

**WHITMAN COUNTY
VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM
Meeting
June 1, 2017**

MEMBERS:

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

Phone: Vivian Erickson, Anchor QEA; John Stuhlmiller, VSP Member; Jason Kunz, WDFW; Art Swannack, VSP member; John Small, Anchor QEA; Bill Eller, Conservation Commission; Evan Sheffels; Farm Bureau; Elinor Huber, Clerk.

Audience: Brad Johnson, Palouse CD.

4:05 p.m. – Ben opened the meeting. Let’s get started. I missed being with you the last meeting. We have pizza coming at 4:45 p.m. We are hoping today after we go through some edits with you that you are ready to support submitting this to the State Technical Panel. If you don’t support it today, we will work on a contingency plan before now and June 30th where we can get you to be comfortable to support submitting it.

We have a date for submitting the work plan to the technical panel for June 30th. Then we have two meetings that are scheduled in July with the State Technical Panel to go through the draft work plan and then they would approve it or do some revisions back and forth with them where they are comfortable and you are comfortable and then it could be approved by the middle of August. That is our tentative schedule. We are not trying to push you in this schedule.

There is a contractual obligation and Alan and Mark Storey are making sure that we get through the approval process. I also know that this group isn’t a bunch of shrinking violets and while we have done our best to meet the schedule and we hope that we will be able to approve things, we recognize that we want you to be comfortable with this work plan before it goes forward. I can give you more meeting dates at the end of the meeting.

We are going to review the updated work plan. We have had quite a few different communications with the Farm Bureau over the last few weeks associated with the Whitman work plan and the Grant County VSP work plan. They have looked at both plans and have given us comments on both plans that we will share with you tonight and show you how we propose to respond to them.

In those comments they reflect the experience that John Stuhlmiller and Evan Sheffels have had in working with the Technical Panel, knowing what they are looking for and how you say things and where you get detailed and where you back off of detail. We are suggesting that we listen to their guidance because they have seen what has happened with Thurston and Chelan Counties and the dynamics of the Tech Panel and we think they have good advice. You will have a chance to see it and you can challenge and talk about it.

We will go through their comments and also comments from Joan, Nancy and Jason Kunz. After we go through the work plan, we have a VSP overview and checklist document that is the primary communication piece that will be shared with producers and ranchers as the work plan would be implemented. Then we will talk about next steps schedule for review process for the State Technical Panel, if you are ready to go there. Any questions?

So, Vivian, let's put up the work plan. Don't be alarmed when you see a lot of edits on this document. There are some themes or comments that make adjustments all the way through. Some areas where it is just more editorial changes and not really changing the content. We have developed a list of what we think are the main content revisions. We will send this work plan out to you after the meeting.

In addition to what you hear and see on the screen you will have a chance to look through it. Even if you conditionally approve it you have the opportunity to ask questions, etc. Maybe before we go into the specific comments, if I can put John Stuhlmiller or Evan Sheffels on the spot, to just talk about the general perception that you had when you looked at the work plan.

John Stuhlmiller – The main thing we were looking at it from the Statewide Technical Panel perspective including in the introduction making clear that you do that walk through A-L and maybe a cover piece to go with it. Basically, what were the challenges? The plan that you have from a structural perspective is the best the Technical Panel will have seen and they know what to expect with your plan when it comes to them. That is a huge positive step.

Thurston was in trouble because the panel had trouble seeing where this or that piece was in the plan. As we have been reviewing your plan, were there any pieces that we should brush up a little bit? ST we have given comments related to that and then the focus being on clarity. All the edits that were suggested were for clarity purposes talking about the protection versus enhancements. So when the Technical Panel looks at this they will basically have a hard time not saying "yes," to the plan. It covers all the bases and it does what it is supposed to do. That was the basic nature of the edits that we suggested.

Vivian Erickson – Updates in the introduction. I know that we have on the agenda the work group taking action to submit the work plan. Some of the general comments I will just hit and then some of the changes that we made we might spend more time on.

We received some general comments on the watershed analysis and cleaning up language there regarding making sure that we are clear that riparian vegetation isn't necessarily existing along

all waterways. We did make that update from Joan's comment in the Appendix B-2 which is the watershed analysis unit description.

We received a comment also on how we are looking at watershed analysis unit description which is included in Appendix B-2 and how that relates to the goals and benchmarks that are in the work plan and making sure that producers when they are looking at this that connection makes sense for them.

We just want to remind the work group that we are taking the approach of preparing a submittal right now that meets the Tech Panel review requirements and we prepared the overview and checklist that we shared at the last meeting and we will review again today. This document that we will hopefully submit to the Tech Panel will be more in that detail review that we think the producers are not really going to read.

Ben Floyd – One of the comments was, what if one watershed is going down while everything else is going up? So let's say, Union Flat Creek. Maybe it is potentially being degraded while some of the other sub-watersheds are functionally being uplifted. We put in more specific measures of how we will track geographically where projects are implemented. We will also note that we will track indicators within sub-watersheds so that the County-wide is good and the individual watershed we are trying to maintain or enhance as well.

So, that is one of the structural updates in the document. We had the sub-watersheds already identified but we hadn't linked everything together. That was both a Farm Bureau comment as well as a Jason Kunz comment. That was a general update that we made.

Vivian Erickson – I think that is it for overall structure. We will hit more of the details as we go through.

Ben Floyd – So, upfront, the Farm Bureau said to make sure we come up with a checklist and that was the item that John Stuhlmiller referenced. This will have a cover letter that will show them, here are the things that are required and here is how we addressed them with any notes that go along with it. It would be like a submittal checklist in a sense.

Vivian Erickson – Here is a comment from the State to make it clear what the (inaudible) and we added a text box down here, discussing what the statutory tests of VSP are and one of them being that we need to protect critical areas while maintaining and enhancing the viability of ag and then obtaining measurable benchmarks. We just make that clear and added that. This version also has more photographs. Brad, thank you for the photos.

Ben Floyd – So, Brad, were you in the plane?

Brad Johnson – Yes, the supervisor from the, Keith Kopf. These photos were taken quite a while ago. I found them and sent them to Vivian.

Vivian Erickson – We also have the updated Whitman overview and checklist that we will review at the end of the meeting and Joan had a comment to add maintenance of native vegetation as the habitat practice. We have added that to the checklist as well as some suggestions that Brad Johnson added, as well.

We restructured Chapter 6 of the work plan and to shorten it up as we go into implementation in Chapter 6. Then after that we went into talking about regulatory applicable regulations and plans and then ending it with the section on watershed (inaudible). To help with the flow of the document we moved the discussion of (inaudible) of the watershed analysis unit towards the front of the work plan.

Ben Floyd – That is what I was talking about, organizing things based upon larger drainages and we will track at this level these three different drainages as part of implementation. Everything that drains to the Snake River that is part of the Palouse and then WRIA 34 and 56, the little bit of Hangman Creek. You could break up the County into 30 sub-basins but that doesn't make sense. So we did it on the main larger water bodies.

Vivian Erickson – We should discuss the comment from the State Farm Bureau on how we wanted to address frequently flooded area provisions to maintain all of the ability of flood insurance. We realized that we should make it more clear in the work plan what Whitman County and the work group is thinking would be covered under VSP versus the traditional Critical Areas Ordinance. We have made it clear when talking about (inaudible) but we may want to clarify that any structures that are included in the critical areas would undergo (inaudible) traditional critical area ordinance.

