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Minutes

Voluntary Stewardship Work Group

3/12/2021

**Attending:** Cathi Winnings, Bruce Gregory, Matt Claussen, Paul Andersson, (all SJI CD); Lovel Pratt, Friends of the San Juans; Brook Brower, County Extension; Faith VandePutte, ARC; Kendra Smith, CWU, Vicki Heater

5-Year Reporting Status:

Matt and Cathi are co-leading the VSP work at this time. Cathi has been working on the required 5 year report, adaptive management plan. It has been presented to the state technical review panel and she shared comments from the various panel members, who represent the Conservation Commission, Dept of Ag, Fish and Wildlife, Ecology. She will be making changes based on the comments and they are willing to reach out and help.

One of the reviewers talked about the need to tie numbers to benchmarks and that this is hard to do. Discussion followed. Kendra urged focusing on target areas, where work needs to be done. Target outreach. Brook commented that benchmark numbers could be independent of target areas. Kendra’s priority is to get streams off the state 303(d) list (indicating contamination and action needed).

Cathi talked about some of the panel members’ comments and recommendations and that they commended her for the clarity and transparency of the report.

Monitoring:

Cathi talked about monitoring, using a “rapid assessment”, looking at conditions on the ground, to evaluate wetlands and riparian areas. Kendra said they have worked with UW to produce (shaded) mapping for riparian areas, Crow Valley and False Bay creeks. Still need to do wetlands. Cathi said the requirement is to measure change. Kendra said it takes time for this, it’s the long haul.

Discussion followed about how to achieve these measurements. Faith urged working to educate farmers.

Kendra said there is $10,000 available for a pilot in the Garrison Creek watershed, to test different strategies.

Workgroup Facilitation:

Matt talked about getting the work group involved in the next few weeks and ready to facilitate the next stage of implementation. Brook and Faith will take on finding guidance about the role and responsibility of the work group. (Public meeting, standing meeting time, formalize membership needed)

Paul talked about developing a strategic plan for outreach, to simplify and distill the program. Lovel talked about Friends of the San Juans lack of support for the program and that she is attending as an observer on behalf of Friends.

Agricultural Viability Survey:

Ag. Viability Survey: Matt told the group that the survey is currently being revamped by WSU for better readability and has been financed by the Ag Guild. This will be available for review soon. Faith expressed her interest in reaching out to farmers and looking at the biological systems, having farmers monitor changes.