of when we think this plan is going to be done.

As they stated the Palouse Watershed which 5-15% of the County drains right into the Snake. I don't know what the percentage is but if this model works well it might be of interest to run that model in those Snake River break tributaries that have erosion potential too. They are just getting going on it. John Bull is incredible, and they have students working on it. I don't have the time frame but there is more information that I will forward on to Ben and Alan to see if this is something to bring up to the group to see how they want to use it. So, John would be available to come and talk to the group.

Ben Floyd - So, it is maybe a more refined method for identifying risk periods in risk areas.

Jennifer Boie – I have more detail on that. The (inaudible) model is based on input (inaudible) as well as land practice and can get a refined output on what the erosion potential is, but also on what practice is most effective in different areas, which will be really helpful for long (inaudible) in VSP. Because both voluntarily offsets this (inaudible) more effective use of funding in areas than others and really claim any implementation money we might get out of VSP in areas where it might be most effective and go the farthest.

The model is really an amazing thing. U of I and WSU have (inaudible) on models other watersheds over the years and have now just turned their attention to the Palouse Watershed by some funding in grant writing and creating a partnership. As Brad said, John would be available to come to the March meeting. He has worked really closely with landowners that have a lot of producer input with the model and have worked with NRCS. It is just a more reliable method than what you have had in the past.

Jon Jones – I think it is important that we recognize there is some erosion off of native areas. Erosion happens. It is a natural process and what we are more concerned about is the amount of erosion over the natural erosion. It is kind of a wordsmithing thing that I'm getting at. I think to listen to someone who knows about the model, we can extrapolate that information to the, take it from the Palouse Watershed and extrapolate to the rest of the Snake River watershed in southern WC.

Nancy Belsby – Jon, you are calling that natural area. Are you talking about range lands?

Jon Jones – Yes, naturally this was all range lands or what we now call range land but the land that has not been disturbed with native plants.

Nancy Belsby – But what you, Brad, were talking about was doing a study in the Palouse or the Snake River?

Brad Johnson – Palouse Watershed, or having that study also done outside that watershed boundaries. Because most of the County is encompassed with the Palouse Watershed but there those (inaudible) on the southern end that drains directly into the Snake River. They are not excluded in this study that John and the group,

Nancy Belsby – How large an area are you doing?

Brad Johnson – I don't know, the Palouse Watershed has to be 80-90% of the County.

Ben Floyd – It is everything except for what drains to the Snake River and then a little bit to the north. I would say the study covers about 85%.

Brad Johnson – Anything that drains down to the Snake River. (Everyone is talking at once!) Jennifer, correct me if I am wrong, I think what they are doing is just the Palouse Watershed because that is what the RCPP boundary is. Is that correct?

Jennifer Boie – That is correct. The model looks at the natural occurring erosion that would happen due to things like soil types, (inaudible) so it can predict what will happen naturally on the landscape just with those factors alone. It is currently just being done for the Palouse Watershed but there could be an opportunity to have them design a similar model to WRIA 35 close enough to WC with the Snake River.

Ben Floyd – Okay, we have probably spent enough time on this but it is just a heads up. I don't know about the March meeting. I want to keep the focus on the work plan but as we get close to buttoning things up we can consider whether we want to reallocate some resources to either supporting that or incorporating that information, as that could be part of implementation too.

Joan Folwell – How do you spell that acronym?

Brad Johnson – Water Erosion Prediction Project. WEPP and it is NRCS.

Ben Floyd – Thanks for sharing that, Brad and Jennifer, and for that discussion.

Nancy Belsby – I don't know how they could possibly do the whole WC except the Snake River. It would take a long time to do it. How can it be so simple?

Ben Floyd – I don't know if it is simple but they have tools to cover the whole, it is probably a GIS, etc.

Brad Johnson – They state in here too. The problem with it is that it is a model that needs to be ground-truthed. So right now, they have done this in other areas and they have ground-truthed them to those areas. They hope it will work here but they are looking for grant money to go out and ground-truth it after they get this model ran. So, there is going to have to be some caveat that go in there.

Ben Floyd – It is a model that won't be calibrated yet and so it will be a work in progress.

Vivian Erickson – We are also working on improving the work plan of making that connection from critical areas to the four functions that we are working on. Water quality, hydrology, soil and habitat and making sure that we are explaining that concept of the benefit that some of the conservation practices that we focus on in the work plan to protect those critical area functions, or ecological functions.

Another comment we got was that we highlight something as a practice because it was one of the ones that was higher in the list of what was being implemented. But if it is not something that will make producers jump with joy, maybe we should de-emphasize it and focus on ones that make people more encouraged to participate.

We have comments for additional discussion that we might take time to go through today. The first one is we talked about in Section 4 with some of the existing programs that are being implemented in the County. Then highlight products that are being implemented by core conservation districts which we are honing in on the data that we have been getting from the conservation districts on that. We will be adding that to the next draft.

Also focusing on NRCS funded projects because we have a lot of information available on that to know what kind of services they provide and what kind of protections they provide with ag viability promotions. The comment was maybe we can focus on all these other projects that are happening with the Cattlemen's Association, the local Farm Bureau or Wheat Growers association. So, maybe a little discussion on how we want to expand that section. What programs should do the testing.

This is where we talked about some of the protection and enhancement strategies. We have this conservation in two sections, actually. In Section 4 we talked about changes since 2011 and we highlight the NRCS practices, built on the data we received from Harold Crose because he had access to the data from NRCS. So we can highlight the practices by acreages and number of projects implemented. That gives a good picture of what has been done under NRCS. Nutrient, past management, direct seed, mulch tilling, prescribed grazing, watering facilities for range livestock.

Then we also have practices under their conservation stewardship programs which are a lot of the enhancement projects. Conservation Districts lid projects as well, which we are still flushing out and we've got some good data from the CD to help characterize this section. Then the conservation reserve program.

Ben Floyd – We don't have anything that was self-funded. So, David, I don't know if you have implemented some practices that are not necessarily true NRCS or CD programs but still provide some benefit or protection of critical areas. John Pearson, same way, Kim, Nancy, Joan and others, right? So what do we say about those here? Do we just say these programs up above are just a small portion of the improvements that been made and other projects that have been implemented through individual stewardship activities of individual producers.

Alan Thomson – I was just learning about the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, (RCPP) yesterday from Brad and Jennifer on the phone. Maybe question that one out a little bit because that sounds like a great program. That would definitely enhance ag viability along with protecting critical areas. You don't have much of a blurb on that now.

Ben Floyd – We don't by design. We got some pushback on, that is what the basis of this comment is that, let's not focus too heavily on the government programs because only a small number of producers use them and there are lots of self-funded activities that happen beyond that. I'm not saying that RCPP isn't

a great fit for many producers but if we over emphasize it, I think you can share with me if I'm not characterizing it right, but I think the concern was when we over emphasize some of these government programs producers might get the feeling that we are trying to push them to participate here or there.

Kim Weerts – My read on this is that if we want to start pushing individual programs then we need to list everything. RCPP is an NRCS program and we list NRCS in there. I think we either need to just list the agencies that are available or we need to list all the programs.

John Pearson – I would like to make reference to private money, and the reason this came out because in the past if you couldn't show that you took a government program then you were assumed to have done nothing. That was the get out of jail free, okay, show where you were working with the CD or NRCS and show what you are doing. If not, we can assume that you've done nothing.

Ben Floyd – Who is "they?"

John Pearson – DOE, basically.

Kim Weerts – A classic example is last March, when Kelly Sousman and David Knight came down and did a tour for 2 days, sponsored by Whitman CD and the cattlemen's and went to sites where producers had received letters, and 80-90% of those producers had all done the projects with their own money. But how do you know that?

Ben Floyd – They learned that on the tour so it was an eye opener for them. They went down there thinking they were finding violations and they found good stewardship.

Jon Jones – Ecology should have followed up on that. They should have asked them what they were doing so they could report to their boss and save them the trip.

Kim Weerts – Kelly was there and she is my special assistant. David was there and he is water quality on the eastern and then Chad came down and after that they went to a couple of producers.

Jon Jones – So, everything worked out all right, though?

Kim Weerts – No, it is a work in progress.

Jon Jones – I think in the same light of things, identifying people who have done things without taking government money, there are some environmental groups around that will do plantings and that kind of thing. Palouse Conservation Environmental Institute, they do that and it's not government money. Somebody needs to get credit for that. If they do a planting on your place, we need to be able to track that. That is the only one I can think of. There must be others.

John Pearson – DOE will never recognize the stuff that is done. They can't recognize it because it is not done to their specs. I was talking to a producer yesterday about that and he asked if he had to fence off the creek. We talked about the law and he asked how far back he had to fence? I told him that it depends on whose money you use. If you do it yourself you put the fence where you want to. If you take Ecology money they want 100 feet. If you take NRCS money, they want 35 feet.

So, no one is going to agree with, you're never going to pass the mark. They are going to come there and tell you didn't fence it off right. I had another producer using a hot wire and Ecology came down and said if you use a hot wire you have to use (inaudible). So this leads me to the question on the work plan. What authority do they have to say the work is being done if Ecology can't agree with NRCS?