So for any structures as defined in the WC Code that are proposed within ag lands or any of the five critical areas whether they support ag activities or not will continue to be regulated through the County CAO as applicable. Additional other critical area provisions that are incorporated into this work plan that will continue to be reviewed under the CAO, include (inaudible). We wanted to make sure that is what the work group is thinking?

Ben Floyd – So, structures. Any kind of structure, what Evan said it wasn't clear whether someone that builds a structure in a frequently flooded area, are there voluntary practices associated with it? Or is that something where a person could still get flood insurance if they meet the requirements on the frequently flooded areas as part of the code within the County CAO and flood provision? Our intention is that all structures continue to be regulated under the County's code.

So other activities that happen in a frequently flooded area, like grazing, cultivation of ground that is where the VSP would apply to the ag activities. But a barn or even a pump station that is in that area would have to comply with the County Code and still have to comply with the hydraulic code. So we tried to clarify that language with this additional text.

Alan Thomson – And ditching.

Vivian Erickson – We do talk about that down here as well.

Ben Floyd – The landowner can improve the draining and ditching that was done. Any permitting from the County that is often done whether they are drained or prior converted cropland areas. That text was already in there, Alan, but it was back in Section 6 so we moved it to make it clearer. This is a pretty important distinction. It is one of those content sections where we clarified things.

Joan Folwell – Does any building that you wanted to construct in a critical area need a building permit regardless of the critical area?

Alan Thomson – You are crossing the building regulations and zoning. Buildings as far as the zoning ordinance and the critical areas, not building permits. Any building in a critical area needs to be reviewed, especially in a flood plain, or if it is a wetland it needs to be reviewed because you would be potentially be impacting that. It doesn't matter what the use is whether it is ag use, residential use or whatever. Buildings under 200 square feet are exempt from a building permit, regardless of where they are but are not exempt from zoning or critical areas.

Joan Folwell – That doesn't help.

Alan Thomson – Anything less than 200 square feet doesn't require a building permit regardless of where it is.

Joan Folwell – I was just curious when you are making the distinction of the flood plain issue.

Jon Jones – But on a wetland you can't build anything.

Alan Thomson – Yes, you can. Mitigation.

Joan Folwell – But if it is over 200 square feet regardless of what critical area it is on it needs to be reviewed by,

Alan Thomson – Let's try that again. All buildings regardless of size will be falling under the CAO.

Ben Floyd – It is just that some need a building permit on top of that.

Alan Thomson – I was trying to separate the permit from,

Joan Folwell – I guess I don't know what buildings are required on the regular CAO.

Alan Thomson – A structure, all buildings.

Joan Folwell – I understand the definition of that. But in order to put, you say structures are regulated by the CAO rather than the VSP? Okay.

Ben Floyd – We could have put ag related structures into this program. It would have been challenging and confusing doing that. So, Evan was saying he couldn't really tell whether how frequently flooded or the structures, can people now not get insurance because this is voluntary measures and they don't have to comply with the County's flood plain regulations, or flood hazard regulations? We were saying that was not our intent. So we are trying to clarifying that to say that all structures are covered under the conditional regulatory process, whether or not they need a permit.

Alan Thomson – Vivian, can you go back to that ditching part? There is one exception and that is ditching in a floodplain. I know we have talked about this and I want to make sure this is in there. A floodplain you can't tamper with regardless whether it is ag activity or residential. So any ditching in a floodplain requires a floodplain development permit. You got that one covered?

Ben Floyd – If the drainage is also a designated floodplain then the landowner needs an engineer to evaluate the ditching,

Alan Thomson – Okay, you got it.

Ben Floyd – So are you good with this language?

Jon Jones – Just a minute, ditching or tiling?

Alan Thomson – No, any alteration of a floodplain. That is FEMA.

Jon Jones – So, shall we put tiling in there too?

Ben Floyd – To evaluate the ditching or any other hydraulic modification.

Kim Weerts – Why don't you say, "ditching, tiling or other alterations."

Ben Floyd – Okay.

Alan Thomson – I think you need to put in there that the thing that triggers this is a Floodplain Development Permit by the County. That is the overarching regulation and application. A Floodplain Development Permit which entails all of the engineering and all that comes after that.

Ben Floyd – So, they will need to apply for a Floodplain Development Permit from the County.

Alan Thomson – Nothing is exempt in a FEMA floodplain. There are ditches out there that are not floodplains. There is a distinction.

Ben Floyd – Shall we put "designated FEMA floodplain?"

Alan Thomson – FEMA makes it even clearer.

Ben Floyd – That makes it better.

John Small – We should make that frequently flooded areas (inaudible).

Ben Floyd – So the designated FFA you can put in parenthesis “FEMA flood plain.” Evan, do these clarifications address your concerns?

John Stuhlmiller – They correct that. We just wanted to make sure other regulations that would apply to show the backdrop for the VSP.

Ben Floyd – So you will see some editorial clean-up, little minor tweaks. Here we just moved things around. Do you want to cover this food quality protection?

Vivian Erickson – This is text that was provided from the Farm Bureau. They wanted to make sure their environmental tests conducted for ag products verification that needs to occur, to make sure that products break down in soil, water and air protection of wildlife and habitat. This language is provided from the Farm Bureau to help support the intersections of soil functions and ag activities.

Ben Floyd – If you use a chemical and you comply with the application provisions, there are assumptions about how they break down in the environment. It is also known that the State has a division that enforces noncompliance.

Vivian Erickson – We just added a little additional context on changes to baseline conditions that occur outside of ag affects and it is something we added later in the work plan. The Farm Bureau also wanted to make it super clear that we are looking at baseline conditions and changes from ag activities.

Ben Floyd – So, you are not responsible for city wastewater treatment plant issues or acts of God, nature that happened. We are focused on those things that ag has control over. That language clarifies that.

Vivian Erickson – There is also clarification on our indicators that we included later in the work plan where we talk about indicators. Baseline intersections. This is based on feedback that we heard from some of the other counties on how we address game species based on priority one and two species. So you see a lot of strike out text, we just moved some of this information down to the text box to make it more clear and bring that game species out of the footnote. We still state in the footnote that we have this summary number and the table excludes the game species.

Ben Floyd – Mule deer and white tail both.

Vivian Erickson – Also providing a reference to where a lot of the detail for the species, as well as other species are met and accounted for in the appendices. This is also an additional note from

the Farm Bureau that data collected on ag activities and effect on designated critical area conditions will be compared to the baseline as in July 22, 2011.

Ben Floyd – So this text box talks about how protection goals are focused on those priority habitat and species, threatened and endangered sensitive candidate species. But when we get into enhancement we are trying to enhance all species. A good example is like a filter strip in between two fields. So, it is a filter strip, it is a drainage, it is vegetative waterway that maybe only flows once every five years but also provides a wildlife corridor. It may not necessarily be a critical area, just a little fringe area, but that doesn't mean it doesn't provide wildlife benefit.

So the enhancement and maintaining that we want to do for all species if it benefits both threatened and endangered species likely as well as the game species. Where we have areas with habitat for threatened or endangered species and it also overlaps with the game species. Then we are protecting game species habitat as well, but then beyond that everything else outside of those habitats are covered through our enhancement efforts in the work plan. So, Jason, do you have any comments?

