

San Juan County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Quarterly Work Group Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 8, 2022, 10:30-12 p.m.

Attendance via Zoom or in-person. Zoom login information provided via link, call-in info is posted below agenda: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84266690787?pwd=S0Q4NW9Ddmh0UkZHdXJMTXN5dkdTdz09>

Physical Location: 530 Guard Street, Friday Harbor WA 98250

Attendees: Charlie Behnke, Byron Rot, Faith Van De Putte, Kendra Smith, Vicki Heater, Cathi Winings, Angie Shephard, Laura Pitts, Dean Dougherty, Paul Andersson,

1. Introductions – Welcome new attendees Dean Dougherty (SJIPT) and Laura Pitts (SJICD).

2. Adaptive Management Plan Progress Report

- VSP StoryMap Survey - communications and outreach of new tool - <https://arcg.is/qO4vD>

The survey was reviewed and more feedback on provided on a few minor details. E.g., if a BMP is in place but the landowner did not put it in place (cover crop) does it still count as being “implemented?” New language will be developed to clarify this.

The use of incentives to encourage participation was discussed. No decision was made on what the incentive would be.

A question was presented about who should be filling out the survey, the landowner or leasee/manager. The survey is currently worded to be either/or. More discussion is needed for Land Bank and Preservation trust properties.

In general, the Work Group agreed to begin developing the necessary marketing tools to publish and promote the survey for public use this summer. A delayed ‘launch’ was proposed until late summer or fall when ag producers are not quite as busy and might have more time to respond to the survey.

- GIS – update to SJC farm map layer (by June 30)

A subcommittee of Work Group members will use the ArcGis online site established by SJC GIS specialist Dan Root to update the inventory of active farms in SJC. This 2022 update is critical to serve as a baseline for other analyses moving forward and has not been done for several years.

- Monitoring

Monitoring will continue to take place over the next year according to the Adaptive Management Plan monitoring protocols. HRCd analysis will likely occur early in 2023; SVAP and other forms of monitoring are ongoing or will see increased attention from SJICD staff this summer.

The Preservation Trust offered to share lidar analysis of vegetation gains and losses for the county, created as part of their conservation plan update. Cathi will follow-up with Dean.

3. Ag Program Updates and Funding Outlook - VSP \$3MM Capital Budget (new), other state and local funding/program updates

Several sources of funding for VSP and riparian habitat project implementation were discussed, including \$3MM in specific VSP project funds for salmon habitat improvement (from WSCC); \$10MM in riparian buffer enhancements not necessarily related to VSP participants (also from WSCC); and other sources of funding that Work Group partners have been applying to to secure similar funds. A subcommittee discussion will be held once WSCC publishes funding guidelines in July to determine “shovel ready” projects in SJC.

- SJC VSP Communications – Web language, permit desk brochure concept

Kendra will follow up with David W. regarding other VSP literature that could be helpful for SJC permitting staff or permit applicants (e.g. permit desk brochure describing VSP). SJC has hired a new environmental planner who will be introduced to the VSP Work Group and receive a briefing from SJICD staff about the program.

4. Actions items

- Cathi will continue making edits to the BMP survey, and work with Faith on some of the edits.
- Further discussion is needed on identifying the incentive for taking the BMP survey.
- Further discussion is needed on who should fill out the BMP survey for Land Bank/SJPT properties, owners or leasees?
- Cathi will follow-up with Dean about SJPT’s lidar-derived vegetative cover analysis and it’s potential for use in VSP monitoring.
- Please take the Open Public Meetings Act training if you haven’t already: [open public meetings act training. https://www.atg.wa.gov/lesson-3-open-public-meetings-act-rcw-4230](https://www.atg.wa.gov/lesson-3-open-public-meetings-act-rcw-4230)