Jon Jones – I think Ecology standards, unless they have changed in the last 3 years, they always go by the NRCS facts. If it doesn't meet NRCS facts it doesn't meet Ecology's. They have an agreement to do that. That being said, in the last two years, NRCS changed the specs for riparian exclusion from 35 to 50 feet. So, maybe that answers some of your questions. Ecology has no specifications except to protect clean water.

Ben Floyd – So we started this discussion as to what we are going to put in this part of the plan about programs. I thought Kim laid out a good option for you to consider. Option A, just list the agencies that have programs and don't get specific programs in there but just list who is available. So we would add Fish & Wildlife, private self-funded activities and probably some others. Or we can try and do a comprehensive list of every program that we know of that might be available to support conservation action. Do you have some thoughts around those two approaches?

Kim Weerts – I think it is more prudent to list the agencies because then the producer can go in and they actually shop all the agencies. If we try to list every program that is available, RCPP is new and it has a sunset period. Any time any of the CD's go in and write grants for different things some of those become individual programs. I get that it would be nice to have a one stop shop but that is going to put this plan out of date almost immediately.

Ben Floyd – You try to summarize all the programs, there is a lot of content there. Is it really necessary? So you're feeling like agencies make sure we have the list of everybody that is involved as well as self-funded activity, private investment. What do the rest of you think?

Joan Folwell – I agree with that in that the entities (inaudible)

Jon Jones – I think Kim is right on.

John Pearson – Does that cover down the road three years from now when the group is trying to (inaudible)?

Ben Floyd – That would cover that. The work plan, we are pretty clear in the work plan that says that if today this is the level of function and the producer does just a little bit better, that is actually enhancement. That is protection plus. So for VSP that is our bar. We want to make sure we are protecting what existed in 2011.

Let's take the buffer, for example. Twenty feet, someone doesn't have anything and now they go to twenty feet and they can make that work and they have a couple water spots. That is credit so whether that might not meet the Clean Water Act compliance in Ecology's eyes, but for VSP protecting critical areas functions it meets our test.

John Pearson - What about no buffer and prescribed grazing in a riparian area? There's no FOTOG for that.

Jon Jones – Yes, there is.

John Pearson – There is a FOTOG for prescribed grazing with no fencing in a riparian area.

Jon Jones – There is a FOTOG for that.

Ben Floyd – So let's say someone is rendering their cattle right down and in the stream and then they change and fence it off and it becomes a pasture and they have them in there 7 days.

Jon Jones – I don't know of anyone who has applied that FOTOG. It is very restrictive. You put your cows on there for 7 days and no more than that and then you get them out. It is there.

Ben Floyd – In VSP we don't care about the FOTOG.

Kim Weerts – Exactly. We don't care about the FOTOG. We don't care what the DOE says. This is VSP. It is completely separate and anything you can be in a program and do what you want to do and then the NRCS or the CD has records of that. Then we have the self-funded. Basically any time a producer does something all they have to do is write it down. Entities such as the Cattlemen's, the Farm Bureau and the Wheat Growers can say once a year, or on an on-going basis, make that part of their responsibility to check in with their producers and gather that information. Then it is there and it is also funded and we don't care what the buffers are. This is self-funded. This is why I did it, to enhance and protect and we get credit for that.

Jon Jones – That is their right. I think to emphasize your point if a producer has cows in the creek and says he wants to bully Ecology and says he will put up a 10-foot fence and see what they say about it. The answer is probably going to be that you are doing better and they will probably go to the guy that doesn't have a fence before they come to you. So you are probably off the hook for a while, because it was an improvement over what they were doing. We are measuring improvement.

Ben Floyd – We are measuring protection, we are verifying protection and we are characterizing the enhancements on top of that.

Jon Jones – We want things to stay the same or improve.

Ben Floyd – Yes, it can't get any worse or we want to see if we can make them better. I'm not saying that they are bad.

Alan Thomson – This is our program. It is not Ecology's program. Yes, they are on the technical panel and when we present the work plan to them they get a shot at whether they like it or not. But I'm with the conservation here. We are setting the bar here. So we've got a baseline to work with and if something is added to that and improves that is in our minds, it is an improvement. It doesn't matter whether it meets Ecology's specs or not.

Jon Jones – The other side is they can still regulate you even if you are in the VSP.

Ben Floyd – You may be complying with VSP and still have an issue with Ecology.

David Lange – If you are self-funded, can you give examples of what you mean by self-funded?

Ben Floyd – We can get some examples. What is your preference? Do you think it would be better to be vague or better to have some examples?

David Lange – I think a few examples like spraying technology or no-till drills or (inaudible).

John Pearson – Make sure they aren't (inaudible) by those examples.

Ben Floyd – Right, these are examples. If you did a search in the work plan for example, I think you would find an example in many cases, in many instances. We have heard that this is not a, we are not trying to push people in one direction or another. We are slow but we do pick up on it eventually. You have helped with that. Example practices.

Alan Thomson – Ben, what I think is important, I know we don't like to push some things in particular but the producers are looking at this. They are looking at this document as far as reading documents like this. Let's make it as simple as possible for people. They are looking for, what do I need to do? So examples are good. We need to provide those examples because if producers are going to participate they want to know what they need to do to participate and they want to see something in this report here that gives them that information.

Ben Floyd – I'm going to give Alan \$10 now because that was basically a lead in. Remember how we asked for pictures? The more we can highlight in this section that we were just in, under self-funded and look at all the things that are already happening, the more you can use to communicate and apply. Anybody else that is looking over the shoulder of producers in WC saying that here is what we are already doing. Look at all these things that are happening through no government programs. You get the full picture. Right now what you are saying is the picture shows government and it is only part of the picture. So, here is a chance. Help us get those pictures. So, in addition to listing them we actually show here are some examples of improvement and we get some pictures to include in there to help highlight that.

Joan Folwell – If you take the chart and go down the list of example practices, if you put small and nutrient, small and management or small letter cover crops and not refer it to an NRCS practice, any one of those things can be done to any degree and achieve benefits. If you wanted to give examples of practices, examples of land management,

Kim Weerts – Stewardships strategy, I pulled that out of the minutes.

Joan Folwell – Then you can list the organizations or entities that can give you information.

Kim Weerts – In January, we had a big discussion on BMP's, and a bunch of that saying something like stewardship practices instead of BMP's or practices.

Ben Floyd – So, does everyone agree that stewardship strategies, could it be stewardship practices?

Kim Weerts – Strategies and practices. The strategy may not be the same as the practice.

Ben Floyd – Right, the strategy might have two or three or more practices included in it and then there are specific practices.

Vivian Erickson – So, we also talked about soil health as a function of critical areas and there was some discussion on how the term, “soil health,” opened up the ag community to being responsible for maintaining that function. We talked about soil health in terms of soil loss versus actual soil structure, soil moisture and everything else. Ben, John, and I were also talking about the soil health function of critical areas and geological hazardous areas and really coming out of the erosion factor, maybe focusing on that soil movement process part of it.

Ben Floyd – What I heard at the last meeting was, “I don’t want anything that happens on my farm and my soil health to be something now that VSP tracks and monitors. If I have a PH issue on my property where I have some erosion issues that I am dealing with, as long as it doesn’t leave my property it is my business, so stay out of it.” So, that got us thinking. Have we really got soil health defined tightly enough as a critical area function? That is why we wanted to bring it up because you raised it for us and we wanted to discuss it more and hear your thought on that.

Joan Folwell – Soil health is not a critical area. It is a function so we are not going to be regulating. I don’t want to use the word, “regulating,” or really monitoring it. We would expect an increase of more good stewardship to enhance soil health. But we are just saying, what the function is of soil health and why it is important? We are not going to be making any pronouncements about a standard for what it should be or that kind of thing. I don’t know how you can eliminate soil health.

Ben Floyd – Is soil health the right term? When I say soil health to a bunch of producers are you thinking about sediment going into a wetlands or sediment being caught in a riparian area and providing clean water? Are you thinking about PH, nitrogen, phosphorous, and what you need to produce a crop? I just wonder if the term, “soil health,” is not the best one and maybe we need to come up with a different one with the definition around it.

Jon Jones – I think what you are saying, too. The soil health you could have really good soil health and have really bad results. Or you could have really bad soil health and have everything good. It doesn’t always follow. Soil health and good quality water, air, or whatever doesn’t always connect.

Kim Weerts – I think in the last couple of years agencies like the NRCS are doing more and more with soil health and it is exactly what Jon said. It is what you are doing to the soil, and how you are enriching it. I think more and more that is what people are equating soil health with. Maybe a different name would be better.

Alan Thomson – But you could also think of soil health as maintaining erosion. Healthy soil. It doesn’t always but it seems to have a number of different meanings.

David Lange – I think soil health can be associated with (inaudible) flood tests.

Art Swannack – My thought is (inaudible) measurements and benchmarks for soil health. It looks to me that every bit of funding you have to try and measure some type of a standard when you are dealing with all the other issues that are involved. Soil erosion has a standard as to what is going on and deposition would have some kind of standard, too.

Ben Floyd – What I’m hearing is that soil health is not the right term. The way we have defined it is maybe not tight enough. Soil erosion and deposition? Maybe I will pause here and let John Small take us to the promised land of critical area function.