Jason Kunz – One thing that came to mind was the use when you exclude the 600,000 acres because it is mostly ag land, you have taken out the pieces that are riparian, right? Because the animals that need that riparian corridor or wildlife activity, were those pulled out of it?

Ben Floyd – No, all the riparian areas, all the wetlands cliffs and bluffs, and habitats for specific species are included, shrub steppe habitat, all of that is included. We haven't really pulled out 600,000 acres. We just say it is part of enhancement as opposed to protection. What we don't want to have is Jeff be responsible for trying to maintain a bunch of mule deer habitat shown on his property when they are feeding on his field on volunteer wheat in the fall. What would the management measure be to do that? If you know you have some specific wetland or riparian area, you know what the measures are associated with those.

Joan Folwell – I'm glad you made that distinction between the game species versus the species on the list.

Ben Floyd – They are all part of PHS like mule deer. Winter habitat exists in the County and that is important habitat. However, it may be mostly on volunteer wheat fields in a warmer area to the south that is not really a designated critical area. But that doesn't mean we don't want to see habitats and those species grow. There is a distinction on how we address them in the work plan, what enhancement is versus protection.

Ben Floyd – So we are addressing enhancement and protection but only when it overlaps with the other habitats.

Vivian Erickson – This is a comment from WDFW just confirming what we talked about not including the unknown steam layer in this summary table of critical area streams in WC ag lands. That doesn't really change the benchmark. We also add in Section 5.3 where we talk about

indicators how we will be working in coordination with WDFW through the implementation phase and future biennium funding for VSP to work on improving the data layer and testing unknown stream layer that exists in the County.

We received a comment from Joan about the giant Palouse earthworm. It is not a threatened or endangered species and so we added a footnote because of the mapped data, we have 39 acres mapped in the County but it all occurs on private land. So we just qualified there are no known or mapped occurrences on private ag lands and any mapped occurrences are in public land. There is no intersect with VSP.

We also had another note about the 1100 acres of the Palouse Prairie and we added another note here that it includes the 1100 acres of Palouse Prairie reference.

So, moving on to Section 4 where we talked about our protection and enhancement strategies, and activities that have occurred since 2011. We received some comments from the Farm Bureau making sure that what we show in this section is we know our baseline conditions. We've done our baseline conditions intersects in Section 3, and Section 4. Let's look at all of the conservation practices, stewardship activities that have gone on since 2011. The Farm Bureau wanted to clarify that the definition of enhancement under VSP and that all of these practices could be enhancement.

The next topic is the conservation reserve program. The Farm Bureau made the comment of making sure we are clear in the work plan on how we propose to address CRP and we have made it clearer that under CRP is considered an ag land. We included the definition of ag activities and ag land from the Shoreline Management Act which is the definition that VSP relies upon. It allows for land use for ag activities to lie dormant because the land is enrolled in local, state or federal conservation program or subject to a conservation easement and that it is still considered an ag activity.

Relying on this definition we are looking at any CRP or acreages being considered enhancement on ag lands and not necessarily critical areas. Also when these CRP contracts expire, first of all they are depending on federal funding that becomes available. But a lot of these acres that are under CRP are either staying in some informal conservation or going into a higher performing practice such as direct seed, filter strips or wetland (inaudible).

We further discussed in Section 5.4 where we talked about indicators that CRP acres are enhancement. The monitoring indicators are going to provide some sort of back stop of how our critical area functions might be affected by any reduced acreages and we can adapt it through our (inaudible) indicators. However, the reduction of acreages in CRP itself would not trigger any sort of adaptive management.

So, we are providing a clearer message of how the work plan proposes to address CRP land. In the

County we're seeing a decrease by 40,000 acres since 2011 in CRP and these are reductions in enhancements. Then also relying on monitoring indicators to make sure that we are doing some sort of adaptive management to make sure our baseline critical area functions are being protected.

Joan Folwell – I have a question where it says, "*Producers are encouraged...*" Who is going to encourage them?

Ben Floyd – You are. The work group and the coordinator. It is more of an outreach in education. This is the work group's product and you are encouraging some of the benefits from CRP to stay in place. The main thing is to avoid CRP being counted as a drop in protection. We have lost 40,000 acres already so if that goes out and the Tech Panel says you have already lost all that function out of your baseline that is a reflection of enhancement.

John Stuhlmiller. – Just a thought, do we want to say, "producers who are expiring CRP contracts are encouraged to renew or transition to..."

Ben Floyd – Yes.

Joan Folwell – I thought this kind of reduction in environmental practices was covered by the recidivism rate.

Ben Floyd – This is more than a 6% change, right? We have gone from 2011 from 193,000 acres down to 151,000 acres.

Joan Folwell – So, you are emphasizing this because there is a fluctuation in the number of acres and it needs special attention?

Ben Floyd – If someone says that this is part of the baseline, you had all those acres, those are all on ag lands. Those are not critical areas that had (inaudible). That was a change in enhancement from this level to this level. Basically, what we are trying to say here is we still want to see the benefits from CRP, and the benefits on F&W, soil erosion, all of that if we can. But that is changing levels of enhancement.

This is a big deal. I have had a discussion with some of the tech panel members, and like why are you addressing CRP? First of all, CRP is ag land. It is not designated as a critical area. If it is ag land that has temporary benefits of habitat, that is enhancement. That is why we are going through this explanation and be as clear as we can recognizing there are few things we need to identify.

Brad Johnson – It gets complicated but CRP really doesn't ensure the viability of ag because it firms up production. If a farmer decides to or doesn't decide to go into CRP, when that ground comes out of production it is ground that is not being farmed anymore. I don't mean it is right,

wrong or indifferent but I don't think the tech panel should get stuck on whether it is being direct seeded or grass.

If it is conventionally farmed from CRP there is a concern there, but if it is not on slope ground or not away from the waterways, what is the problem? I think the tech panel is over stepping its bounds a little bit when it says that taking CRP ground is bad. I would say it is good for ag viability.

Ben Floyd – I don't know that the tech panel has overstepped anything. They just wanted to know the story and the situation so we are trying to explain it in a way that is as clear as we can make it.

Art Swannack – How much credit are you getting out of CRP in terms of enhancement or habitat? CRP has some variability in its quality but over the long term it isn't as good as pheasant habitat as it is in those first 5-7 years due to the breaking down of the stand or bunch grassing or other issues.

Ben Floyd – For me, we are not going to look at field by field. We are going to track just the level of enrollment in CRP, and make a kind of assumed benefits of that land that gets verified, if someone comes and works with the CD or VSP coordinator or private contractor to help them with ground that gets put into CRP-like production, even though it is not specifically enrolled.

Art Swannack – When you start talking about the Technical Panel, is the FSA giving a certain amount of credit or the NRCS, when we were looking at the different scales of improvement or enhancement, do they have a certain amount of credit they give CRP that would be measured?

Ben Floyd – No, they are just looking at the technical baseline. One would make the case that you have had this big loss in habitat because you have had all this land in CRP that is now not enrolled, and some of it probably still looks like it did. It probably has not been cultivated but some has been put back into production and why isn't that a drop in the baseline? It is not a drop in the baseline because it is ag land that was temporarily enhanced as habitat that is now back in production. It is a change in crop usage as opposed to a change in critical area habitat.

