

**WHITMAN COUNTY
VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
PUBLIC WORKS AUDITORIUM
June 27, 2023
2:00 p.m.**

Members present:

Jon Jones
Kim Weerts
Alan Thomson

John Pearson
Nancy Belsby
Larry Cochran

Others: Brad Johnson, Palouse CD; Caitlin Harrold, Rock Lake CD; Casey Lowder, Pine Creek CD; Brandon Johnson, WC Public Works; Elinor Huber, Clerk.

Zoom: David Lange.

2:13 p.m. – Brad Johnson opened the meeting.

MOTION by Larry Cochran and seconded by Jon Jones to approve the minutes from the April 3, 2023, meeting. Motion passed.

Brad Johnson – In front of you is the VSP Budget. This budget is similar to every other year. The only difference is this year the Commission gave each work group \$47,000 for monitoring. So, without the \$47,000 the figures up top are pretty much the same.

You can see the technical service providers, Palouse CDs the first three lines, and then you've got Whitman, Rock Lake and Pine Creek budgets. Then the only addition is the \$47,000 for monitoring. I tried to spell out everything on the next page, but I was wondering if you have any questions, other than the line item for monitoring, which is second up from the \$167,000, most everything similar from year to year. We do a year-to-year budget with VSP monitoring with the four CDs and the technical service provider.

Larry Cochran – So what are we going to monitor?

Brad Johnson – Okay, go over to page 2 and 3. On page 3, so within our VSP work plan the \$47,000 is for monitoring and it has to be identified in the VSP work plan. We have participation monitoring and then we have metrics monitoring.

We got together and proposed looking at the monitoring that needs to happen to fulfil the plan and the participation. We've got the action map that producers have voluntarily filled out that shows the participation within VSP and the stewardship that is protecting critical area functions and values.

There are a few things with critical areas and getting more information out of the action map. I'm proposing \$1,200 to do that. VSP education and outreach on monitoring, I don't know if that is something you are interested in. But we could get the word out on the type of monitoring we are doing and why we are monitoring critical areas, and making sure that we are doing it the right way, to just get the information out what is in the plan and what monitoring we are doing.

The four CDs do projects that producers may not be in the action map so we were looking at pulling together an Excel data base to ensure that we are capturing all the projects that are being completed through CDs.

Then the last one, again, we go to the Fair, we go to other, we have our annual meetings and grower meetings, we are looking at getting a new Fair booth display with some posters and a tri-fold that updates on VSP. So, that is the participation monitoring we are looking at.

Then under the monitoring piece where you see the development of the VSP monitoring plan, that has to be completed and sent to the Commission by July 1, 2024. I identified \$20,000 for that.

The Flow monitoring device was actually my idea. When I saw this, and I sit on the Snake River Recovery Board and they came in front of us to get one of these down in the Snake River region, specifically in the Tucannon, I thought, \$12,000, but it is all sonar. It is easy to go out and get high flows and low flows and make monitoring a lot easier.

Then analysis for aerial imagery for priority habitat species, wetlands and riparian areas. We did that for the last 5-year review. We did it through a grad student at WSU. She is still there. The price hasn't increased. That is \$1,400.

Then the analysis and reporting on monitoring information in the VSP work plan comes to \$4,000. So, all of that comes to \$47,000 for the budget that we have over the next year.

If there are other things that this work group wants to do, we can do that. But it is basically participation monitoring and our monitoring of water quality, water flows, and temperatures is what we had identified in the plan for monitoring.

John Pearson – And you get \$47,000 from the State and they will sign off on this project?

Brad Johnson – Correct. So, we had to send them different ideas that we had and they may have some questions back to us, but if the work group approves it. The flow monitoring device, in my opinion, is going to be a question mark on their end and I was going to ask Ryan Boylan.

Basically, the flow monitoring device is sonar so it is safer during high flows and it is a lot quicker during low flows. It is what everybody has gone to, and he was like, "Wow, if the work group does this, they will use that information for VSP and like if Casey has a small stream, and Kaitlin

has a small stream, it is really easy to use once you get trained up on it.” So, it flows in our plan. Again, I get it. It is a lot of money.

I just want to pull up, Ryan Boylan gave me just a quick, I said when I need some help on this if I get questions because we approved it for the Snake River Board, which is not here or there, but we had some questions and they really came out and the staff down there.