John Small – We are trying to get ourselves down to a simple set of functions that represent all of the critical areas, at least the major functions of the five critical area functions. Soil health is helpful for water erosion but it is also an important one for any of the water quality and hydrology because it is part of the natural flood plain soil cycle. It is part of the wetland cycle. To say it is always a bad thing is a big mis-characterization. I think when you think of well publicized erosion that seems stark when it happens, but every meadow was once a lake for the most part and then it is just a matter of the time scale. We are just trying to characterize it in terms of understanding what producers are doing on their property and that is helping to keep the soil fertile and generally in place.

Ben Floyd – But connects that to the critical areas. What happens on property in ag production land? To me, soil health is more of an ag viability consideration in that context.

John Small – It certainly is an ag viability consideration but it is also a consideration for the amount of sediment available to get into waterways, make its way downstream affecting (inaudible) sedimentation rates in lakes and wetlands. The way floodplains work and the deposition of sediment within a frequently flooded area is important. Unless I am mistaken, Whitman has a portion of the geologic hazard code around water borders. So those are the three connections I would make to soil health.

Jon Jones – Measuring the health of the soil that is going to be a big hurdle. There is a simpler way to use a surrogate for the rest of it, if you measure the organic matter. If we get a baseline of organic matter we can come back 5 years later and measure the organic matter and see if we are making progress. But that is only one point of soil health, but it is a surrogate for the rest of it.

David Lange – To me soil health is more of a like a blood test (inaudible) any time the movement of the soil can complete different things. We have soil samples done every spring and that is the soil health.

Ben Floyd – That is part of figuring out what you are going to do in terms of input in that year.

Joan Folwell – I sort of agree with people who feel soil health is (inaudible) term. To me it entails making sure that you are taking care of your property and certain standards are achieved. I would call it soil function. Except that would be redundant because they are functions. So I was thinking about soil attributes. What are the different characteristics of soil and how those characteristic functions to show the benefits of the critical areas?

David Lange – Couldn't we just say, "soil movement?"

Ben Floyd – Soil movement deposition.

Kim Weerts – Why not "soil conservation?" it is already in here and conservation has to do with movement. You ought to conserve the soil where it is and not let it move.

Jon Jones – Both mechanical and from water and wind erosion, Yes, those are the three.

Ben Floyd – Soil conservation? I'm just wondering if that fits with our definition of our function. Sedimentation, erosion, it happens. It is part of a natural process and in the critical areas context you got floodplain movement. Some places it is here and it gets moved here and then new soil, new plant growth and next year another area erodes and moves. Then you have soil coming off a drainage into a water

body. I personally think the soil movement and deposition are more process focused. Soil conservation is kind of how you manage it.

David Lange – Does the group think that erosion doesn't occur until it leaves your property? What does the group think?

Joan Folwell – Erosion happens when it happens, wherever it is.

David Lange – I know but it can be from on top of (inaudible) if you can't see it that doesn't mean it's not there. Just wondered what the group thinks. You mentioned if (inaudible)

Ben Floyd – What I heard was we were talking soil health. "This program shouldn't deal with anything that happens within my property. It is only if it goes off my property and then it enters a water body or something then it becomes an issue." That was more of a general statement about, are we getting into the PH of my soil and how much organic matter I have. That seems like a stretch from the feedback that we heard.

Alan Thomson – I think that conversation was that you have so many small drainages all over the Palouse that are not critical areas but they lead to critical areas. So, I think what we were saying in that conversation was that if you've got a drainage on your property that is not a critical area and it is not getting flushed out downstream that is not a problem. That is not affecting critical areas. But if it does get flushed downstream it could be affecting critical areas.

Brad Johnson – For fear of saying the wrong thing, if you go through and look at how you have described your functions, water quality you have (inaudible) and erosion in there. Is soil health something that can be taken out of the function and as it is does soil health erosion relates to water quality? If you put it in as soil movement or deposition it is going to be repetitive of water quality to some degree. But not all of the sediment reaches the stream. I'm just asking. Can you just remove that soil health column and go with water quality, hydrology, and habitat? Is there another one that makes sense for dirt moving out of a field?

John Small – One think I want to remind you is that what we are proposing to measure comes back to conservation practice. Not necessarily the NRCS (inaudible) conversation about fencing as an example of where we would want to under VSP track the 10-foot electric fence as much as the 100-foot four wire fence. We want to make sure it all gets collected so we can show that the trend is positive since July 2011. At the end of the day that is the one thing we need to do.

The discussion of soil health is similar in that we just want to show that the tillage practices, the grazing practices are all having a net benefit. That is just another set of metrics that we have and we have that information available based on the practices that are going on, to understand that there is a better fit and we can measure it to some degree.

Ben Floyd – The suggestion was specifically that maybe soil health should just come out and get covered under water quality. But I think that we've learned that soil health is not the right term. I don't know that we have consensus on what the right term is but let us take that back as a homework assignment as the consultant team to further refine that.

Jennifer Boie – I know we are talking about the effect on critical areas. Someone mentioned that soil health seems like more of an ag viability term and why they (inaudible) on the scientific perspective of organic matter and PH and the organisms. From the ag viability standpoint, I just wanted to ask, I can't help but think about the VSP process without thinking of the VSP implementation process. I think there can be some benefit from using some of these buzz words in terms of soil health, if you do want to attract public funding or program funding to help not just the conservationist but the ag viability end.

The soil health is definitely a buzz word right now. It is super important that a majority of the work being done out there is probably being done by people independently of their own funding. To those who are looking for some help whether it be with things like precision ag or soil PH, listing them in line as the VSP implementation including factors like soil health, which is a hot button in the grant world, you might be able to attract more funding to help implement VSP measures that help ag viability specifically.

Kim Weerts – I still go back to soil conservation because we, under soil health you have one goal is to protect or enhance available soil for ag and then the next one is to protect or enhance soil health and fertility. Why isn't that conservation? It's not just health because you are trying to enhance and protect the available soil that you have.

Ben Floyd – It may be conservation. Those are both to me focused more on ag and less on critical areas. Really what this is the context is, this is water quality, habitat, soil health and hydrology. So those are our critical area functions that we boiled down. I think in the context that you just described that is soil conservation. We are maintain ag soil health.

Kim Weerts – Then back in the goals and benchmarks.

Ben Floyd – I think in the interest of time, and you've given us some good thoughts, we just need to give you a little better term to use and a definition around that. We will pick that up at the next meeting. Is that okay?

Nancy Belsby – Somewhere in here I would like to include in that WRIA 34 the channeled scablands and that we have (inaudible.) Also, the riparian habitat is not woody vegetation which is traditional. We've had some arguments with Ecology over that. I don't know where it fits but I think it is important that it be included.

Ben Floyd – That riparian areas are different in the channeled scablands from the Palouse main stem, for example.

Vivian Erickson – We had talked about it and I put your comments in our form and also about characterizing riparian areas more accurately and the channeled scablands and then also making sure that we had that discussion of warm water conditions in some of our streams that is a natural condition and also talking about fish in the streams. I found a good place where we can put characterizing the intersections of ag with our fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas and we can be sure that they are characterized more accurately.

Jon Jones – I want to go back to the thing about fecal chloroform. There is so much run off from non-ag related things, such as roads, parking lots, buildings, and it is not all fecal chloroform, I hope. So, I'm thinking we should broaden the discussion of pollutants instead of fecal chloroform.

Nancy Belsby – There are a lot of areas that have a lot of urban run-off.

Ben Floyd – I think the comment also was that waste water treatment plant discharges and there are a lot of backed up septic systems.

Jon Jones – Whoever made that comment was right on.

Vivian Erikson – We got a couple of comments on broadening that conversation and we do talk about some of the other pollutants.

Ben Floyd – So, I propose a break for seven minutes. Get back here about 3:30. Do we have anyone else on the phone who hasn't introduced themselves yet?

Jason Kunz – From Fish & Wildlife. Glad to be here.

Break - 3:23 p.m. – 3:33 p.m. -

Ben Floyd – John Small, we are going to move to goals and measureable benchmarks. How do we tell if our work plan is protecting critical areas, how do we demonstrate that to people outside of WC that don't necessarily know that you are among the most progressive farmers in the state and want to see that this program is achieving what we say it is going to achieve? Where is the proof in the pudding?

John Small – To start with a quick overview the terms within VSP and that is largely a function of the terms that are used in the RCW. When we talk about benchmarks we are talking countywide. We are basically looking at a protection benchmark that is a pass/fail. An enhancement benchmark that it is more of an aspirational direction of what we want to see happen as an indication that critical area functions are being enhanced.

As we mentioned earlier in our discussion about hydrology, soil health, water quality, and habitat, we have broken those functions, the various 5 critical areas into four ecosystem functions. We have defined goal statements basically a trajectory to improve this function and improve water quality in surface waters. Increase habitat availability of a certain type. The objectives, the way we will do that, and meet those goals are based primarily on conservation practices or stewardship actions and investments that are similar to NRCS conservation practices.

This is just a handy graph I made of the benchmarks at the top level and it is largely the pass down notion. Are we protecting or enhancing critical area functions and values? The goals are, what are we trying to do? Are we trying to improve surface and ground water quality? Are we trying to improve the ability of flood plains to absorb and store water and not have it move quickly and with a lot of force and move too much soil around and that sort of thing and cause damage?

My feeling on soil health is that we are looking out for the interests of the ag community more so than anything else and insuring the soil fertility is there, the soil structure is appropriate. That is going to have its benefits for hydrology, water quality and habitat. But I think of it primarily as an ag viability.