David Swannack – It is temporary. It is planned to be just temporary.

Ben Floyd – Most of the conservation practices are temporary in one way or another. But when we get in to when something happens specifically in a riparian area or next to a wetland, then we will track them more specifically as direct effects on critical areas. Whereas the rest of this is more indirect effect and is adjusting CRP. I suspect we will get comments on this part of the plan. We are trying to explain it as best we can and we will see if they buy our logic.

Joan Folwell – And this is all because CRP is going to be counted as an enhancement in regards to critical areas?

Ben Floyd – Yes that is what we are proposing. If they see it as a critical area because there is habitat there then we are arguing about the definition of critical areas. We go back to the County Code and that is what we are relying on.

Alan Thomson – It doesn't seem like critical habitat to me.

Jeff Pittmann – I don't see how the tech panel can get hung up on it to that degree. When it is in CRP the habitat benefits. When you take it out the deer are going to come back to eat it anyway.

Ben Floyd – Exactly, they will use it the same way, as well as many other species. It might be a different situation like in Douglas County, where you have sage grouse that are a listed species that rely on a certain type of cover. So, there may be even if land gets expired and it isn't renewed they still might want to keep corridors of it in place for those species. This approach works for Whitman, Adams, Franklin, Grant and Lincoln. But if you had a bunch of listed species that were in CRP ground, then it would change it. But we don't really have that case here. Art, did I answer your question?

Art Swannack – Yes, you covered the question. I think there is a balance between habitat enhancement and ag viability in the CRP and that is a basic to this whole program. If you put in too much CRP you lose your farm communities and your businesses that are important to ag.

Ben Floyd – So maybe we need to add something in here about ag viability.

Art Swannack – I think that would be good. Just a simple statement that ag viability can be effected negatively by high rates of CRP enrollment.

Ben Floyd – It is okay to add what you did, Vivian, but I think we need a separate the paragraph that is focused on ag viability and how there is a balance between CRP enrollment and ag viability. We want to maintain enough planned in production to support all the ancillary part of the ag economy that rely on wheat production, grains, and all the rotations that goes along with that.

John Small – I think you covered it well. I like Art's addition if you guys can write that up.

Ben Floyd – Let's keep moving on.

Vivian Erickson – Here we have a comment from the DFW about including examples of how we came up with our acreages and suite of practices in setting up protection benchmarks and enhancement benchmarks. Also looking at how the data and the methods we used to set those benchmarks and how they account for current baseline conditions at the watershed scale. We added the data gap portion as we discussed at the last meeting.

We did include in our indicator section some future coordination effort that we planned to do with DFW for GIS mapping for both habitats. PHS habitats as well as the unknown stream layers, ground-truthed based on data that you have. So those are some of the ways we propose to

address this habitat. The Farm Bureau also had similar comments on how we came up with our accounting efforts that we presented in this section. We did ask them for language to help address those comments, so we will walk through that as we go through this section.

We had another comment about covering benchmarks at the watershed or landscape level. To account for producers that are not enrolled in a farm bill or other reported program or the participation benchmarks appear to get (inaudible). It is unclear as to how this information of the thought and role of the producers figure in to the overall protection of critical areas. We do have a new table added in this version to address our participation goals with some adaptive management actions that we have identified, to help address potential well participation in those self-reporting in VSP as well as in reported practices under the public refunded program.

Here is a comment from the State Farm Bureau making sure we weren't putting ourselves into a corner as to how we phrase our goals and benchmarks. We changed this language from, "protect and enhance," to "protect and/or enhance," making sure we don't fail out of VSP if we don't necessarily meet our enhancement goals. VSP is really, any failing out of VSP would be if we don't meet our protection goals. We made that a global edit throughout the document.

Joan Folwell – What is it when you say "adaptive management?"

Ben Floyd – Adaptive management is how we might adjust our plan in implementation based upon new information. Let's say we do a bunch of practices on the North Fork of the Palouse. There is a plan in place but the monitoring says things are getting worse even though they should be getting better by the way of what is being put on the ground. Then we look more closely and we find that a couple of producers have changed their practices and things have gotten worse, and we would invite them to participate.

They still can choose whether they will or not but we will adjust our plan accordingly. Maybe we thought we would get this level of participation and then realized the funding changed. So then we want to modify our participation and adjust our goals, still maintaining protection but maybe our enhancement goals changes from this to a little level or vice versa. So it just tweaks the plan as we go along.

Joan Folwell – I was wondering whether adaptive was general just any changes to tweak the thing or whether it meant specific approach.

Ben Floyd – There is a specific approach that is outlined for how we evaluate and adjust the plan through our adaptive program. We will assess the information and then update the benchmarks, implement and monitor, evaluate and adjust as we go along.

Joan Folwell – So where does it say "adaptive management?"

Ben Floyd – It is the header for all of those steps. A formal way to monitor implementation and then adjust based upon the information. Jon knows all about adaptive management.

Jon Jones – It is when you have a plan and it doesn't work and you try something else.

Kim Weerts – I'd like to go back to the TMDL language.

Kim Weerts – We probably defined it earlier but different people work on different sections so then the tech edit, when we go back and make sure, we have already defined the acronym for TMDL but then we also added implementation recommendations for water quality improvement. There is a TMDL and then there is a water quality management plan that goes along with it. It is that plan that is the TMDL standard and the recommendations for improvement that we are going to be considering. It is more like a clarification of what is already happening.

Vivian Erickson – We have a comment from DFW describing the sampling method used for measuring past stewardship practices and meeting CPPE scores with WC. I think the Farm Bureau had a similar comment on this methodology and we realized that the way we had written it was a little bit unclear. We came up with a tailored scoring for WC and we are not looking at the resources that are, we didn't change the scoring from the national standards. We were relying on the CPPE scores that were developed by NRCS on the national level per conservation practice.

But there is a lot of criteria included in the national standards which includes something for water quality related to the Colorado River, for example. So we tailored that list of resource concerns to those that are applicable to WC. Then we took the national scores for those applicable criteria and averaged them to come up with something that applies more to WC. We clarified this language in both the work plan as well as the appendices.

We also wanted to make it clear and the Farm Bureau brought this up that the positive score under CPPE scoring is just the assessment that the conservation practice has on the resource. This is different from the definition under VSP where we are talking about baseline conditions. We also made that clear when we go into our (inaudible) during our reporting process that if there is a resource condition that is related to and a conservation practice that provides a plus to, that we are accounting for that complete list from the (inaudible) condition, rather than just what is included in the CPPE national score.

Ben Floyd – I'm not sure if the USDA CPPE scores were averaged for the four key functions. I think they were averaged for many ecological functions that are within the four key functions. We looked at multiple white water quality parameters and then came up with a composite score.

Vivian Erickson – Our four are per function.

Ben Floyd – Right, but they are also based upon several individual scores that roll up.

Joan Folwell – I don't understand why that happens that way. I understand you are going from a minus 2 to a plus 2 and that represents four units. But if you record it as a plus 4, it is like a plus 4 improvement on that particular situation. But you started at a minus 2 so it only makes 2 plus units of improvement on it.