“The Flow Tracker 2 has the latest technology in stream flow monitoring and would be a significant upgrade to the equipment currently being used to assess stream flow in the county. This tool uses Acoustic Doppler Technology, essentially sound waves to measure the speed and direction of water moving through a stream cross-section. Stream flow is one of the key indicators that we have been using to assess the progress of Whitman County’s VSP program.

By upgrading to the Flow Tracker 2, the monitoring team will save time, be able to collect more accurate measurements, and will own a piece of equipment that will be used for many years into the future. In addition, it comes highly recommended by Hydrologists at the USGS.

They honestly kind of scoffed when we talked with them about the current flow meters that they are using, because they, every foot they lower probe do 1/5 of the water, something like that. They raise it up, they get the total depth and it takes a lot of time to do a cross section where this just has sound waves.

John Pearson – Is this \$47,000, are we going to get it every year?

Brad Johnson – We don’t know that, John. I don’t believe so, but I believe,

John Pearson – So, buying a capital investment may not fly because of that.

Brad Johnson – I think we will be okay, but I think we’ll just have to justify it.

John Pearson – The other question is, I don’t see a lot of monitoring in this budget. It is outreach, it is developing plans, analysis, where is the monitoring?

Brad Johnson – So, they realize that we have to develop that monitoring guide or the monitoring plan for WC and they knew that was going to take a bunch of the money. When basically, that is the who, what, where, when and why. There is quite a bit of monitoring that is occurring at Hooper on the Palouse River, quite a bit of monitoring that is going on that we’ve used.

Our monitoring that we provided in that first 5-year review was very well received by the State. They were fine with it. So, this is making sure that we can continue to get that information and get it into that work plan and get it into the 5-year report. There is no new monitoring. You are correct.

Kim Weerts – If we use that \$12,000 who owns that?

Brad Johnson – This work group owns that piece of equipment. It would be owned by the County, actually. The County has the contract.

Kim Weerts – Okay, and then if other people wanted to use it, can they use it?

Brad Johnson – Yes, if they get trained up on it.

Kim Weerts – They would just come to the work group or they would go to the County?

Brad Johnson – I guess it would be up to the work group to decide on how that would be. From my perspective the County owns it. At first it would be at the Palouse CD. They are the ones who are doing most of the monitoring.

But if Casey wanted to, as long as this work group said, we could loan it out to partners to use and get an agreement where if you damage it or break it you have to replace it. Right? There is kind of an agreement in place so that it stays in good shape. But this work group would have the final decision on who uses it. Correct.

Kim Weerts – Okay, water quality sampling and analysis. In this \$47,000 are we using, keeping monitoring results that the CDs are already doing?

Brad Johnson – It would be the analysis of flow stations that Ecology currently has out there and an analysis of water quality monitoring that CDs have, who put it into the format of how we report it in the 5-year plan. It's, I was going to grab that section, but basically, it's statistical analysis based on years prior to 2011 and then post 2011.

John Pearson – So, that \$1,400 is for the three lines?

Brad Johnson – The \$1,400 on the aerial analysis?

John Pearson – Is that for the two lines above it as well?

Brad Johnson – No, those areas up there were things that I, testing for caffeine and fecal coliform tests, water quality sampling analysis and agricultural soil loss, I didn't know if the work group was interested in those, so there is no budget. If there was, if we ask for that from those groups it would come out of that \$4,000.

Kim Weerts – Why are we wanting to test for caffeine?

Brad Johnson -There are areas like in Asotin Creek years ago, Ecology came down and identified fecal coliforms. They test at the mouth. There is a whole bunch of septic systems. We did caffeine tests and found out that a lot of it was coming from the septic systems. Right now,

Kim Weerts – How would that affect critical areas?

Brad Johnson – It could take some of the pressure off of Agriculture if there is an area that has a lot of septic systems,

Larry Cochran – You are living in a critical area, Kim, so you want to be careful.

Jon Jones – This is something from FEMA. If there is caffeine, it is not coming from,

John Pearson – Unless they drink it.

Jon Jones – Don't give your cows coffee.

John Pearson – When they drink out of the creek.

