



## San Juan County Voluntary Stewardship Program Quarterly Work Group Meeting Notes

Tuesday, June 3rd, 2025  
10:30-12 p.m.

In attendance: Pauline Chiquet, Maggie Long, Paul Andersson, Tyler Davis, Charlie Behnke, Morgan Krueger  
Absent: Dean Dougherty, Kathy Morris, John Latimer, Faith Van De Putte, Vicki Heater

### 1. Work Plan Progress Report

- Implementation: Individual Stewardship Plan (ISP) updates
  - i. 3 ISPs were completed on San Juan this quarter, and a 4<sup>th</sup> will likely be completed by the end of the month.
- Monitoring: Monitoring updates
  - i. SJICD staff are working to finish Stream Visual Assessment Protocols (SVAP) and Wetland Rating System assessments (WRS) on watersheds in year 3 of the 5-year monitoring cycle. Laura Pitts who was in charge of watershed monitoring, has left the district; the remaining assessments will now be conducted by ICC members and supervisors.
  - ii. The new High Resolution Change Detection (HRCD) dataset was made available in May, and GIS analysis for the 5-year report will begin in the next couple months.

### 2. Administrative Updates

- Updated VSP guidelines are in the comment period. Pauline will be submitting feedback in the next few weeks. Some new guidelines include:
  - i. Funding timeline: Rather than releasing funds on a monthly rolling basis, a set amount of funds will be made available in July and September into 2026, allowing later season applications to still be competitive.
  - ii. Each district will be allocated \$40k in VSP capital funds of an available \$3M. Districts can apply for funds beyond the guaranteed \$40k through the competitive application pool.
- The governor's budget has been approved with an operating budget (program administration) amount for VSP of \$10.7 million (a slight increase from \$10.3 million in the last biennium to accommodate counties that joined the VSP) and capital budget (cost-share project implementation) of \$3 million (same as last biennium). An exact contractual amount for each county's operating budget has not been released. We are expecting ~\$250k in operating funds which is similar to the last biennium minus the additional \$40k for monitoring that was allocated specifically for districts to develop a monitoring plan. This amount is intended to cover 1 full-time employee across two years. SJICD will fully utilize these funds and will also seek additional funding outside of VSP to account for similar work.
- San Juan County can designate the District as the contract recipient for VSP which would allow the CD to administer all contract details directly with the State Conservation Commission, instead of

having SJC as a middleman, which would be more efficient for all parties in San Juan County. Tyler Davis is exploring this possibility with the county's PA office.

### 3. Report Framework

- 2025 Biennial Report:
  - i. This is primarily a narrative-based status update which allows us to report on qualitative progress towards the county's VSP. Case studies will be used to highlight the work being, and the report will rely less on data than the five-year report.
  - ii. Table and metrics will be finalized towards end of month – planners are still capturing data inputs through the end of the biennium.
  - iii. Pauline will implement the edits discussed today and send a new draft out in July.
- Five-Year Report:
  - i. Maggie and Pauline will be receiving login to the Commission's new database system later this month. This login will provide access to the newly developed template for the upcoming 5-year report. Work group members will receive draft versions of the five-year report as pdfs downloaded from the server.
  - ii. The 5-year report is primarily data-driven. Reporting will occur on two types of data: spatial data stored in GIS and implementation data stored in our customer relations management system QuickBase.
  - iii. Timeline:
    - 1. Effectiveness benchmarks: HRCD analysis to begin this month. Maggie is in the process of developing a consolidated Fish and Wildlife critical area layer with input from WDFW which will be used in the HRCD analysis.
    - 2. Implementation benchmarks: Table will be pulled from QuickBase starting in July when all 2023-2025 biennium projects are fully input.
    - 3. A draft of the report will be shared at the September work group meeting.
  - iv. Pauline will be presenting on QuickBase at tomorrow's joint VSP technical panel and advisory committee meeting.
    - 1. Let Pauline know if you'd like to attend virtually. Pauline will be presenting from 10-10:45 tomorrow.
  - v. A VSP technical panel visit to Orcas will occur on June 25<sup>th</sup> with the option for panelists to visit the office on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Work group members attending include Charlie as Land Bank host for one of the site visits; and Pauline, Maggie, and Paul from the CD.

### 4. Project Approvals

- New Project Approval Requests:
  - i. Overmarsh Farm Commons – Water Management: Approved
  - ii. Thistledown Farm: Not seeking work group approval at this time.
  - iii. Others forthcoming: Approximately 30 projects are in development at the District, a handful of which will require Work Group approval for VSP Capital funds. Work Group

members will received requests for approval via email in June/July rather than via zoom at the September Work Group meeting.

## **5. New Member Onboarding**

- Application document: mimics county process for committee applications with space to list interests and activities beyond VSP and any conflicts of interest.
- New members:
  - i. Maggie was suggested as a possible replacement for Laura.
  - ii. The group needs to bolster farmer representation. We have historically done targeted outreach to find new work group members. Rebecca Moore and Abe Gates were suggested.
  - iii. Pauline has drafted language for an open recruitment letter. This could bring in folks with wider backgrounds and differing opinions.