Ben Floyd –We are actually looking at the relative change, the four as opposed to minus 2. This is kind of bureaucratic math so this is truly a bureaucratic tracking exercise. It has validity and in the context of a project going on the ground it makes sense. You do grazing management and you can protect riparian area, improve water quality function. Because maybe those cattle were in there for weeks at a time and too many and now, you're fewer cattle and they are only in there 6-7 days and maybe a couple times a year and then they are out.

You can take those benefits and translate those into water quality and habitat and even hydrology benefits. Then you go to the scores and it is more like saying, do we have a little bit of benefit or a lot of benefit? If it's like 6-8 point swing, that is a lot of benefit. If it is just a few point swing, it is a little benefit. This is just a mathematical way to show whether you are having negative impact, little benefit or a lot of benefit for a given conservation practice that occurs.

Joan Folwell – It registers the total change but it doesn't register the total good.

Ben Floyd - It does. It just does it in a way that is relative as opposed to absolute. This doesn't translate into the real world. It is a surrogate for evaluation or characterizing the relative effect of benefit for impact. What Evan was talking about it wasn't clear to him how you are tracking this. Are you just saying that if anything is above zero you count the benefit? He gave the example of if you go from a minus 2 to a plus 2 that is a 4 point increase. So, count the whole change because it was bad and now you are making it pretty good. You should take credit for all of that.

Joan Folwell – You are not making it that good if you consider good from a zero to a 4 or a 5.

Kim Weerts – You are looking at baseline. So, if that was a minus 2 in 2011, and you went to a plus 2,

Joan Folwell – I understand the frame of reference but to me zero is just the baseline.

Kim Weerts – No, it is not the baseline.

Ben Floyd – The baseline is what has happened since 2011.

Joan Folwell – Maybe it was plus 2 at 2011. Who knows? You don't know what rating the baseline had.

Ben Floyd – You give it whatever the condition is when you go out there. So, I go out as VSP coordinator and there is a bad condition. I happen to know this landowner and so I know that has been there for a long time. Some years it is worse and some years a little better based upon what is happening. Not a great situation but if that landowner will work with us and put in some conservation practices, they get it positive.

Joan Folwell –I understand what your frame of reference is.

Ben Floyd – So it's not just zero, it could be negative.

Nancy Belsby – You understand but you don't agree.

Joan Folwell – Now that I understand their frame of reference, it helps me.

David Swannack – Your question is going to come up with a large number of people as they are going through this.

Kim Weerts – Realistically, it is just a way of monitoring and showing improvement without spending a fortune. We don't have a fortune to go out and do water quality and soil testing and to see where the improvements are being made.

Ben Floyd – If we had all the money we wanted to monitor and if we could go back and say all these streams were just like this in 2011, and this has a functional score of minus 1 and this stream has a score of plus 4. If we had that baseline and then we could implement practices and do monitoring that would be great. Because we don't have that baseline this is our surrogate method to try and approximate what the benefits are.

Art Swannack – When somebody comes in to this situation to deal with enhancement, there is going to be some measurement of what they were doing before or a pseudo measurement; meaning you can't be there in 2011 but you can look at maps and say that this is what this ground was like in 2011. This is what we are going to do now. So there is going to be a change under our methodology. The law says you have to have X value for 2011 and whatever the new value based on what they are doing. It is pretty regulated as to how this can be measured, if you are going to comply with what the VSP law is.

Ben Floyd – That is what I was going to say, we are trying to look at stewardship strategies and practices on the ground and what their effects are and we just use this to try and characterize that.

Vivian Erickson – This is what we have for protection and enhancement benchmarks. We had a lot of questions from the Farm Bureau and DFW asking where these numbers came from. What we did to address some of those comments is to add a bit of clarity. Hopefully, this will clear up what we are calling performance objectives now. The Farm Bureau made a good point that our benchmark for protection is no net loss; and the actual acreages those are, we may be going above and beyond what we need to put an acreage value on a benchmark, so why don't we call them performance objectives rather than trigger any sort of adaptive management just on these numbers?

But our big picture in our protection benchmark is no net loss. How do we come up with our performance objectives? We took those acreages and those lineal feet for practices that we want to aim towards for our key storage of strategies and practices. We came up with, you have our 2011 baseline conditions in order to maintain that we are looking at newly enrolled acres and

we are subtracting our dis-enrolled acres. That is the simple equation we have for protection baseline conditions.

For enhancement benchmarks, we are looking at our enrolled acres that we have been doing and we are taking what we need for protection. Everything we have above our protection benchmark we are including as our enhancement objective.

Ben Floyd – It is a simple formula. But we want to make it explicit. This may be the most confusing part of the plans. Okay, we are clear on this.

Vivian Erickson – This is also revisiting language about making sure we are looking at our CPPE scores and but also considering our 2011 baseline conditions. This is again improving our messaging to make sure our methodology is completely clear. We added open channel as the key practice for DFW comments. We changed our benchmarks for predicted values for performance objectives. The actual benchmark for protection is no net loss.

Ben Floyd – That was a Farm Bureau comment making sure that we weren't tying ourselves to numbers that we may or may not have control of. Is that a fair way to characterize it, John and Evan?

John Stuhlmiller – Yes.

Jon Jones – The baseline acres, is someone going to question that on the Tech Panel? Is that going to be an issue?

Ben Floyd – There aren't baseline acres.

Jon Jones – We have to start somewhere.

Ben Floyd – We are starting with what changes happened since 2011.

Jon Jones – I think we have looked at that before. The simple equation. Is the Tech Panel going to question how we came up with the baseline conditions on acres?

Ben Floyd – I don't think it is. Help me understand how you think it might be.

Jon Jones – If we establish baseline acres as 850,000 acres and we have enhanced 20% and we come up with a number. Are they going to question, how do you come up with the 850,000 acres baseline?

Ben Floyd – We describe how many acres are in production in the County and the different types.

Jon Jones – We have established that? Okay, and the Tech Panel is going to take our numbers? Is that a fair assumption?

Nancy Belsby – Why wouldn't they?

Vivian Erickson – We presented it in our methodology and we are being seen, how did we establish our benchmark quantities? Our methodology talks about measuring historic enrollment data and key practices, because all of our averaged annual enrollment quantity and, again, the VSP statues say we need measurable benchmarks. We have no net loss but how do we monitor that and so this is the method that we put forth based on the data that is available. That is the method we are presenting. The Farm Bureau and DFW seem supportive of this method. We are making it very clear so this is our hope that the Tech Panel will accept what we have presented.

Ben Floyd – I do think a good point is being raised.

Kim Weerts – That is not the answer to the question. The question is how did we come up with 2011 baseline conditions?

Ben Floyd – Or are we using the right term for 2011 baseline conditions?

John Small – We aren't really coming up with them. We are looking at the changes since 2011. Because no net loss doesn't require (inaudible). What it requires is tracking the changes so additional tracking (inaudible) or otherwise easily tracked. We are going to start tracking what is going on including how often things are going to CRP come out but it will give us an overall understanding of how practices are changing over time. Everything that we have seen so far indicates that is all we need to do to show.

Ben Floyd – This is almost like a change in the 2011 baseline conditions.

Kim Weerts – So, there is no real number. What we have done is gone back to the agencies from 2011 and taken their numbers and added that to this non-number.