Brad Johnson – Those three-line items were just some ideas if the work group was interested. We can strike them out of there. I didn't put a budget associated with them. I just was trying to throw some ideas, and I know that Casey, is there anything in there that you would like to, from the standpoint that I missed with this stuff? We went over it and talked about some things. Is there any different type of monitoring you would like to see?

Casey Lowder – Monitoring from Pine Creek will be pretty simplistic. Based photo monitoring primarily of projects, plant growth and development from the ground level. We do have a relatively low type drone that we use, that we have been trained on and we are going to do some monitoring for over crop with that. But beyond that, this covers any type that we would be interested in.

Larry Cochran – So, are you monitoring any of the Spokane River that is in your district?

Casey Lowder – I don't think we have any Spokane River. We have Hangman Creek.

Brad Johnson - I think Ryan gets information at the State line. Someone was saying there is a flow meter or something at the State line.

Casey Lowder – I wasn't aware there was one there. There was some interest in the fish at the State line and maybe one has gone in since I was there. We do have some flow monitoring stations set up for different purposes so that could be (inaudible), although we do get the new flow monitoring, (inaudible) use that especially for the out flows. That is the limitation of the flow station that we have now, the out flow is difficult because it is too deep to stand in and

unless we have a bridge to stand on to monitor just to kind of extrapolate based on the depth and the speed (inaudible).

Kim Weerts – So, how is it that none of the CDs have purchased this flow monitoring device?

Brad Johnson – They haven't looked into it. It was just, like I said, it came at a meeting that Jon and I were at and then this money came available and I asked the question and they were like, "Wow, that would be a game changer."

Jon Jones – I think the CDs had some of the flow monitoring,

Brad Johnson – We have just the basic.

Jon Jones -The old ones were before they used transistors. It was a little propeller that would break all the time. The main resistor was just too much but I think the CDs were, (inaudible). That's just my explanation.

Kim Weerts – I am a little uncomfortable with this entity purchasing testing equipment. I don't think it is in our bailiwick. I think it is more, particularly since the 4 CDs have been in charge of this, I think it is more in their bailiwick. I can't see why you guys couldn't find a grant or some money to purchase it. I just don't we should, VSP shouldn't be in the business of having hardware. I think it opens up a whole can of worms.

Brad Johnson – I don't see a problem with that.

Larry Cochran – Unless we buy four of them. Did you know where you want the monitoring? Everybody is going to want it at the same time. It would be hard to move around that way.

Kim Weerts – The CDs are monitoring all the time. If it is something they want then they should purchase it.

Brad Johnson – Like I said, this came from me.

Kim Weerts – If we are going to be paying the CDs for doing an analysis for us anyway, then they should purchase it.

Alan Thomson – On the testing, especially the fecal coliform, those are coming from septic system, humans, close to ground surface ground water. That is an impact on a critical area, if not Fish & Wildlife habitat. Water testing is coming under that.

Also, the knowledge of that, if their septic is leaking into streams, we need to know that. That is a, "No-no." We should not have that happening. I think that is an important thing. The monitoring whether or not we buy equipment, we should be monitoring.

John Pearson – So, is this monitoring money? It seems to me my first impression was this monitoring money is to monitor stuff that we are doing. So, if some of the practices that we are going to implement, so if we are going to plant, we need to monitor to reflect the action that we are doing. So, we should be looking at what we are doing and then say that how are we going to monitor? It could just be flat out, yes, it could be water quality, water volumes, but it should tie into what we are doing.

Kim Weerts – Are we getting this money because we're being required to get, to provide a monitoring plan?

Brad Johnson – Correct. And you can see over not quite half the budget is going to that.

Alan Thomson – Keep in mind, John, that one of the overarching objectives in this whole enterprise is to protect critical areas from agricultural activities, or human beings (inaudible) in the streams. I think that is an important thing whether or not it ties into any action that we are doing. I think the overall thing is protecting critical areas. If you've got coliform coming into streams, that is something that we can monitor.

John Pearson – I agree, but I think if we could cross a line to where, instead of we talk about the action and look at the VSP map and we have more cover crop or with no tilling this ground or, shouldn't we then tailor our monitoring to those actions as opposed to just go look for bad septic systems?

