



San Juan County Voluntary Stewardship Program Quarterly Work Group Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 14, 2022
10:30-12 p.m.

Attendees: Cathi Winings, Pauline Chiquet, Vicki Heater, Brook Brouwer, Laura Pitts, Paul Andersson, Faith Van de Putte, Steve Krueger, Grant Carlton, Sean Williams, Kathy Morris, Charlie Behnke

- 1. Introductions** – Welcome new attendees Pauline Chiquet (SJICD) and Grant Carlton (SJC). San Juan County Council will be asked to approve the new members to the Work Group at an upcoming council meeting (date TBD). The current VSP Work Group roster includes:

VSP Work Group 9/15/22

Brook Brouwer, WSU Extension
Byron Rot, San Juan County Environmental Resources
Cathi Winings, SJI Conservation District
Charlie Behnke, SJC Land Bank
David Williams, San Juan County Planning Department
*Dean Dougherty, San Juan Preservation Trust
Faith Van De Putte, Midnights Farm
*Grant Carlton, San Juan County Manager's Office
Kathy Morris, West Beach Farm
*Pauline Chiquet, SJI Conservation District
Paul Andersson, SJI Conservation District
Vicki Heater, SJI Conservation District Board
*Not yet appointed by SJC Council

2. Adaptive Management Plan Progress Report

- **Implementation:** Individual Stewardship Plans (ISP) update from planners
Three ISPs are actively being planned between Pauline and Bruce. Bruce is back from retirement part-time for planning. Twelve landowners are on the waitlist.
- **GIS:** GIS intern work
GIS intern Bernard Cowen is working six hours a week. Bernard is a second year ICC crew member in pursuit of his masters. He is developing templates for ISP maps and building datasets connected to farm parcels. SJICD is looking more closely at intersections of agricultural parcels with critical areas. This will be useful to help for outreach and lining up future ISPs. A draft table output showing number of parcels in critical areas by watershed was shared with the group. Bernard will work on adding the acreage of parcels for each critical area to the table. He will also work on High Resolution Change Detection (HRCD) analysis as well as geologically hazardous areas and class 'e' soils this fall. Robin Hale is a resource at WDFW for HRCD questions.

- Outreach: BMP survey updates

BMP survey is live. This survey was designed to collect baseline data on implemented BMPs in the county with the goal of protecting critical areas. Soft roll-out so far—it was launched at the fair, but no participants yet other than from farm plans in the works. There will be a formal launch in the fall with an incentive for ag producers to take the survey. Social media and other advertisements will be started November-December.

Incentive ideas include credits toward SJC Food Hub food purchases, free soil sample, pint of local ice cream, entry into a raffle, and water meter installations. Need to avoid gift of public funds.

- Monitoring: Field monitoring continues; SVAP training with NRCS

SJICD will host an SVAP training (NRCS protocol to visually assess streams) with Rachel Maggi on November 15th for CD and WDFW staff. Garrison Creek or False Bay Creek are potential sites. Training will help SJICD staff have more consistent reporting. This is a lighter approach to collecting data than water quality sampling that was in the original Work Plan.

Other monitoring is on-going with farm plan writing (Tech Note-14). The goal with these assessments is to have cooperators take them every five years to monitor progress.

3. Budget Updates/Funding Outlook

- 50% of VSP budget spent, halfway through contract timeline

SJICD is meeting contract goals and deliverables, is on track to spend funds by June 2023, when the contract ends. If anyone would like to see budget specifics, contact Paul.

- VSP Salmon Recovery Funding-\$3mm + \$10 mm general SRF funding

Riparian habitat restoration and salmon funding is now available. There is a shovel-ready riparian project group to identify projects that could benefit salmon. \$10mm is available statewide by 2023. SJICD was awarded <\$200,000 for Garrison Creek project continuation and to help fund outreach in other priority watersheds. A Land Bank fencing project in False Bay Creek also has been submitted for funding. The Beaverton Marsh fencing project is still pending, but harder to identify direct salmon benefits; if it's ag related fencing, the \$3mm VSP pot of money may be a better fit.

Laura to follow up with Charlie about Beaverton Marsh and Dean about his project next steps.

- VSP Capital funding-\$10k

There is a smaller pot of funding of \$10k for capital cost share funding, outside of the typical cost share pot, reserved specifically for VSP. The Work Group is brainstorming if/how to spend this money and discussed the potential to fund water meters on farms. Labor and materials for water meter installations would cost \$500-1500 per unit. Water meters could point to water losses and leaks and help to build a baseline of water usage in the county. Water meters would be a good conversation starter and outreach tool and could provide a link to how to encourage farmers to get water rights. The dilemma is that there is data for residential water use but not agricultural use, so this would provide good data for agricultural water use.

Water meters could serve as an incentive to take the VSP survey. However, all cost share recipients are required to cover 25% unless the SJICD changes those guidelines. Perhaps landowners who have already purchased a meter in the last six months could be reimbursed if they have receipts and take the survey.

4. Action items from previous meetings

- Form climate change goals subcommittee to address the potential need for adaptive management.
The current Work Plan goals are difficult to measure and would benefit from a focus on water holding capability, water availability, and carbon sequestration. It would be good to sync goals with the County's Climate Action Plan and the work the Climate and Sustainability Advisory Committee is doing. The Farm Bill might start to address some of these monitoring points. The biennial report next year will address agricultural viability and climate change.
 - Committee members: Faith, Paul, Charlie (maybe); everyone will be notified of meetings.
- Further discussion is needed on who should fill out the BMP survey for Land Bank/SJPT properties, owners or leasees?
The Work Group discussed a case-by-case basis, relying on the Land Bank for consistency; CD planners can work with Land Bank to fill out surveys. Land Bank can speak to pre-2011 conditions and current lessees can speak to their BMPS. Further discussion is needed on ISPs for Land Bank properties and queuing properties for funding.
 - Cathi to add survey field about landowners/lessees.
 - Charlie to send out survey to his contacts if we make flyers. Late October/November
 - Brook can outreach to producers when we are ready with materials.

5. Other updates and next steps

- Check out the latest Statewide Advisory Committee and WSCC Policy Advisory #07-22: [Adaptive Management in the Voluntary Stewardship Program](#)
- On Friday, September 9 SJICD celebrated its 75th anniversary.
- New members: please watch the attorney general's [open public meetings act training](#)
- Paul to send updated roster and submit new members to council
- Form climate change subcommittee meeting and send meetings to the group
- Development of GIS
- SVAP training November 15th (Cathi to send invitation)

Next Meeting: December 2022 (exact date TBD)