Ben Floyd – Yes, what has happened since 2011.

Kim Weerts – So, the 2011 baseline is irrelevant because,

Ben Floyd – It was the 2011 starting point for tracking change.

Kim Weerts – I think that is a better answer; it is no real number.

Ben Floyd – So, 2011 baseline condition is kind of a misnomer and we may want to think about renaming that.

Joan Folwell – The newly enrolled minus the dis-enrolled people.

Ben Floyd – No net loss. It is more like the change in 2011.

John Stuhlmiller – What your formula is saying is new stuff minus dis-enrolled stuff but it doesn't have stuff that is in play already.

Ben Floyd – A change in conditions.

David Swannack – Is it really worth changing it? We are going to have questions again anyway.

Ben Floyd – If we can make it clearer, it might not trip them up.

Kim Weerts – I was going to say, 2011 baseline condition change equals the plus, minus the length.

John Stuhlmiller – Now you have your formula correct, you have to think about what are you saying about baseline versus other things.

Ben Floyd – This has been a good discussion. Way to go! We may need to look at the text around that to make sure it is clear. Can you support it that we can make the formula and the text match?

Joan Folwell – I want a printed copy of this.

Ben Floyd – We can do that.

Kim Weerts – If we are going to sign off on this, I am not comfortable to put my name on this yet.

Ben Floyd – We figured that.

Alan Thomson – You can finagle the numbers if we have credit.

Ben Floyd – Can we use the County resources that are still in the grant money?

Alan Thomson – You've got all of that money.

Ben Floyd – There is still a lot on the table.

Alan Thomson – We will have to negotiate that one.

Ben Floyd – Let's figure that out. Yes, we can get you hard copies.

Vivian Erickson – So, another thing we did, we weren't sure we were very clear in the way we have written the benchmarks, so we made a statement that what we are showing now is that we are overcoming the reduction in acres and key practices. We presented that in the text so the Tech Panel and the State knows that we are not writing a plan that we are on track.

Moving on to indicators, this looks like a lot of edits and we have rearranged the language. One of the comments was that the way we had written this made it sound that what we get from our monitoring data will determine whether we are meeting our protection goals. The State came up with a good comment that these are really informing how to adaptively manage how we want to use our indicators. So a lot of the edits in this session and in the adaptive management section is addressing that we are using these indicators to inform adaptive management.

Ben Floyd – So, indicators and adaptive management are joined at the hip. We just tried to clarify that.

Vivian Erickson – We got the language here based on the conversations and decisions in our last work group meeting about future coordination work we plan to do with DFW. Those ground truthed what will be needed to insure we have our habitat indicators and monitoring in place and relying on other GIS approaches to habitat assessment. Also working with DFW to (inaudible) our DNR unknown stream layer.

Ben Floyd – If we can do a changed detection for WC and DFW can include the County and you want to have that information that is one way we can track changes. It is harder to be an effective tool in this environment because you can't always tell vegetation changes by GIS or even what land is fallowed one year and then it is cultivated. There are other GIS approaches for habitat assessment that might work. We are also asking F&W to work with the VSP work group and the coordinator to help make sure as we update PHS that that information gets rolled into the plan. So, Jason, we are looking toward F&W as a long-term management partner in helping us identify habitat concerns during implementation.

Jason Kunz – Sure, I was going to ask about when you are doing your effectiveness monitoring, and you are trying to use a mapping GIS type process of looking at how things have changed and improved, is that going to be additional monitoring methods? Not just the mapping exercise?

Ben Floyd – Yes, we are proposing some on the field, eyes on the ground, random sampling of practices that are done and percent of practices that are done every year. We are also hoping producers will self-report improvements that have been made. There are a variety of ways, trying to collect that information, recognizing we don't have a ton of money to track.

Jason Kunz – If you were going to try and use GIS or like the high resolution change tool, that comes available and it is suitable for your monitoring, it wouldn't be a catch all just using the high resolution change detection. It wouldn't cover everything that the monitoring requirements are for VSP.

Ben Floyd – No, it wouldn't.

Jon Jones – I think that is one part of the adaptive management. We want to keep it open to what kind of monitoring we can do, depending on our resources.

Joan Folwell – Does F&W rely on GIS mapping or is everything ground truthed?

Jason Kunz – It is a bit of both. We do these exercises where we are going to update the PHS maps. We go off of professional judgement and experience. People being out there doing projects and also looking at aerial photos.

Ben Floyd – We want to be sure that stewardship strategies and practices are on that top row, are employed with the goal of improving water quality and that they are effective. So we have some gaging stations give us water quality parameters information. If something changes in Category 4 and 5-303D listings focus on the parameters that are impacted by ag, then we will look at what that is. If there is a trend that shows things are getting worse and things are getting better, we will note that.

If things are getting worse then we look more closely at that area. If there is something we need to change, further define, and get more enrollment or participation. There are different actions that come to determine whether water quality parameters are from ag or non-ag.

Then it says who is going to monitor when. So this says CD, we are assuming that is going to be within that things will be organized by CD's, the VSP Coordinator could also be listed. Counties still have to figure out exactly how they are going to approach implementation. Maybe we should say, "CD, VSP Coordinator or other designated." Maybe that one would be "and others."

Vivian Erickson – We had a table in here on how we wanted to address low enrollment and we were looking at our producer participation goal which is one of the RCW requirements for the work plan. Our homework assignment from the last meeting was to look at how Chelan and Thurston approached their producer participation goal. So we reformatted this table to the combination of what we prepared with some of the framework by someone in Chelan.

Ben Floyd – Remember, we were trying to come up with a number, like 800 farms in the County with probably 500 producers because some are leasing multiple farms. What is the number we want to come up with? The Farm Bureau guys said we really didn't have to come up with a number. We just need to come up with the things to try and increase participation and your goal is to have enough participation to meet your goals. That is what this table says, basically. Sufficient participation is what our goal is and we will measure it by acres reported, checklists that are submitted.

Then if it is not implemented is there a reason why we are not getting participation? Then we try to do more outreach. We try to get more self-reporting. So, logical actions that follow from that. The VSP coordinator keeps track of all that. We are going to look at aerial photo evaluation, mapping rapid watershed assessment and random sampling of farmers and ranchers in the field. So those are some of our monitoring and effectiveness measures we talked about earlier. If we are seeing things dropping off, why are they doing that?

Let's do more outreach, maybe people don't understand the programs. Maybe there is something economically that has happened and we want to know and then adjust it accordingly. We are going to participate in outreach in education events. We will track how many people attend, how many people we talk to, all of that so we can track again. Participation as measured by things that we can actually measure instead of some number we pull out of the air that we can't really track to and could trip us up. So again, the Farm Bureau guys and their wisdom said that we could make it more general and still meet the requirements and so that is what we did.

Joan Folwell – Under “Identify Causes/Adaptive Management.” The third one down where it says, “inadequate reporting of voluntary participation.” It is all voluntary. I know what you mean.

Ben Floyd – So, inadequate self-reporting, maybe. So change that, Vivian.

Jon Jones – It doesn't really have anything to do with the table. But on the outreach, who would do the outreach?

Ben Floyd – The VSP Coordinator.

Jon Jones – What kind of funding would he have?

Alan Thomson – The next budget, if it comes.