Then habitat quality, of course, includes both terrestrial and aquatic habitat. All of those are predicated on these objectives, just the work that the ag community is doing now, the investments that they are making now that we have seen as evidence since 2011. We can show back up to the top of this slide the

benchmark level that without any doubt these functions are being protected at the level they were at 2011.

David Swannack – I want to back it up a minute. Soil health, I need the word health in there because to me it might be a hot spot but really it is a very dangerous word to put in there. Can we do it without the extra word? Just write “health?”

John Small – We will take a look at how we want to characterize that, if at all.

David Swannack – I probably said it backwards.

Ben Floyd – Soil health, there was just a discussion we had earlier about where it goes and we will bring you back a recommendation. It won't be called soil health. Who knows we maybe be down to soil erosion, deposition may be part of the others. We will come back with an updated approach for you to consider.

John Small – I keep hammering on this notion of July 2011 because this is a no net loss approach. Which to those of us who have been involved in shoreline master programs we are very familiar with the way the statements are interpreted, no net loss of function. It is a pretty way of understanding what the task for VSP is. As these conservation practices and conservation measures are happening and producers are making investments into a new equipment, changes on demand, the way they are doing their practices, we are going to see this increase in ecological function, we can document that fairly easily.

What will also be happening is that land will be changing hands, practices will be changing, and not everything will be pushing us in an upward trajectory. Land may be coming out of CRP and going back into production, seeing the use of herbicides and fertilizers and the amount of cover crop may vary because of market conditions and other incentives. We have to have a way to account for that and capture it in this accounting that we are being asked to do by the State to prove everything, every 2-10 years that we are meeting our goals and benchmarks.

I understand the dents in our progress. I think it is important to understand and hear from this group, so please interrupt. Some of the things that contribute to, we are calling it recidivism. It sounds like a big complicated bad word but it is really just what is causing changes in the landscape that are either reversing the conservation measures or practices, or are there other changes that are likely to have been having or discontinued? Has it been having a detrimental effect on these four functions and values or are discontinuing a beneficial effect?

So you lease out your land to an operator and he uses all direct seed. Then when that expires it goes to someone who uses a more conventional method and that is land that is changing from one practice to another. That gets us to this slide which is really thinking a little bit about what are the investments? What are we seeing producers put money into? Infrastructure, irrigation systems, and watering facilities, things that are not necessarily inexpensive or easy to move or transferable versus cropping practices that may be more transient or more dependent on incentives.

We haven't talked about it much in this work group but I think there are also some questions that we want to ask about the influence of different business models. How many operators are working their own land, versus working on land owned by others, the different practices that are maybe more common to those who own their own land versus those who operate on other folk's land?

We need to get a sense of this to try to understand the different rates that the conservation practices that may come out of these. What I understand, there will be some things that are under primitive contracts or easements where land may go into primitive conservation agriculture of some kind and that can be defined a lot of different ways.

Ben Floyd – Everybody understands why we are caring about recidivism? Any questions on that?

David Lange – I'm lost on that. I looked it up and it says, "The tendency of a convicted criminal to reoffend."

Ben Floyd – That's the definition that would fit right in. Guilty until proven innocent. There are different ways we can measure performance. We discussed as a group that we wanted to focus on practices rather than trying to measure water, soil, riparian vegetation, more of the physical attributes that illustrate what functions exist. If we are going to focus on practices or conservation stewardship, strategies and practices to demonstrate that we are protecting critical areas, then we have to be able to account for changes in practices as they occur.

Where we are going with this, is you buy a direct drill seeder and it costs a couple hundred thousand dollars. Are you going to buy it one year and stop using it two years later? Probably not. You are going to make an investment and you're going to continue. That means you are going to have a very low recidivism rate. You are not going to repeat that other kind of tillage practice you used to do but other practices may change in and out year to year.

Or maybe you are farming some ground in one area and you are up high and now you are going to no-till so you are protecting land but maybe it is not next to a stream. But maybe next year you go somewhere else and that goes back into conventional tillage and now you have more runoff and erosion that comes off of that. That change in effect based upon practice is what we are calling recidivism, if it goes back towards that may be more harmful to a critical area. Does that make sense? I could tell there were a little bit of questions.

When we track all the good things that you are doing the trajectory looks like this, right? It says, generally producers across the County get better and better, more sophisticated, more precise, more protective of critical areas in many ways over time but there are some down ticks on occasion in certain areas. Even though the overall trend looks like that, the little down ticks is recidivism. We are trying to demonstrate to the people that have to approve this that we thought about that and we captured what we think the rate of recidivism is, and we made sure our protection goal was a little bit more than what we thought was going to be coming out to maintain what we have today. Does that make sense?

Nancy Belsby – Sometimes there are issues with the direct seeding and you go back to conventional. But that shouldn't be backsliding. You shouldn't get negative points for that.

Ben Floyd – I wouldn't say there would be negative points. We need to account that we have already overcome that. So, if no-till is not working because you don't have enough moisture, weed issues, and so you have to go back to most tillage, there is still above conventional. But it is different than what it was and it is probably higher erosion rates associated with that even two pass for conservation tillage as opposed to direct seeding. There is probably a little less aquifer recharge. So, all we are doing is we are accounting for that change in our measurement of how we are doing to protect the critical areas.

Vivian Erickson – Maybe it is also not getting a negative point for changing your practice, but recognizing that people are continuing to do practices after they have (inaudible) So, ten acres put into direct seed now is ten acres the next year is on top of what someone already did the previous year by another producer. You put in a practice and you are continuing to influence that base line so we don't have to account for, recidivism is just accounting for just the base line.

John Pearson – A good example would be CRP that doesn't get signed back in that was there in 2011.

Ben Floyd – CRP is a great example. We have to account for that change even though CRP may not necessarily be, it is not a critical area but there is an indirect downstream that could affect critical areas and that is how we account for it.

Jon Jones – Just a real life example of that. I used to work for Ecology and they would report how many direct seed acres they had every year. It went up every year, it went up so high they had more acres in direct seed than they had acres. Some of the people would crop out and change the rotation points that were sold and they were just the new people they signed up. It all added up. You don't want to be that watershed because they lost a lot of credibility. It wasn't the best thing. They knew what they were doing.

Joan Folwell – What I thought was recidivism, I thought it was also to ensure that we would not drop below that 2011 level. We were covering in that respect.

Ben Floyd – You are spot on. I wish you would have said that ten minutes ago, we would have been done.

John Small – I think a lot of this comes down to this key point here, that is exactly what was going on in WC in July 2011, except that we don't expect to be able to figure out perfectly, despite how smart Vivian is. It is too much to figure out exactly every direct seed field versus low tillage and every other practice that was in the ground. What we are proposing is to define some of the NRCS data and go forward to track stewardship investments whether they are conservation practices or other things that people are doing. Self-funded or otherwise. That is why it is important to understand this recidivism rate. We don't know where we are in terms of absolute value for these functions and values. We are only measuring the change, and in order to do that effectively we have to measure the change in both directions.

Ben Floyd – We can't know what was in 2011. There is just no way to be able to capture that.

David Lange – We could go to the County and compare the 1960-70's miles of ditches that were cleaned compared to the 1980-90's.

Alan Thomson – We don't have any records of back then because you guys were just going ahead and doing it and not telling us.

Ben Floyd – You could look at aerial imagery and do some riparian vegetation and stream mile lengths.

David Lange – I think in my life time I've seen reduction in, (inaudible.)

Ben Floyd – David was saying he has seen improvements over time and so have we. That is why we are counting on that trajectory continuing as part of this. It is just that the resources it would take to nail down that 2011 baseline. Who knows, WC or the conservation district may get sued by some third party interest that says, "We don't trust your baseline. You can't tell us exactly how you are protecting. You

have some counties that are using measures. How can you really demonstrate unless you have on the ground data that demonstrates that it is better?" This approach that we are proposing could be an issue. But it is an approach that we think is consistent with the law, is a cost effective approach and there is enough logic and evidence of practices that are ongoing that we think we can justify, explain it and defend it going forward.

John Small – Our intent is to talk through some of these key conservation practices and get a sense from worker members what is an appropriate recidivism rate. How many anchors county-wide that go into a certain conservation practice might be likely to come out within a period of time? We can start to account for that as we look at those anchors that are being put into that conservation practice.

Obviously, this is something we are going to need the work group or the future members of the work group to think about in 5 or 10 years as these conservation practices change. We built in an ability to account for that overtime. That is often what we see is not so much recidivism, and I don't like that word for that reason, but it is an evolution from one cropping system to another to another as the techniques become more refined and more accepted.

Art Swannack – One problem I see with this recidivism idea, maybe relapse would be the same term. We were just at a meeting yesterday in St. John, talking about weed control and no-till challenges on both. There may be points in a rotation of farms that you go back to conventional for a year or two before you roll back into no-till or some type of mulch till, because of normal weed control practices and the way chemistry problems are coming up. I feel like you guys are headed towards a linear model on either you have this practice or you don't. You never get rid of it and I'm not sure that is the right approach in reality which those of that farm it is just more of a systems model. Just to make it fit in for certain things but may not be all you ever do. Does that make any sense to anybody?

Ben Floyd – It does.

