

**FRANKLIN COUNTY VSP
WORKGROUP MEETING MINUTES**

September 22, 2016

**Franklin County Courthouse
Commissioner's Meeting Room
1016 North 4th Avenue, Pasco WA**

ATTENDED BY

James Alford (Farm Bureau), Kent McMullen (FC NRAC), Dave Solem (SCBID), Case VanderMeulen (Dairymen), Brian Cochrane (FC Wheat Growers), Rick Miller (FC Commissioner), Robin Priddy (Benton Clean Air Agency), Debbie Berkowitz (LCBAS - Alternate), Valerie Carlson (LCBAS), Mark Weiseler (FCD), Mike Ritter (WDFW), Mark Nielson (FCD), Heather Wendt (FCD), John Small (Anchor QEA), Vivian Erickson (Anchor QEA), Nora Schlenker (Anchor QEA).

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

John Small welcomed the group and introductions were made.

FOLLOW-UP ACTION ITEMS FROM AUGUST

Website – The Franklin County VSP website is live and will be maintained to include all meeting materials from past meetings – URL <http://www.franklincountyvsp.com>

Public Meeting Training – The workgroup is subject to the Open Public Meetings Act. Workgroup discussion needs to occur at the workgroup meetings. Please note that email chains and making decision outside of the workgroup are subject to the Open Public Meetings Act.

Meeting Notices – Anchor QEA will send out electronic meeting notices to add to your calendar.

DRAFT GROUND RULES

John Small reviewed the draft ground rules with the group. Language will be added that details the designation and participation of alternates.

CRITICAL AREAS AND AG LAND

Anchor QEA reviewed critical area maps and agriculture land cover maps with the group. The group needs to determine if they want to break out vineyard and orchard? Do livestock operations need to be called out?

Public lands are not part of VSP. Anchor QEA is waiting for confirmation from the Washington State Conservation Commission on whether DNR lands farmed under leases are subject to VSP.

Intersection of Critical Areas and Agriculture

- Wetlands and Streams – stream need to have evidence that water flows through them. The Esquatzel Coulee was removed from shoreline jurisdiction in the County’ SMP update process. Anchor QEA will update the maps to note this change and show the Esquatzel Coulee as a non-fish bearing waterway.
- Priority Habitat and Species – includes wetlands and waterfowl concentration areas. Anchor QEA will double-check the presence of shrub-steppe habitat. We also need to be clear on jurisdictional wetlands versus fish and wildlife habitat wetlands.
- Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas – critical areas for potable water supplies. Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas in the County include irrigated grounds over sandy soils and a 100 foot buffer on some of the main canals.
- Geologic Hazard Areas – not a strong correlation with agricultural lands, however soil erosion does have a strong correlation with Ag. Viability.

Maps are for planning purposes only and will be clearly noted as such on in the Work Plan. Anchor QEA will update the maps to be consistent with County-adopted maps.

Analysis Units

Watersheds (HUC 10s) can be used as the analysis unit for Franklin County when considering baseline conditions and VSP benchmark. In Franklin County, it may make more sense to use agricultural landcover groups as the analysis units. James Alford recommended breaking analysis into the agricultural land groups.

WORK PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Work Plan Outline was reviewed.

Conversions to agricultural lands and changes in the type of crops being grown will require adaptive management. The State Technical Panel will need to decide how to address lands that are no longer enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), including when local producers do not have the option of re-enrollment in CRP.

The VSP Work Plan will also address critical areas enhancements that may have been occurred since July 22, 2011 (baseline) from practices that have already been installed. Characterizing the functional lift from enhancements does not change baseline conditions. The critical area protection standard is still based on 2011 conditions. Work Plan deliverables are approved by the State.

NEXT STEPS

At the next workgroup meeting, we will discuss conservation practices and best management practices that are implemented in Franklin County and virtually tour James Alford's farm for an example of agricultural and conservation practices in the County.

October 27th – Next Meeting Date – Virtual Tour Web at the Franklin Conservation District office.

Public Comment / Other:

ADJOURN:

The meeting concluded at 3:10pm