Jon Jones – Is there going to be enough?

Ben Floyd – Its \$125,000 a year.

Vivian Erickson – We did include a new table to discuss budget based on the assumption that the State would continue to fund VSP at the level we are.

Jon Jones – Are we going to tell that coordinator it is time to do outreach because the numbers aren't what they are supposed to be?

Ben Floyd – Yes. That coordinator may come back and say that we are getting in year 2.5 and we are not getting self-reporting back like we thought. We need to go out and beat the brushes more and here are some options. What do you think? Then you will give that person guidance.

John Stuhlmiller – It just came up about funding. The Technical Panel was wanting to see budget numbers what you think you will need to implement the WC plan. These are pieces to that puzzle.

Ben Floyd – We have a table to correlate that, Vivian. I would say you budget for everything that is available and you can always scale it back if you don't need quite as much. That is my advice.

Jason Kunz – I just want to confirm that the VSP Coordinator has the opportunity to work with the Technical Assistance Providers and the tech providers would be State agencies like the CDs or even the NRCS. I just wanted to confirm there will be a bunch of people providing help.

Jon Jones – The basic reason for my question is the CD and some of the other agencies don't have any funding at all. Most of the CD's, in fact, all of them in WC are totally grant funded and depending on what their grant says, they can and can't do they can't do much else.

Ben Floyd – To Jason's comment yes, State agencies like the ALLEA program and others, CD prepare grants and programs but also Cattlemen's Association, Wheat Growers Associations other private sector groups and businesses. All of those can provide technical assistance and can help the VSP Coordinator work with all of those entities to help coordinate VSP implementation.

Jon Jones – What we could do specifically as a group is ask the CDs when they write up a project proposal for a grant to include a niche for the VSP if we needed that. So we could go to the CDs and ask for some outreach assistance.

Kim Weerts – They will do it anyway. Any agency that you go in and participate in a program is going to be monitoring and telling the VSP what the projects are; so they do it anyway.

Art Swannack – I have to leave. I think the Farm Bureau covered a lot of things. Some of the stuff right now is a rehash. We had that discussion about the different entities to support the VSP but it depends upon the qualifications and the coordinator would have the authority over that.

Ben Floyd – The County gets to figure that out.

Art Swannack – There may be a pause between what we grade for a plan and for what implementation is able to be done, based on money.

Alan Thomson – Are we going to make a decision tonight?

Ben Floyd – I think we will give you a hard copy and have a conference call. People who are not here need to have a chance to look at it too.

Alan Thomson – In the information gathering is there going to be a cost involved with that? Is anybody going to charge us for that information?

Jon Jones – I don't think the CDs will charge. Or the FSA won't charge if you can get the information.

Kim Weerts – I don't think NRCS will charge.

Ben Floyd – We are making a lot of assumptions as to how this is going to work. There may be a few issues like this.

Brad Johnson – I think it is how much work the coordinator does to get it in a format that you want it from them. If the districts have to go through years and years of data, there should be some compensation. If the coordinator gives them some parameters and sends it to me and I put it together, there won't be a charge. NRCS wouldn't give us data this last time and you had to pay for it through Grant County.

Ben Floyd – We could have got the raw data and processed it ourselves but they already had the template and spreadsheets already set up.

Kim Weerts – I can't imagine there wouldn't be a spreadsheet the CDs could fill out every year. If the CD's, and NRCS and the FSA working to do all this voluntary work and to get funding for all of this stuff, they better be willing to do a little help.

Brad Johnson – If it is a spreadsheet that needs to be filled out, yes.

Kim Weerts – That was the first time around. It should never happen again. It shouldn't be a significant pause like the beginning of this was.

Brad Johnson – The grants require us to provide them information on what metrics we wrote in to them so that information could be sent on to somebody. It will depend on the questions. Some districts can do ten projects, and some three hundred. If it is filling in a spreadsheet, that is not a big deal. It will be a different workload for every district.

Ben Floyd – It probably varies by district on how they track.

Brad Johnson – We had to go through all our files because none of it was in a spreadsheet, because of the turnover of employees and the information may have gone with the employee. So we had to go back and look through every folder.

Ben Floyd – But we paid for that and we have that summary already for 2011-2016. We aren't starting from scratch. Or we gave the opportunity to pay for it and some didn't take advantage of that. What haven't we covered yet, Vivian? That was moving text from above down to below.

Vivian Erickson – This is back to our discussion on how we want to look at the changes to baseline conditions and a follow up note on CRP that it is considered enhancement. We are looking at monitoring indicators that helps to increase critical area functional effects that may occur from reduction of enrolled acres through adaptive management, but reduced acres will not trigger adaptive management because these are enhancements.

There is a provision in the RCW about identifying determined additional voluntary actions to meet benchmarks and additional funding to meet these actions. We included in here that it is federal funding and we are able to maintain some of these acreages then. We might want to try and maintain that level of participation in CRP but this a call going to be or in CRP or other equivalent state or federal programs. But this is all contingent on funding being made available.

This is enhancement, so VSP for the County does not fail if we don't meet this level of participation for CRP.

Ben Floyd – So, in effect, we took the language from up above about CRP and how it is enhancement and not protection. We just reiterated it down here. But then we also address this RCW requirement that which is, if you have an enhancement goal and it changes or you are not able to meet the enhancement goal, what is your adaptive management approach to meet it, saying that we already knew that CRP was changing? This wasn't a surprise.

Adaptive management doesn't trigger, it just adjusts. If we had the money for CRP enrollment we'd like to see it continue at the 2011 level. But it is really outside of our control. If we had the money we'd like to see it continue. We are talking out of both sides of our mouth like the politicians. John Stuhlmiller, I'd be interested in what you think about the RCW reference we added here. We did try to cover ourselves on one hand but say it is not applicable on the other hand. Do you have any thoughts on how this might be received by the tech panel?

John Stuhlmiller – I don't think it is a problem. It may be the interpreter who is there speaking to the tech panel. They may have a question if they get that deep.

Ben Floyd – We just need to convince them that we do have it right and they need to understand if it is not clear.

Vivian Erickson – We did a little bit of restructuring at the end just to make the ending flow better but we didn't lose any substance. We're going to do implementation, monitoring and there is regulatory backstop.

Ben Floyd – So the next steps on the work plan. How many want a hard copy? We will send out hard copies to everyone.

John Stuhlmiller – What we did at Thurston and Chelan, you actually have a motion by the group to accept the track changes into the clean version for review.

Ben Floyd – Are you guys ready to accept the track changes into the clean version? You won't be able to see everything we have changed.

Jon Jones – We can still change it.

Ben Floyd – Yes. Okay, we have a **MOTION** by Jon Jones and seconded by Kim Weerts that we accept the track changes into the clean version for the work group to review prior to their approval to accept it to the tech panel for the review.

Joan Folwell – Is it just this section that had changes or are there other appendices that are going to be changed?

Ben Floyd – There are some appendices that have been changed consistent with this. But the changes are pretty minor. We showed you most all of the substance changes that are in the work plan, there are some reflection of those changes in the appendix.

Vivian Erickson – Most of those changes are in direct response to your comments. The new table in our watershed analysis unit description that just talks about the watershed management objective and key practices. Everything else is cleaned up for consistency.