Alan Thomson – I would agree with you, but how would you,

John Pearson – What do we do with that information then? If we do go around and we start finding, is it our job to find caffeine in all the creeks?

Alan Thomson – No, but that would instigate some action on behalf of the County and the Health Department would need to investigate such things. So, if we have knowledge of that we can pass that knowledge on. Environmental Health would go out there and figure out if something is going on with somebody's septic system. A farmer's septic system right next to the creek.

John Pearson – Is that the job of this group?

Alan Thomson – If it protects the critical area, yes.

Larry Cochran – If it is in the critical area.

John Pearson – I didn't realize that.

Larry Cochran – So, to me, instead of buying the flow monitor for \$12,000, we just use money to pay somebody to monitor, to do the monitoring and if something comes up, the next step is going to the County or whoever we need to go to.

Alan Thomson – I agree with not buying the equipment. That is a bit of a fuzzy area. Who owns that? Then even if we the County owns it, what happens when it is over and done with?

John Pearson – Which cupboard are you going to leave it in?

Alan Thomson – Exactly.

Brad Johnson – I really appreciate that. I think that I really like where John was going with the type of projects that we could potentially fund in this, because this money lasts for the biennium, this \$47,000.

So, if we don't, if we take that \$12,000 out and then we start getting projects in and we find areas where we need to do some more monitoring, then we have that \$12,000 to allocate towards different types of monitoring. Or if you want to, if, it is a slippery slope. I agree with what Larry and Alan are saying about the caffeine stuff.

I'm looking at more at where you've got a trailer park where everyone is on a septic system or even a lagoon system with the trailer park. I'm not looking at individual farmer septic systems. It could come back to that but I wouldn't think that one or two farmer septic systems is, it's going to have to be a concentrated area of septic systems that are going to cause the problem.

So, I was thinking along the lines of, if fecal coliforms are high in some area, go in there and pull some tests every so often and have them tested for caffeine, which there is an increased cost for. The fecal coliform tests, I'm am not asking to pay for any of the conservation districts that are doing those now. Or Ecology that is doing them. I'm not paying, asking to pay for them. I am asking to pay for that extra test if this group supports it, to see if there is caffeine in there.

Alan Thomson – It doesn't necessarily have to focus just on caffeine. Fecal coliform inside a stream is not good, regardless of whether there is caffeine or not. I think that is an important thing to monitor, fecal coliform.

Brad Johnson – And it's being monitored correctly. It is just the caffeine tests aren't being pulled on it.

Alan Thomson – The people that are on it currently, have they tested for caffeine?

Brad Johnson – They would have to have some way to pay for that.

Alan Thomson – That would be us.

Brad Johnson – Yes, if this group supports that.

Larry Cochran – We always talked some about the DNA testing too, which we haven't done.

Brad Johnson – There is environmental DNA testing that’s gone really off with just a new buzz word in the monitoring arena. So, they can go in and pull water samples and they can find shredded scales or shredded DNA off of steelhead or salmon. There is a lot of that that is going on where they are doing DNA monitoring to see if there is (inaudible) present.

Kim Weerts – So, this \$47,000 is a pot of money that we are getting no matter what, because we are required to provide a monitoring plan by next summer?

Brad Johnson – Yes.

Kim Weerts – And so, if we don’t budget for all of it at this point it will just sit there and we can tap into that later at any time?

Brad Johnson – Correct. So, if we pull the \$12,000 out, there would be \$12,000 to allocate before the end of this biennium that starts July 1st. So, it would be two years.

Jon Jones – We couldn’t tap into it unless we have right now a plan in place.

Brad Johnson – This work group would have to come up with, just make a motion that we will do x, y, and z for \$12,000.

Kim Weerts – We have to have a plan anyway, by next summer. But we could modify that plan if we don’t spend all the money now, at a later date.

Brad Johnson – From my perspective, updating the action map will help with the 5-year reporting. The \$20,000 we need and the \$4,000. There are four-line items here. Updating the action map, development of the VSP monitoring plan, aerial analysis, and the analysis and reporting, that I would like to have a decision made so that we can get going on those on July 1st.

Kim Weerts – Those are all the things that we have done thus far and will continue to do anyway. But as an example, updating the action plan is something that we haven’t done, yet, correct?

