

# Pend Oreille County VSP Work Group Meeting Notes

Tuesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018

5 pm to 6:30 pm

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Jon Driver - Landowner

Larry Cordes – Landowner

Ron Meyer – Landowner

Sandy Coelho - Landowner

Sharon Sorby – County weed control board

Ted Davis – Landowner

Andy Huddleston – Pend Oreille County

John Floyd – Pend Oreille County CD

Karen Skoog – Pend Oreille County Commissioner

Mike Lithgow- Kalispel Tribe

Ben Floyd – White Bluffs Consulting

Lara Floyd – White Bluffs Consulting

John Small – Anchor QEA (by phone)

## Follow up from last meeting:

- Informational flyer – Mike L. mentioned adding in the flyer links to both the County and CD websites where the reader can find more information. The group liked the shortened version. On VSP implementation website, we will include links for individual outreach items, such as the 2-page overview flyer, the VSP checklist, Frequently Asked Questions, and other items, along with the VSP work plan.
- Work group establishment – List of Work group members was approved by the County Commissioners today. Lara will send out an email of the official list and notice of the action by the County to the Work group.

## Draft work plan:

- The consultant team has made updates on chapters 1 -4 based on comments given at last meeting, such as the updates to the Ag viability/SWOT table, updated data or added missing data and made corrections.

## Chapter 5 (Goals, Benchmarks and Adaptive Management):

- Ben noted that the Work Group has to meet the VSP protection goals to keep the program viable but if the enhancement goal is not met the program can still continue.
- Ben reminded the group about the list of programs and plans that Lara sent out for Work Group review and comment. If Workgroup members can think of any other plans to include on the list please let us know. Lara will email the list of programs and plans out again for Work Group review tomorrow. Please provide comments on the list by no later than May 18. Earlier comments are welcome!
- Mike L. said survival of native plant restoration has been limited in the past and the Kalispel tribe is expanding its native plant nursery to allow the tribe to provide heartier plants better adapted to survive in Pend Oreille County for future restoration efforts, including but not just limited to Kalispel tribe restoration efforts. He would like to see if we can emphasize integration of more locally grown native plants into local restoration and enhancement projects to make

them more effective. The workgroup agreed to have the consultant team add a callout box in chapter 6 that emphasizes using locally grown native stock, and the partnership the tribe has partnered with the CD on this effort. It was also noted that planting time and using seed stock from different elevations is also important for plant survival. Mike will send Lara a picture of the tribe's nursery that can be included with the call out box in the plan.

- Sharon S. challenged the characterization of pest management not affecting hydrology/floodplain functions, particularly when it comes to invasive vegetation management. Stewardship strategies and practices related controlling vegetation can impact erosion, water storage in the soil and other factors. Spraying invasive weeds without adding a subsequent acceptable vegetation replacement can negatively affect hydrology and other floodplain functions. Cattle were removed from Diamond Lake but have been introduced back in to areas along the lake in recent years to help control weed canary grass. Managed grazing can help with vegetation control and protect floodplain functions. The Noxious Weed board has a process it follows to evaluate site conditions and historical modifications, consider different treatment options and associated risks and benefits, and then apply the treatments that work best with the conditions. Sharon will provide the consultant team with the information on this evaluation process used in her work with landowners.
- What happens if acres have been removed from agriculture and converted to residential or other development? It comes out of the baseline conditions for VSP and is regulated under the County's critical areas code. Mike asked does it affect our viability if acreage is reduced? Yes it can but there isn't a strong agricultural support services economy in Pend Oreille County built around the producers here. The SWOT analysis did identify ways to strengthen agricultural viability.
- Why isn't forest management considered agricultural? It falls under the Federal Department of Agriculture. And it's still a crop, so why isn't it under the agriculture umbrella? It's due to the state Forest Practices Act, which is already set up to regulate forest practices.
- If we set more modest restoration goals does it impact the ability to successfully compete for funding resources for plan implementation? It shouldn't affect our ability to compete for resources. The more conservative goals allow for changes into the future, if programs go away or are reduced in funding. After additional discussion the Work group decided to support the proposed goals, benchmarks and performance objectives.
- Small farms in the area are growing and should have some focus in the plan.
- Andy asked if a landowner plants vegetation and there's an increase in function do you get credit for it? Yes!

#### **Next Steps:**

- We would like to communicate to all about the public meetings and make up a flyer to post in different places. We will email that out to the Work group.
- Schedule public meetings in Cusick and Newport on June 19<sup>th</sup> and June 20<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm (we may try to schedule both meetings on June 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm in Newport and 7:30 pm in Cusick)
- Get any comments about the work plan or pictures to Lara by May 18<sup>th</sup>
- We will review Chapter 6 of the work plan on Implementation at our next meeting

**Our next work group meeting will be on Tuesday, June 5<sup>th</sup> from 5 pm to 6:30 pm at the WSU Cooperative Extension office in Newport**