John Small – Just remember we are thinking about this on a county-wide level, not on field by field level. I completely acknowledge that you might want to go back to conventional practices or it may be an individual farm level but different changes emit every direction. We are just trying to understand the net change of the county-wide level. So I would include some of those conversions back to conventional practices to just be part of the larger crop rotation in the County. We are trying to understand is how is that evolving?

Joan Folwell – So the 20% that has been suggested,

Ben Floyd – That was a plug number.

Joan Folwell – Oh, I thought you did some research on that or got somebody else's data.

Ben Floyd – We pulled the number out of the air. So that is why we have this table now. We put that as a plug number to get the concept out there. Now today we would like to come up with some assumptions. We will still pull numbers out of the air but you will help us. I think it is probably too high. It varies based upon practice.

You buy a drill seeder, you are probably going to try and make that technology work for you. You may swap in and out year to year but you are going to probably continue to use that direct seed equipment for your planting operations. That is something that has high cost, it is a big investment.

Fencing. Fencing is going to come in and out every year. Maybe if it is electric, you can move that around. But if you put in a permanent fence, it is not likely going to see a change. Out of all the acres that might go into fencing or grazing management how much would come out in a given year? Is it one to two percent, ten percent? We are looking for some guidance from you. We broke it up into if it is expensive to get into, you are probably not going to come out of that quickly so you will have a lower recidivism rate. If it is easy to move in and out like a filter strip or something or let's say you have a crop circle.

NRCS gave you some money to put some habitat in a corner that is not part of the circle. You've come up with another way to make more money off of that than it is higher than the payment of the NRCS program, you may just go ahead and put that into another type of ag use. Where it is not that expensive to come in and out, it is grass for habitat and now it is crop or whatever. It is easier low berry, entry exit, then you might have a higher recidivism rate. Maybe it is 10%. We need some guidance from you on what rates to include for some of these practices.

Joan Folwell – We could drive ourselves crazy thinking about all these different situations. I appreciate that chart. It gives me a perspective but I know there is fault, but the suggestion that I will put forward is that CRP covers a lot of acres. There is documentation about how many acres were in, how many acres came out, how many acres were re-up. Just look at those figures to get a feeling to what a common practice like that has and then make adjustments for. How many situations where there wouldn't be any recidivism? This is a guessing game to begin with. So, come up with a figure that you are comfortable with based on data.

Ben Floyd – I think that works pretty good for CRP.

Jon Jones – Joan hit on something that has been floating around in my head. When someone takes out CRP and that is probably the biggest thing we are going to address with recidivism. When we take it out there is a lot of different ways with what they are going to do with that. Whether it is going to be conventional tillage or a combination of conventional or total direct seed. We are going to have to snatch numbers out of the air with two hands on that. No matter how many farmers you ask what they are going to do with that ground after it comes out of CRP, you are going to get that many answers.

Nancy Belsby – What I've seen is that the direct seeding is the best way to take it out of CRP because you are not turning the soil and it is more effective.

Jon Jones – I agree with you, that is probably the best way. But there are farmers that say you need to plow and get rid of the weed seed on the surface and turn it under and then you summer fallow it really fine to get rid of the weeds, and the clumps so you can get a good seed bed.

Nancy Belsby – In WC we have a lot of poison hemlock along the waterways and WC doesn't seem to be addressing it.

John Pearson - I'd get more cows in there.

Nancy Belsby – There is nothing in here about weed control and you should get a bonus for getting rid of poison hemlock. Am I off the mark on that?

Ben Floyd – No, we probably have something related to weed control or practices.

Vivian Erickson – I think we discussed it in ag viability. Some of the practices help manage weeds which is good for ag viability.

Art Swannack – I'd be putting CRP into your lower recidivism category for a couple of reasons. One, it doesn't come quick and it is not easy to take out. Depending what part of the County and what kind of a variety mix you planted, it is hard to kill. The other part is, a guy doesn't necessarily leave that in conventional tillage when he takes it out. It may be going into a mixed tillage (inaudible) after the first couple of years. So I don't know that it sits there quite as much as the, under higher recidivism there is one that is kind of there but not, and I think that is low market prices. If we have really low market prices anything you can do to cut costs is going to affect what you are willing to continue doing in terms of conservation.

David Swannack – We are almost maxed out in our County for CRP which means that our CRP acres has been going up for the last 30 years. It is just changing the part of the County that it is in. That won't make any difference, will it? Okay, now it is in Palouse instead of Lamont. Nobody cares as long as those acres are still in CRP.

John Pearson – Aren't we doing this by watershed?

Ben Floyd – We are doing it by watershed but then we are rolling it out to the County level, so there may be some offsets in areas, right? This area changes back to more conventional tillage and in cultivation and this area now is not cultivated. It is more across the county.

David Swannack – We have to keep in mind that the farm is really a living organism. It is changing every day, every year. You talk about \$200,000 to buy a no-till drill and decide the next year you aren't going to use it. That is a reality. It happens and David is probably being polite but I've done this and you take it and you know you are going broke because you've done it. If you paid for one mistake you've got to change and every, we've gone through droughts, we're going through a money drought now. How much are we going to be changing next year because of the bad mistake we made last year based on what we understood was real?

John Pearson – I would caution, I am a little uncomfortable putting too much emphasis on talking about CRP because it is a government controlled program. I know it has been around for 30 years but we have no control of what the government is going to do for funding. If they don't have another sign up and stuff starts drawing out and we lose 20% of the County in CRP and we have it as part of our model then that could bite us. We can't do anything about it but I don't know if I would bring it up any more times than we have to in the document.

Ben Floyd – Except we do need to account for it if we see this, which is happening. We are seeing decreased enrollment since 2011 and that is the baseline. The good news is that things are hammered from a producers' standpoint.

John Pearson – What was the last sign up? There was a lot that didn't get accepted in WC and that was through no fault of the farmer.

David Swannack – Still our percentage went up.

John Pearson – What about acres in the County. Did it go up?

David Swannack – That's what I'm talking about.

Ben Floyd – In 2011, 193,000 acres. In 2015, 151,000 acres.

Joan Folwell – We are talking about this in the context of trying to get some kind of grasp of what the recidivism rate should be to be incorporated in this document. We are not talking about advertising CRP or putting any special emphasis on it in the document. We are just talking about some kind of (inaudible) data or tool to come up with a reasonable estimate of what the rate should be.

Ben Floyd – That's correct. Maybe you can help us if you think about practices that are implemented and change from year to year. How much do you think is going back into conventional tillage versus ground that is being put into mulched tillage or direct seeding?

David Lange – Seven percent.

Ben Floyd – Seven percent that is probably coming out back into,

David Lange – Comes and goes.

Ben Floyd – I thought that 20% was too high, too, but we heard feedback from some of the other counties that is too high of a rate as well.

David Lange – Well, maybe 3-7%. I don't know.

Jon Jones – I think some of the CRP when it comes out whole fields don't come out. They leave the hilltops or wet draws or something like that. CRP is still functioning for the whole thing. That will be a hard thing to track. I don't want to throw another variable in it but it comes back to we are going to have to make the estimate.

Joan Folwell – That is what I was saying. You've got these figures but you talk about all these exceptions that are going to undo that total of plus, plus, minus with a result. But it will give us some kind of a frame of reference. We can bring up examples like the ones you already have to say. It will add to the number of acres that are in or subtract from that number and that will help us get us a ball park number.

Ben Floyd – We can look at that. The percentage might be higher than what we think so I can put a percentage to no recidivism that is zero percent. So if lower recidivism, so there are occasions where you buy a big piece of equipment and make a big investment and find out it isn't working for you. You sell that to somebody else and it works better for them and you go back to something that works better for you. But that is maybe a lower percentage. Maybe that is a three or five percent. Then you have a higher rate for things that come in and out quickly and it's like seven or ten percent.

David Lange – You could have a no-till drill and then find out that you can't get through the residue and so you have to disk the crap out of it in the Fall in the front of the drill. The soil erosion in all reality is still next to zero through a heavy disking or a matting format. Is it a full no-till system? No, is soil erosion reduced as much as possible? Yes. To put a number on that, I don't know.

Joan Folwell - So, you come up for these various percentages for each one of the three categories. Did you expect to add them together?

Ben Floyd – We are going to identify what we think is going to be happening. Basically, this is to account for practices that get self-reported, or tracked through conservations districts or tracked through NRCS and we just said that we had 100,000 acres of these practices. Our recidivism rate said that we lose 7% of that so we are going to say 93%, 93,000 acres is the net increase that we saw or maintained through that time. It is really just to track, protection and account for it. It is a value that we use in to the future to discount our progress to account for recidivism. Does that make sense?

What I am hearing is that twenty is too high. We may go look at CRP acres and that may not completely help us because these guys are trying to convince me that doesn't give a complete picture. Just acres that are enrolled and not enrolled. I'm liking the three to seven and that is not far off from what we have heard from the other counties we are working with. This is how you would account for it. The dark blue in the bottom is the cue that is recidivism.

But if you look at the practices that are improving water quality function over all, the preponderance of practices that are being implemented overwhelms the recidivism rate. We know that this would be protection basically just capturing that and that everything else on top of that is enhancement. We are over and above meeting our goal.