Brad Johnson – We’ve done some small updates and you guys have approved those. We have the action map and we did, I can’t remember what update we did for a few thousand dollars. We took it out of the money that we get, yes. The only thing we have not done is the VSP monitoring plan.

I think the Fair booth display, I’d like to see action on that so we could get things ordered to get a nice Fair booth that says, “Whitman County VSP” on the cover. Then get some nice things to set inside there so it would look more professional than we have in the past.

Kim Weerts – That is in this money? Under the VSP education and outreach?

Brad Johnson – Under the participation part, the last one, *“Fair booth and cover that is VSP-focused with information that is easy to display.”*

Kim Weerts – Talk about a VSP education and reach on monitoring, again.

Brad Johnson – So, we sent out a postcard every quarter on the action map in VSP. We were just wondering if we wanted to get information out on the different parameters that are monitored for the critical areas. Just update folks on what we are looking at and whether or not that is a priority of the work group or not, I don’t know.

Kim Weerts – I sort of had a little bit of apprehension on doing that. Sending information like that out on that on a post card, because for a certain percentage of people, the minute you say “monitoring,” they will just turn around and walk away. Because they think that their information is going to get out and they will get in trouble.

So, I’m just a little concerned about that as opposed to just keeping the post card a little more generic or focusing it in a different area. More encouragement rather than explaining the details of what we do.

Brad Johnson – So, we are talking about, that would give us \$16,000. Is there anything about the data base that we get project information for the 5-year report out of? The only one that we do in my mind, we’ve got \$12,000 for the flow meter, that is off the table and the \$4,000 in employing people on monitoring.

Are you okay with the \$34,000 for the funding for a local data base to get projects that potentially that are not in the action map and get them captured for the 5-year report? The stewardship that is similar to what is on the action map.

Alan Thomson – Did you just say you were nixing the VSP education and outreach on monitoring?

Brad Johnson – Yes. Proposed, right now. Kim, she’s not comfortable sending out postcards talking about what monitoring we are doing. Just more generic information that is on the front of the postcard.

Alan Thomson – Well, we still want to get some information and we still want to educate. That is an ongoing thing.

Kim Weerts – I don’t mind doing more education and outreach. I’m concerned about targeting it towards monitoring. I think there is a certain percentage of people you say things like that and they run scared.

John Pearson – That is to my point, if you advertise the fact that we are going to go out and start testing for water quality, all of a sudden, we have a problem with Ecology. And I, if we are asked to, if one of VSP actions is that if the farmer says he is trying to raise the quality, you know, he

has a feed lot, not to pick on cattlemen, or I want to do something with my septic system, then maybe do some type of monitoring then (inaudible). But to just go out and do water quality, especially if we advertise it, I don't think it will be (inaudible.)

Brad Johnson – It has been really interesting within Whitman County. Ryan Boylan and I think, he has come and given a presentation on the different monitoring he is doing within the County and he has two different, (inaudible) watershed studies. He has one in Kamiak and Thorn, and then one in Thorn and another creek, south of Colton-Uniontown.

I don't disagree with Kim, what you are saying, but those landowners want that information whether helps or hurts them. So, but there is a pretty large percentage of people that get nervous when you start talking about monitoring.

John Pearson – If it is their information, then yes, but this is public.

Brad Johnson – Yes, and most of this has to be public information.

Kim Weerts – We are required by VSP to do a certain amount of monitoring and now we are going to be required to provide a VSP monitoring plan by next summer. Since we can't run away from it, I just think that we need, I'd like to see us focus on the positive parts of monitoring and not be so declarative on what we are doing. Because the goal is to get more voluntary participation as opposed to putting people on a list.

Jon Jones – I don't think on our public outreach we say that these are really bad guys here. We found these things in the water. Our spin would be these are the good things because we have not found these things in the water. This is what we we're told.

Kim Weerts – I think what they are talking about, and correct me if I'm wrong, would be to send out a postcard telling about the different kinds of monitoring we do. I don't know how you put a positive spin on that if people feel that we are looking over their shoulder. What I'm saying is I don't know that we need to specifically,

John Pearson – We are all sitting here volunteering because we all believe in improving water quality. That is why we are here. I think it becomes a point how do we get the buy in? We just got to be careful on how we sell that.

Jon Jones – It can't be threatening. We can't say we are going out to monitor your water and if we find something, you are really in trouble.