Ben Floyd – Why don't we send out this tracked changes version electronically, so if you want to go back and compare to the hard copy you can check them both? Okay, so with that friendly amendment, can we accept changes for your review version recognizing we are going to get track changes as back up? So everyone agreed. Then we will work off of the clean version for future edits. We will keep the line numbers in there for easy editing.

Thank you, John Stuhlmiller, for that process suggestion. Let it be written and let it be done. We are not done, we want to just give you a quick run-down. This is not really part of the submittal but it is what we will be using to deal with producers. So it is pretty important in the implementation phase whether it is required or not.

Vivian Erickson - I just wanted to add that we may want to consider submitting it with the work plan just because we do reference it directly in our submittal in our work plan so the tech panel has a complete picture of what we have prepared.

So, I will go over the changes we made to the overview and checklist. This is in response to feedback which we updated some of our practices. We globally changed steward strategies and practices. We also replaced the language with what we had originally to talk about ditching, how critical areas off ag land do not include structures and ditching regulated floodplains. We updated, I think this is a new table that we added to illustrate what the difference is between the critical area ordinances versus how critical areas are managed under VSP. This was borrowed from Chelan's work plan.

For the checklist, the major updates is the list of practices. Brad Johnson suggested that we include precision ag. Joan also recommended that we include maintenance of native vegetation as a management in the habitat management.

We also add some measures that maybe apply more to the Snake basin and Brad's comments to include stream habitat improvement and measurement measures in this list of key strategies and practices.

We've got contact information for the WC Coordinator of VSP and we have the local resources. If there are additional resources that you would like to add, I can add them. Once we get this going, we can add this link to district assessment tool that Kim provided on grazing areas. This can be printed as a nice booklet and then also be made available on the VSP website.

Ben Floyd – Are there comments on this document?

John Stuhlmiller – I want to say this is one of the best looking checklists, lay-out wise, format-wise. So good work there.

Jon Jones – I would second that. It looks really good.

Ben Floyd – Thank you. We want something that someone will actually pick up and spend time with and not just feel overwhelmed or just a bunch of text. The idea that the VSP Coordinator or whoever is on point to do that retail outreach, can just go right to this checklist and talk about what applies, what are you doing, how many acres, or percent of your ground or whatever the parameter is or and just help them fill this out.

Jason Kunz – In the additional self-assessment resources portion of this checklist, landowners may want to have access to the NRCS. They have a (inaudible) assessment methodology. Does this initial assessment done by an individual landowner that maybe wants to sign up there is going to be more input and evaluation on their parcel. Does it have to be inspected then?

Ben Floyd – Yes, this is like the start of the conversation like the lure that you are reeling them in.

David Swannack – That should be simple. The NRCS won't be.

Jason Kunz – I didn't know if the NRCS riparian assessment that the methodology would help people get it more grounded and understanding of what constitutes riparian in the ag.

Jon Jones – When they go to the NRCS, they will need some assistance and they should be able to provide that. It is not quite as simple as this.

Kim Weerts – Both the Ecology and the WSU Water Quality Risk Assessment tools talk about that riparian areas, specifically.

Ben Floyd – Thanks for that feedback. You certainly helped shaped this document. Vivian, I did want to make note of that text on Page 1 of the overview where we talk about the floodplain. Can you flag that? We made some tweaks in the work plan and there is some important nuance's that we clarified that we need to also update here.

Now we need to figure out where we go from here. Do you feel like with what you've seen with the changes that we can get to a point in June that you are comfortable with this plan to be ready to submit this to the tech panel?

Alan Thomson – We are on deck for the tech panel submittal on June 30th.

Ben Floyd – We don't have to but we are targeting that. We can always give up that date if we have an issue that we can't get a resolution for. Does anybody not think we are close? Okay, then do you want to, we didn't budget another meeting in person. We could certainly have it in person if you want.

Or we could do Webex, so we want your comments by the 15th and then we will have an updated version by the 21st and a conference call Webex to walk through it one more time, finalize it and hope you make a motion saying that we bless this thing and send it forward.

That gives us a few days to get it cleaned up and submit it on the 30th. Does that time frame work for you? Do you want an in person or do you think you could do this with a Webex over internet recognizing that all of you might not have internet to see this.

Kim Weerts – I think it would be helpful, especially if we are going to Webex to share our comments. So that everybody can see each other's comments so we might be in places where we are being redundant, it might move things faster.

Ben Floyd – So, you are saying that we should do a comment summary and response? Like take all your comments on the clean version and put them into a document that you can improve.

Kim Weerts – Either that or why can't we just shoot them to you and you shoot them back to us all together.

Ben Floyd – And have some response, like I agree, etc. If you can't see the screen then you know the comment and what the response is and you can tell us.

Jon Jones – We are all going to meet at Jeff's house anyway.

Kim Weerts – We need it before the meeting so we can look at it.

Ben Floyd - So we need to think about timeline. Vivian, do you think the hard copy can be available by Monday or Tuesday?

Vivian Erickson – I think we can print these in house depending on how we are going to handle the budget. If we can print them in house we can get them mailed out tomorrow. I can coordinate with our editors here and see if they can do that.

Ben Floyd – Probably mail them directly to the work group members.

Alan Thomson – We have an email addresses on line on the County's webpage. There are addresses on the County webpage.

Ben Floyd – We can email them. We will get them out tomorrow. You will get those on Monday the 5th. So can you get us comments by the 11th? By Monday at 10 a.m. on the 12th and then we do a comment response summary and send that out to you on the 14th or 15th.

We will put this on the email and we will turn around by the end of that week so we will have the comments response, comment summarize and response and then we should schedule a conference call for June 22nd at 4:00 p.m.

Evan Sheffles – The (inaudible) with technical panel is on June 9th. Since there are similarities in the plan you might consider giving yourself another day after that happens so you can adaptively manage this plan so you can iron that out before you submit it.

Ben Floyd – I think that actually works though because if the work group gets those comments on the 12th and we have the first meeting with the tech panel on the grant plan, and we also hear questions that they have, we can put both your comments and the preliminary tech panel comments in the comment response sheet and try to get that out on the 16th. So what about the 22nd at 4:00 p.m. No?

Jon Jones – I'm just one person.

Ben Floyd - What if you gave us your comments ahead of time? Like, I like this, or have questions, etc.

Jon Jones – I can do that.

Ben Floyd – Then we, hopefully, that we are approving it on the 22nd at 4:00-6:00 p.m. That gives us basically a week to get it all cleaned up and send it to you electronically.

We will submit it on the 30th and then here is what we have scheduled. Okay, on July 18th we have a meeting in the morning with the tech panel, and July 28th. If you will entrust us, and maybe Alan, that we would go and try to respond to questions.

Anything that requires a change in the plan, we will bring back to you. You would still have final say. Here is what we heard, etc., there will be communication. We will schedule something with you, maybe on the 20th. Have another Webex, potentially.

We don't know, but at least you know, we are planning to submit and we have a tentative date on July 18th and the 28th to review with the tech panel and we will keep you in communications. We recognize these are busy times for you. So, you will have to let us know when the best time is for you with emails. If we have to do another in person meeting we will do that. Okay, so I think we have covered everything on the agenda. Any other final comments? Thanks to everyone the phone and all the work group members.

Adjourned – 6:55 p.m.