We are hoping that even though we don't know exactly what really was happening in 2011, where the practices were, how many practices were and how many acres, how many miles of fence, prescribed grazing that was happening, we can still demonstrate that there is net trend that is going this direction. Even with the recidivism rate of three or seven or even ten percent. Maybe we pick five and ten, we still show that we are way above that so leave us alone. We are protecting and actually enhancing. That is the premise behind this. So three to seven, five to ten. Do you have any guidance for us? Five to ten is more conservative, three to seven is maybe more accurate. We just need to pick something that makes sense.

Alan Thomson – Three to seven.

Ben Floyd – Three to seven it is.

John Small – I had my set up slides, I talked about benchmarks, goals, and objectives, but the middle part of that is goals. These are required on the work plan and we've chosen not to make these detailed but break them down around what is the enhancement trajectory. What are we trying to do with regard to each of our functions?

Ben Floyd – So, we have to protect, that is the baseline performance measure we have to meet. But we also have to demonstrate through voluntary measures how we are going to enhance, improve, increase so that is what this is. You saw the goals and benchmarks language in the work plan. This shows how we are going to both protect and upward movement.

Alan Thomson – How are you going to do that with ground water recharge?

Ben Floyd – Maybe we just protect the ground water recharge. We are recharging but we are recharging for Adams County. Maybe Latah County. Recharge is happening somewhere, somehow.

Alan Thomson – They are stealing it.

John Small – I don't know that we are losing recharge rate necessarily in WC. It certainly not the source of the overdraft.

Alan Thomson – We don't know.

Ben Floyd – You may be increasing ground water recharge and then it goes down, hits a clay layer of soil, back into the water body, surface water.

Alan Thomson – That new well that Latah County just drilled over the border is sucking our water away.

Ben Floyd – Exactly. But that is not part of VSP. Don't look too far under the hood when it comes to ground water recharge and critical aquifer recharge areas. Just trust us on that one. We will check the box, answer the mail, and everybody is going to smile and say that we have it covered and hope that is all we have to say.

Art Swannack - Are we going to be held accountable for increasing soil moisture when they look at this?

John Small – That gets to the next slide. What you guys are going to be held accountable to some degree is just the level of participation of these conservation practices. Whether or not it is through the NRCS or voluntary or self-funded, or through another program. Our suggestion is that we set up a tracking system. Primarily we have seen that just by tracking NRCS numbers things are looking good and that definitely does answer the mail in terms of protecting critical area resources.

This just shows what the (inaudible) that we have talked about up until now is really just a method for doing these things on the landscape. The changes that ag is having are providing the benefits that the USDA and others have provided for nutrient management, pest management, direct seed, mulch till, range water, and prescribed grazing. All those are having a beneficial effect and they are being done more and more within WC and that is how we can show that critical areas are being protected. It is really more based on tracking the things that we can track, which is participation or implementation in these conservation practices.

Ben Floyd – Were there any questions you had about the goals? We are going to refine the goals a little bit and we will have some updated values based upon the recidivism rates that we just agreed upon through our scientific process. Overall did you see anything in the goals that you didn't like? The goals are largely in the direction that we are suggesting the plan goes.

Joan Folwell – The list of goals you show up there, that is not the same list you show in the draft. (Inaudible)

Ben Floyd – This is shortened, we do have those in the draft in more details. We are going to do some refinement of that section, but the general methodology is still going to be in there. The agency that is

going to help you track and monitor this or organization that you set up, or however you are going to do this, they really get to worry about how to track this. You are setting up a process for somebody else to follow.

Dave Lange – Do you think the key conservation practice examples, there should be something in there (inaudible) like summer fallow, something that protects summer fallow, guys under key conservation practice example? It has no till, direct seed, mulch till, reduced till, it doesn't mention Western WC.

David Swannack – But it does help reduce tillage.

Vivian Erickson – That is another thing we wanted to discuss today. We have our surface water quality goal to maintain and improve surface water quality. For each objective we have come up with some stewardship strategy examples. Making sure that this list covers the County to meet that objective as well as what people are doing and where we want it.

Dave Lange – I'm thinking black summer fallow that has enough residue in it that it falls under (inaudible)

Jon Jones – Black summer fallow is probably less than 10% surface residue.

Ben Floyd - It just means that you till it up pretty good but you still about 10% of the residue.

Jon Jones – It might be really fine and it looks like dirt instead of, (inaudible). I think the no-till and the mulch till, I don't want to get too much detail but if we gave a surface residue of 40% for example, that is considered to be a conservation practice that would cover both of those. It is possible if people are really careful.

David Swannack – Really careful means I do not grow barley. Not plant hay and barley (inaudible)

Jon Jones – Okay, let's make it 30%. Thirty percent is the NRCS standard for mulch till. It is pretty low. If you measure residue, if you see any residue at all it is probably at least 30%.

Art Swannack – I've had crops just like Dave in this part of the County and if you get farther to the west it just produces nothing and the residue doesn't stay around. It's not the main money making crop but like Dave said, if you put barley out there in those years where we are getting $\frac{3}{4}$ (inaudible) to the acre barley because we had hot weather and eleven inches of rain fall, there won't be much there. That just happens every so often with those rotations and it happened a couple of years ago.

David Swannack – You spray it three times and you may not have that 30%.

Jon Jones – We are trying to set a goal, not a standard that people have to meet.

Kim Weerts – So the goal is no-till direct seed, mulched till, reduced till and it doesn't have to have a percentage because it is a goal and that goal is going to be different on everybody's land and if we get into the minutia, we are in big trouble.

Ben Floyd – That is why we wanted to keep it handled. We could put in rotation.

David Lange – I would like you to put in high residue black summer fallow.

Ben Floyd – Okay.

John Stuhlmiller – This conversation is very interesting and it happens in each of the groups I have participated in. I would encourage you all to think about, remember these are the key conservation practice examples. I wouldn't think of it as 30% crop residue, or 23% or anything like that. You are talking about practices in the broader sense. I would encourage you not to get yourself bound up and say this is also not the goal.

The goal is under surface water quality and all of these are practice examples. Remember not to try to dial it in and say what we mean by reduced till or what we mean by mulched till at X percent. It is a practice that involves mulched till then you don't care whether it is wheat or barley or some other cover crop. You are working towards maintaining that rather than (inaudible).

One more thing, where we have to maintain or improve surface water quality through implementation of key conservation practices, I would encourage that it be written such that maintain or improve water quality through continuing practices on the ground. Because your baseline is July 2011 and you are already doing things so you don't have to add to that to maintain. Continue doing all the good stuff you are doing and add to that.

Ben Floyd – Okay, I think you agreed on the first one which was we are going to stay away from getting too specific. We will add the black summer fallow and I didn't quite get it all there but Vivian has it. High residue black summer fallow as a key stewardship practice with overall stewardship strategy.

David Lange – I was just thinking that when the rubber hits the road on this thing, and if you are driving through WC and they come and inspect WC under the new VSP program it is like, what is that dirt field out at Dusty? Where does that fit in?

Jon Jones – I wondered it too, and I don't want to. We are getting really deep into the details but I would even question the definition of direct seed. Maybe we should. It is like seeding in a way you can maintain the best amount of residue. Everyone has a different idea of direct seed.

Ben Floyd – We have a general definition of conservation tillage and direct, so you make a good point. Everything we try to provide a little bit of flexibility and getting more general than specific. So I would say you look at what we have written up and if you think something is going to give the impression that everybody has to start doing this practice, we don't want that out there, so help us. We are not sensitive in it the way you are and you know it much better than we will ever know it. Help us make this work plan be clear about those.

John Pearson - Along those lines, the difference between the work plan and the technical plan, you said there is stuff in the work plan that should be transferred to the technical plan. So is that what we just did? Are we talking too much technical in this work plan?

Ben Floyd – We may have a high roll up and we may have all of this goal, benchmarks, recidivism in the back for the implementer and the tech panel. We came up with the same conclusion. It sounds like I'm seeing some head nodding that all this discussion in Chapter 5 really belongs in the appendix and just keep it, here is our goals. We are going to try and do this and here is all the practices that you can consider and there others. You can do a little bit or you can do a full NRCS, lots of flexibility.

Kim Weerts – We want the producer to read it and if we make it too long and too technical they will read five pages.

Nancy Belsby – Can you go back to, back to goal #1. It says something like reduce input from wildlife including sediment, nutrient heat and other perimeters. Why do they have heat in there?

Ben Floyd – Because heat affects the function of a water body so it is one of the things we are considering. There is a function there, if we can have cooler water we could have used temperature.

Nancy Belsby – Warm water is natural.

Ben Floyd – So, we only care about where we can affect it. Right? So if you got a bunch of areas where you got direct seeding, more residue and you are getting more recharge, and that comes in as cooler ground water that downstream is coming in, great. We are trying to reduce temperature in that instance. In the channeled scablands you can't do much about riparian vegetation, but maybe there is some other areas where a little more canopy can help some.

A hot day, several hot days in a row, ambient air temperature, it doesn't matter in Eastern Washington, you are not going to affect water quality like a lot of people outside of this area think. Maybe you just need to plant tall trees and have everything shaded all the time and then you'll have cool water and salmon, etc. That is not the way it is but there are people who think that is exactly what needs to happen. You have taken all the vegetation out and you're grazing the cows and you're not doing anything good. So we are trying to dispel that but keep it in the context of that we can actually affect temperature in some ways. It may be marginal but we can have some affect.