John Pearson – You don't have to say that for them to think that. We're not talking about the people in this room. We are talking about people saying, what are you checking my water quality for?

Alan Thomson – I don't see how we can avoid it because if there is a problem, we don't advertise it but that doesn't stop us from doing it. We should do it and if we find no problem then that is a good thing to advertise. If we find a problem, then we have to find a way to deal with it.

John Pearson – Do we have the authority to test water and then,

Alan Thomson – It's water of the State, not a private owner.

John Pearson – But if we have the water problem,

Alan Thomson – That's our job to protect the critical areas.

John Pearson – The job of the group?

Brad Johnson – So, if you guys said that Casey, Kaitlin to go out and monitor water quality, if we didn't get private landowner permission which we would try to, if we didn't, then the only access points are public right-of-way where a road crosses, bridge crossing.

So, I hear where Alan is coming from but I loud and clear hear what you guys are talking about. Because it makes people nervous whenever you talk about monitoring, because we are looking at monitoring critical areas and protecting the viability of Ag. That is our huge charge.

Some of the legacy effects, I think Nancy was talking about Spokane when we were talking about that prior to the meeting where the straight to implementation as opposed to doing a full blown PMDL got the City of Spokane saying that the legacy effect this water is not going to get cleaned up really quick. It is going to take years to see benefits in some areas.

But we, I believe 100%, we have the landowner's interest in mind. If we find an area where x, y, or z, is elevated, we will try to explain why and what practices are being implemented to change that but those changes are not going to be short-term. They will be long-term changes.

I think we have done a pretty good job of that in the first 5-year report and having the monitoring plan based on all the existing monitoring whether it is Ecology, CDs, or the Conservation Commission. The Department of Ag is doing a lot of monitoring down here with pesticides and different things. If we can assimilate all that and explain it well, I think we will fare out as well as we did in the first round of the 5-year reviews.

The biggest thing is that the VSP monitoring plan by July has to be done. Then after that, we can have some money to play with to massage and mold into what type of monitoring we would do. I don't disagree one bit.

I was wondering how we would get the education out on monitoring in a positive light, or pick the number, 60% would see a positive, 40% wouldn't and then we block that 40%. I don't want to lose anybody. We are doing things right now to document that critical area, function and

values are maintaining or hopefully improving. Whether or not we get the word out to the public on that, there are still a lot of people that don't know what VSP is. Jon was telling me before the meeting, "I'm still trying to decide what VSP is," and he has been on the work group for 5 years.

Jon Jones – I'm a little slow.

Larry Cochran – It's part of growth management is what it is. But somehow, I noticed through this monitoring we've got to convince people in WC that voluntary monitoring, and if we can prove there are no problems, then that keeps the Department of Ecology out of here and the EPA.

Alan Thomson – And John, back to your point, it is not the job of this body to be enforcers. We don't do that. We are just reporting.

Jon Jones – Things are getting better instead of worse. We have done a lot of our job and that is the positive part in monitoring.

Larry Cochran – Which is why we have been monitoring the North Fork for 20 years and basically just kind of hit a plateau. But it is still better than, at least we know what it is.

Kim Weerts – All these entities do monitoring around here. They have for years and years. VSP is required, in our work group we are required to do a certain percentage of monitoring. My whole thing is I don't think we need to advertise it. I don't think there is a positive enough response.

I think that if positive things are happening, it will be noted in the 2-year and the 5-year report. I don't think that most people, I think that most people are more interested in doing practices and seeing the improvement, as opposed to us telling them that we're going out and monitoring this and that.

Alan Thomson – We are monitoring their background. That's part of our job.

Kim Weerts – Yes,

Alan Thomson – Which we have to report on.

Kim Weerts – But we don't have to send out a specific mailer that says we are monitoring you and here's is what we are monitoring.

Alan Thomson – Agreed.

Jon Jones – We don't want to do that. I think everybody agrees with that.

John Pearson – I also caution that this group does not interpret the data too closely. Fecal coliform is a big one and I want to recall that Skagit Valley deal where they actually DNA tested, and it was totally different to what was assumed when the EPA tested all that. That was 5 years ago, they had analyzed it totally different to what it actually was. So, you want to be really careful that we don't just make assumptions that,

Alan Thomson – That's not going to be our job, either, John. We are going to report on what we find and the state agencies are going to do that interpretation and that's where the action will happen with the state agencies and local authorities.