By the way, you see the circle in the draft, we now have the circle with the leg off to the side. It shows the work planning process, established the benchmarks indicators and implementation and the goals and then we will take that and adjust it over time as we learn more. We talked a lot about participation goals today and practices. There is data out there that can help us to validate the things we said are happening, the benefits we think are happening. There are some trends hopefully that are showing up in the data that is being collected many times for the purposes that can further validate the performance of this program. That is just an updated adaptive management slide for you.

Implementation. John Pearson before he read the work plan, said that we should start with the job description of what we want this organization to do which is in Section 6. We have a description of reporting, outreach, technical assistance, tracking and working on adaptive management. You could also put in that job description working with this group, which is probably going to be the hardest job.

With this job description in mind and the homework assignment to think about who you want to lead this, what are your thoughts on who should lead this? We are going to need one organization ultimately where the buck stops. We don't have to figure this out today but I would like to advance our thinking at least some.

John Pearson – How big a job is it?

Ben Floyd – I think it can be pretty substantial. John Stuhlmiller, do you want to tell us what you anticipate for funding at least maybe for the next 2-4 years?

John Stuhlmiller – In the baseline of the budget is money similar to the exact amount, 7.3-7.6 million, I think about \$140,000 per year. I think that is the number per county.

John Pearson – That sounds like a one person job.

Ben Floyd - Let's say, \$125-135,000 a year for the next 2-4 years in terms of the state binnerium. That money is not there yet, but there is lot of support for it so we are expecting that it will be there. It is one person with reporting associated with recognition that you will have a report every two years like a progress report that needs to be prepared. I assume there would be some time working with the work group to make sure the report is accurate. Then a 5-year performance review and a 10-year performance review where you have to go and demonstrate how your goals are protecting and where you are trying to enhance.

Jon Jones – Art, is there any way the County could assist with logistics, maybe office space? Can the County help at all?

Art Swannack – When you start talking about where there is space available in the County, and there really isn't a lot of space available for something as a continuous project. If you are talking is there \$50,000 for the County to help with, I don't see that money being there.

David Lange – What happens if we have the Whitman Conservation District do it. They are out there doing the burn permits and driving the area doing testing. Just an idea but not create more bureaucracy and maybe have a little efficiency.

Ben Floyd – What you are saying is use an existing organization as opposed to creating a new one. Whitman CD, there are four CD's.

John Pearson – I think it has to be an entity that is recognized by government but it also has to be one that is accepted by producers and there may be some feedback from some producer groups with these people are going to be on your land. It sounds like they will come and evaluate what you are doing.

Ben Floyd – Maybe it could be like what Kim was suggesting is that cattlemen and wheat growers prepare a report, other commodity groups prepare a report, and it comes back through and that person collects it and summarizes it.

John Pearson – Can we do it on a website?

Ben Floyd – You could do it on a website but you still have to have some kind of administration.

David Swannack – You've got four conservation districts. They have most of this information already.

David Lange – They would be able to highlight fencing or no-till drill, sprayer, or technology or something like that so it would be an easy way to show case it and report it, I think.

Jon Jones – The four CD's in the County used to have a council of conservation districts. Every month they would get together and have a meeting and just exchange ideas what they were doing. That worked well for a long time. They don't do that anymore. They took minutes and when we came up with the burn permit plan that's when they kind of got together. The council came out with a consolidated plan and

they worked out what they were going to do and how to do it. Each district could give a burn permit but they had to consult the other. There were perimeters.

My point is that group of people work really well and I think they could work well on this, too. They would act as an advisory group to a particular employee, maybe. One of the CD's would handle the funding for that employee. One of the CD's would have to take the lead to pay the employee because the money would come through the State and it needs to go through a state recognized agency to get the money down to the base level for final pay. I would suggest the four CD's do it in a partnership that takes all and it takes some of the stress off of each one of them.

Kim Weerts – Okay, I'll play devil's advocate and I'll use historical evidence if you want to say that. Not all producers like the CD's and they don't like to work with the CD's and a certain percentage feel pressure in working with the CD's. There are producers that don't trust the CD's and in fact, in the last couple of years there have been situations where the CD's don't even work together. So I see those all as issues.

A classic example is John and I were sitting in the conference room and a guy came in and he wanted to borrow a drill. I said to him about three times that Palouse Conservation had a drill. He said, "I'm not going there." So I told him that I thought the Palouse Conservation District had supervisors and they are all farmers and they could probably direct you toward a drill. "I'm not going to the CD's. I'm not going to that one and I'm not going to Whitman CD."

So, I think by having maybe a person as its own entity we might get, there would be less of a perception that this is governmental and more of a perception that this is a program that WC wants to be successful at.

Ben Floyd – Just to recap what I've heard. We have some folks that feel like the CD's are there and we should use them and then I'm hearing that we may not get the full participation that we would like if we went that route.

Joan Folwell – I guess you know what my bias would be, a district board. I look at this position as not a regional but a county-wide position and CD's have engineers that work on a regional basis. They are shared with several CD's. From an implementation aspect of just getting that position situated it seems to me that the CD's would present the most efficacious method of doing it. They have their own data about programs that could be put into these reports.

They liaison with a bunch of other organizations, NRCS, FFA, that they could gather the information from there. The individual producer groups could make the total of their data flow to this individual. I understand there may be some opposition to working with the CD's but the fact of the matter is this is a program that is mandated by the State and it has to be done. It is not to anybody's benefit not to provide the data that is needed to make the program show success.

Art Swannack – I hate to bring in a little reality but I'm expecting the funding stream to come down for implementation the same way it came down for VSP's plan creation. If it does that means the County is going to have to, it will be just basically for this process, which is search for people willing to implement with proposals their RFP on services and then decide who is going to be the implementation. I expect it is not going to be this free-flowing as we may be starting to talk about. It will be more restricted in the sense, of are you capable of doing this work when we pass the money on to you to do it?

John Stuhlmiller – I think that is right. I think in the end the County will be receiving the dollars from the conservation commission, (inaudible).

Art Swannack – There is less requirement on the County as being on the line for the report being done properly, accounting for funds and whoever is doing it is going to have to show us they can show they can do that work.

Ben Floyd – Thank you, Art.

Alan Thomson – We are doing it the same way we are doing it for this program that we are in right now. We manage the money but we could assign somebody to do the work. Yes, the money comes through the County and this is the VSP program. This is not the conservation district that is running this show. It is not the County running this show. We're just channeling the money so somebody needs to get appointed or employed to implement this program and the funding comes through the County. Talking to your point there, Kim, it's not the CD's that is running it. So, those folks out there that don't like the CD's for whatever reason we can't say the CD's are running this. Maybe that would alleviate that issue.

Ben Floyd – What if we focus on identifying that we are going to have a VSP coordinator? The County is going to contract or through some other mechanism establish a VSP coordinator that would work with all the producers. Also work with CD's, private industries, commodity groups to collect, summarize and report on at a county level. Not any individual's names specifically but the performance every two years, and oversee the development of the 5-year, 10-year performance reviews and will work and provide staff support to this work group.

We just described the responsibilities and say the County, the work group supports the County going through some kind of process to determine who would be the best to serve in that coordinator role. It could be an organization, it could be an individual they hire, and the resources go through the County. So if you decided you wanted to hire a county staff or contract with a local person to do the work, you could set up an office and you could use the money from VSP as long as it is there to pay the rent, pay that employee. The County would figure that out through whatever arrangement they felt was appropriate.

John Pearson – So, what is the chain of command?

Ben Floyd – I would say the County is an administrative function and the individual coordinator would report to the work group. You would be like a board of directors.

John Pearson – The County must be on the hook to somebody.

Alan Thomson – That is the way the VSP is set up right now is the money is funneled through the County but we are not creating this program.

Ben Floyd – Nor will they approve it or be responsible for implementing it.

John Pearson – So, who is?

Alan Thomson – That is somebody we need to appoint.

John Pearson – We answer to Fish & Wildlife, DOE or somebody.

Ben Floyd – The Conservation Commission approves this and if they approve it the plan is in affect with however we define it.

John Pearson – Who is going to audit us?

Art Swannack –I believe it would be the State Conservation Commission director or their appointee. Once the plan is created and started they are the ones you would be looking back to see if you met their checkmarks.

Ben Floyd – And the technical panel. John, who is this group on the hook for? Who is going to verify that we are doing what we say we are going to do in the plan and the performance is there as we say it is?

John Stuhlmiller – Ultimately, you who develop the plan are going to say it will work this way. Whoever the report generator (inaudible). It will be ultimately the Commission to check in the 2 and the 5 following thereafter and you roll it up and say, “Here’s our report.” There won’t really be an audit in that sense during it because the cash, presumably keep in mind that it has to be re-budgeted every two years, but let’s assume that the cash flow remains steady.

You’ll have your cash. You’ll have to deliver the product for every incremental report so then the monitoring that is going to be going on. So it is really going to be you all, the County work group in a sense, along with whoever is handing the money out, better be making sure that there is actually the right post office box being delivered to. But ultimately it is the work group in a sense that is looking at it and (inaudible) the effort going forward as you think about it your adaptive management all of that will be at the work group level.

Ben Floyd – You have been set up as an organization or a governing board or a board of directors to develop the work plan and to oversee implementation.

John Pearson – Do we need insurance?

Ben Floyd – You can probably get that through an existing organization. The portion of the insurance coverage could come through the resources that come through the Conservation Commission to the County. If that’s who you choose, if that is who ultimately ends up being your administrative support. You get a change to decide how that works.