John Pearson – That makes me nervous.

Alan Thomson – Well, otherwise, we have a problem here and this VSP thing goes poof out the window and all of a sudden, I'm monitoring you through the authority of the State (inaudible.)

John Pearson – So, we did it on the South Fork and my daughter was in high school for her senior project and she actually traced, she made the papers, and she was the one that traced it all the way to the Jack-In-The-Box. The stormwater drain came out of the Jack-In-the-Box and that was my daughter that did that. But for the previous 15 years, we were testing the river on the South Fork and we fenced off every horse and cow. Then she discovered that it was coming out of the drain there.

Larry Cochran – The car wash also drained directly into Paradise Creek.

John Pearson – So, that was kind of a fun Senior Project. She worked with Ecology on that.

Kim Weerts – Do we have a list of what we currently monitor for?

Brad Jones – I can get you that. I don't have it off the top of my head.

Kim Weerts – I just think for informational purposes it would be good for this group to see what kinds of things we are monitoring.

Larry Cochran – We've got that map of the critical areas and you want landowners to, how much of that area is done by the local landowners and how much more of this needs to be done? How many, the percentage of the critical areas the landowners have done those maps?

Brad Johnson – So, how many, the action map, we've got 95 different pins on the action map. I don't know, we are probably, I don't remember how many producers are in the County.

There is probably, David do you remember that number? You and I talked about it one time. I thought it was closer to 1,000 and you were saying it was lower? Are you still on, David? (No response)

Jon Jones – A few years ago, it was about 1,600.

Brad Johnson – Right, that is what David and I were talking about. I'll go get that number. I think it is closer to 500. We've got almost a fifth. Ninety-five out of five hundred.

Larry Cochran – So, for me, instead of sending a postcard about the monitoring, how about sending a postcard to get people to fill out that map and we can talk about the good things we are doing and we have protected the critical areas?

Brad Johnson – We do that on a quarterly basis and the participation I wouldn't say has waned, but it has just, we've gotten, and people we know people that come into our district, I know, Caitlin just got one on the action map and Casey has worked hard to try to get some up on the Hangman.

We've only got one pin currently on the Hangman but we are working hard. We've got a couple on the hook and hopefully get them signed up. Then I've got other guys that I'm talking to that come into the district regularly that are interested in it. But yes, that is in our focus, the action map to get stewardship practices that protect critical areas into that action map.

Kim Weerts – So, did I see in the new budget that you are wanting to do a new, something different with the postcard?

Brad Johnson – The postcard in the regular budget we would do just the same as we have always done. Quarterly information on the action map and stewardship.

Kim Weerts – Okay, maybe it was the Fair thing you were talking about.

Brad Johnson – No, that was the VSP education and outreach and monitoring that was \$4,000 that we just said that we are not going to send postcards out on monitoring.

Kim Weerts – Right, but I thought I saw somewhere else to Larry's question. I agree with him that I think that we should change out the postcard that we are using and do something different. Because if we are sending the same thing quarterly, people are seeing the same thing quarterly, and it is like getting something to check off or throw it away.

But to that, to Larry's question, I don't think we should do, or can we do a new type of mailing not using the monitoring and have it come out of the monitoring money? I would assume we couldn't. It would have to be in the regular budget.

Brad Johnson – If we are getting information, that is still participation monitoring, so it is identified there. So, we could have, we would just have to figure out if it ties back to participation. Participation in VSP, so we could put more money into the postcard mailings or change it up and use some of this money, definitely, because it is participation monitoring.

Kim Weerts – Okay, good. I wouldn't be opposed to changing that what you are sending out as long as we are not talking about monitoring. I think once you get ¾ of the same mailing, you kind of look at it and throw it away.

Brad Johnson – What I've heard from when we had the 4 CD meeting at the Fairgrounds, I ask people about it and they say they got the postcard, set it aside and were going to fill it out and look at it more, but just ran out of time. I heard that from a hand full of people.