David Lange – You make it sound like we can be liable, in my opinion.

Nancy Belsby – Look at the number 2, 3, and 4 up there. Is that going to work?

Joan Folwell – When I look at that list of responsibilities, that is a really broad range and I’m not advocating CD’s in particular but I know there are agencies out in the County already that have fulfilled some of those points. We were talking in terms about that person mainly just collecting the data and making a report. That list may be re-considered. There may be some of those duties that other entities can fulfill at this point. We need to think about that a little bit more.

Ben Floyd – Good point, and I don’t want to lose the liability insurance but ultimately what happens if this program doesn’t work it just goes to a regulatory approach. So you are not on the hook. I’m not saying “just,” that is a big change, but you are not on the hook for anything but reporting and maybe overseeing

the work that this VSP coordinator, and I just came up with that as a term, is doing to make sure that they are doing the right things.

Kim Weerts – I agree with Joan in that when we talked about a coordinator that basically to me is that last bullet point and that the three above can be done by any number of organizations. Actually realistically, some of that could be funded, but a lot of that just goes with the existence of organizations, such as the CD's. When you go into a CD office now, the CD's already conduct outreach, they already provide technical assistance, and depending if they are going into a program or not, they develop plans.

But in addition to that, I can see somebody like the Whitman County Cattlemen's Association, doing the same three top things and certainly conducting outreach. We do now provide technical assistance to our producers and depending on whether or not the farm stewardship plan has to be a specific form we can do those things too. I like the idea of having one person that is collecting all the information because really, that's just a matter of connecting with all the organizations.

Ben Floyd – Right, which is why a coordinator title makes sense.

Kim Weerts – Then the rest of us do our due diligence on the top three and then we really shouldn't be paid for those things. That's stuff we should be doing anyway. We are trying to encourage producers to be a part of the program. Because that helps all of us.

Ben Floyd – Okay, are we getting some lessons around performance?

David Lange – So, bullet #2, provide technical assistance. Once again that comes back to self-taught. If you have one person accumulating the information but in reality we really are self-taught all winter long. We go to various learning seminars so that might not show up.

Brad Johnson – Getting back on the liability, when this plan is approved, all the liability goes to the Conservation Commission. That is why the Commission wanted to be the one who approved this. If there is a law suit or anything that is what the big selling point to the County was early on. You keep saying this is a board or this group has to stay in place, only to ensure that whatever one of those bullets they decide to participate in, is how I envisioned it.

Ben Floyd – To see the program gets implemented as you envisioned.

Brad Johnson – I don't see this group having any liability in the process but I could be wrong.

Ben Floyd – I think that is correct.

Jon Jones – There needs to be one person. I think we agree that there has to be a lightning rod somewhere. Someone has to collect the information. It has to be one person. But looking at that, that one person is going to need a lot of technical assistance from a lot of agencies. It's too big of a job for one person. I guess it would be our job to direct the person to collect the information from these different places. If we do have that one person, this board is going to have to do a lot of that training. There aren't any seminars for VSP coordinator.

Jennifer Boie – I'm just looking back at some of the comments and just wanted to offer the importance of if we do go with something like a local agency like a CD it is really important that we have all four CD's

working together. There is a conservation partnership that you can call. RCCP is not just an NRCS program. It is a partnership of agencies and we have collectively hired several staff that work on RCCP programs but work county-wide. So, PCD is the employer of records of these individuals but they are already working equally for Palouse Conservation District, Whitman CD, Pine Creek and Palouse, Rock Lake. So I just wanted to throw that out there that we have some staff that are already on as far as (inaudible) and records on behalf of all those CD's already.

Ben Floyd – I just want to recap what I've heard and I want to get some head nodding if you think I have it right. We have agreed upon a focal part, one person. Is it okay if we call this a VSP coordinator? Okay. Have we also agreed upon that the County will figure out how to establish that coordinator, will consider a variety of different approaches for doing that? You're not going to get into the business of figuring out how they are going to administratively function that.

So, the County will select who the coordinator is and go through the hiring or the contracting or the whatever, administration in coordination with this group, so that you are not left in the dark. That the resources that come for VSP implementation you will expect will continue to go through the County. The County will serve as the administrative organization for making this coordinator be in place and come about and would handle the administrative part of implementation with the coordinator being the point person.

Joan Folwell – Are you saying that the County would be the employer of the records?

Ben Floyd – I would say they would be the organization that administers how the VSP coordinator gets set up, or hired or contracted and we don't necessarily tell them how to do that. They come and hear what we are thinking about so there is some communication but they would be the lead on making that happen, using the resources. It wouldn't come out of county budget to do that. It would be out of VSP implementation money. If the money stops the function goes away and we look at an alternate approach. It wouldn't require any financial commitment for the County.

Alan Thomson – It sounds like the same process as getting you on board in the first place.

Ben Floyd – Right, but you made decide to not do a contract. You may hire somebody or you may contract with an individual, you could have flexibility on how you did that.

Alan Thomson – I need to explore that one.

Ben Floyd – So, can we ask Art, does that make sense to you? May be we lost him. I know that may seem like we are getting way ahead of ourselves here but we have to describe what this will be like in the plan.

So the third thing is we are going to de-emphasize the first three bullets and maybe this person will do that but it will do that for those people who aren't already reached through some other organization, if there is such a person.

Jon Jones – Whoever it is, is going to have to be pretty special person. That person is going to have to be a great communicator, good administrative skills, good organizational skills and I don't know if \$140,000 is going to buy that person and his office and a computer and mileage and everything he is going to need.

Ben Floyd –Let’s cross that bridge when we get to it. Maybe he doesn’t need to be a full-time person, maybe it is a part-time. There are lots of different ways it can happen.

David Lange – What is the farm stewardship plan?

Ben Floyd – Actually we don’t have farm stewardship plans. They are stewardship strategies and practices. You can document however you want to formally or whatever. We are going to scrap or de-emphasize that term. There is a farm stewardship plan that can be prepared by a CD, staff member or NRCS. There is a bunch of different names for what these are. I looked at your land and did an assessment of soil and runoff and all of that and here are some practices. That could be farm stewardship.

David Lange – Farm plans.

Joan Folwell – The plans that were put forth for Thurston and Chelan had checklists for the farm stewardship plan. Have they (inaudible) theirs?

Ben Floyd – No, they have checklists still and they will use those. We are proposing to have some kind of self-assessment for a checklist or tell us what you are already doing that is really great so that we can put it into the report. We are working on that right now behind the scenes, what you are reviewing and commenting. We are now taking a break from Volume I and we are working on the checklist and some of the technical appendices and all of this is going to come together. We are dribbling that out in bite sized pieces as we can put it together and as you can digest it and summarize it and get comfortable with it.

Nancy Belsby – How are we doing?

Ben Floyd – I think we are doing pretty well. You tell us how we are doing.

John Pearson – We are looking for someone full-time that is looking for a job, or a part time job. Can we use an organization like Anchor QEA? Can you do something like this?

Ben Floyd – I think you can handle it a number of different ways. Yes, you can use a consultant.

David Lange – So that questionnaire where you glean information from the growers, so if you partnered with the NRS or the FSA and then that would be just that questionnaire sheet of when you sign up, “What are your practices?” Then the grower doesn’t have to respond to 3 surveys, etc. We don’t do surveys.

Ben Floyd – What you are saying as much as you can build this into existing processes, we need to somehow collect the practices.

David Swannack – I think pinning this down to a farmer, can we actually pin it down to a farmer? The NRCS already has this information.

Kim Weerts – So, the person is not re-inventing the wheel. The person is collecting the data that all these agencies have that you pull it together for a report.

David Swannack – Talking about the farm plans which the farmer is having to end up make up. I guess that is where I’m getting down to. I’m afraid it is getting (inaudible.)

Jon Jones – I think maybe the sign-up sheet at the FSA when they go in and certify their stuff you might say on the questionnaire, “Are you doing anything on your place that you are not getting paid for? What practices that you are doing that are good for water quality that isn’t in the book?” They would say yes, and then the coordinator would go and ask them what they are doing. That would become part of the overall thing. Don’t make it individual. When you put a sign-up sheet in a government office it is pretty hard to get people to put anything on it unless they are getting money for it.

Vivian Erickson – This is where we are de-emphasizing the farm stewardship plan and relying more on collecting the agency data that is already out there?

Kim Weerts – I would think that the farm stewardship plan and the checklist and stuff like the DOE self-assessment and (inaudible) self-assessment, that’s for an individual to look at. It is at the back of the book and the only people that aren’t going to be already reported on are the people who are doing things that aren’t in a program. It doesn’t have to be, I think if you took one of our cattlemen, they are more than happy to say what they have done on their property that isn’t within the program. The rest of the information is already out there and it is just a matter of pulling it together on an annual basis. I don’t see it as that difficult. It is already there.

Ben Floyd – Okay, we’ve had a lot of discussion. We can pick this up again next time. Maybe we will summarize what we heard and refine the job description in Section 6 and then have a more informed discussion around that specifically. Is that okay? We’ve been going over 3 hours now.

Thank you everybody. Thank you to those who were on the phone. Another great meeting. We will see you on March 2, 2017, from 2-5 p.m.

5:20 p.m. – Adjourned.