I don't disagree with you. I think there are a certain amount that just toss them. I think there are some that it is resonating with and some of them when they are filling out the action map, they put down they heard about it from the postcard. So, I don't disagree that maybe the message needs to change, but I think that is it starting to resonate with people, I think you've got the percentage that just tosses them, the other ones lose them, so.

Kim Weerts – Is it feasible to use some of the monitoring budget money to bridge that gap or try to figure out how to bridge that gap? I would agree with you. A lot of people think great thoughts and then it gets to the bottom of the pile.

Brad Johnson – Yes, absolutely. So, we could change VSP education and outreach and delete out the monitoring. VSP education and outreach for \$4,000 and not talk about monitoring.

John Pearson – In advertising, they say you have to see something seven times before it resonates. We still see them advertising coca cola. Even if they have tossed, after a while, you could change the format up switch the words, etc.

Kim Weerts – If we do that, that would be a good use of that money.

Larry Cochran – We have to convince them that this program is better than what the next program could be.

John Pearson – Or the one that put the brakes on. Right? Because this was in lieu of,

Brad Johnson – Growth management.

Alan Thomson – It's not growth management. It is updates to the Critical Areas Ordinance. It is the regulations through the County.

John Pearson – And this was negotiated so we wouldn't have to go down that road.

Alan Thomson – The Ruckelshaus thing or initiation of it, to be voluntary rather than,

Brad Johnson – Right now, if and again, I'm not trying to assume anything. If we take \$12,000 off, then the budget comes to \$35,000. But one thing, the only one we haven't talked about is that

funding for the local data base that captures stewardship that is in the work plan and compare that to the action map.

I'm just going to use Larry as an example. If Larry has worked with us on 300 acres of direct seed, and then in the action map, he has 1,000 acres of direct seed, we wouldn't report Larry's 300 acres because we have already got it in the action map.

John works with us but hasn't filled out the action map, so we are going to capture his stewardship. We aren't going to double report it. This will really help us. In the first 5-year report we only used information that was in the action map. Ninety-five pins out of 500, if that is the number, but now we can also increase the 95 number to 96 and include his acreage because it is in our data base as projects. Again, it is reported by watershed, not by producer.

I really, again, all these amounts are, "not to exceed" amounts so if there is money left over, if whoever we are working with the action maps, the first one, the \$1,200, if they don't provide me billings for \$1,200 and get us \$1,000, we have \$200 later on to allocate in the next two years.

If we keep VSP education and outreach, we can't spend over \$4,000, is what I am getting at. These would be all "not to exceed" amounts. But if we don't spend that amount, the money would go into a pot that this group at a later date, I'd come forward and say, "Hey, we've got a year left and we know we have \$12,000 in my mind right now." But it could be more, is what I am getting at.

Kim Weerts – The \$3,400 funding a local data base, is this for us to find producers who are not taking money from CDs for NRCS?

Brad Johnson – That is the action map. This would be actually funded projects through CDs. Getting it all into one place so it is a central repository, if you want to use that term, with their names that we only see, so that we can compare back to the action map. If John hasn't participated in the action map, we need those acres. If Larry's project, we pushed them off to the side because we have already captured them in the action map. We try not to double reporting.

Kim Weerts – Okay, so then would the data base be just producers who have worked with the CDs or would you go and include NRCS in that big data base?

Brad Johnson – I don't know if we could get NRCS's information. In the past, we've struggled. We have tried.

Kim Weerts – Okay, so it is just office CD practice. Basically, you're just making a name and address list to try and make sure that everybody who is working with the CDs make sure that they do the action map too.

Brad Johnson – Hopefully, we can do some targeted mailings to those people who have worked with us and say that you have worked with us. It would really be nice to not just get the acres, you got cost-share, but all your acres. So, we could use some targeted mailings off of that data base as well. But, again, that is all voluntary. I really appreciated what Alan had to say, earlier.

I'm tickled that there are 95 pins on that map. I'd like to say we are up to 200. It has been well worth the money to build it. You see the \$800 there is basically \$2,000 in this biennium that would go to the people that developed the action map, because \$800 is to maintain it on a yearly basis. But that \$800, if I call them. When Caitlin was hired, I called them and they updated it but Caitlin's contact as opposed to the previous person, we don't get charged for that. But, getting more focused in on critical areas in stewardship is a lift and a \$1200 price tag.

Larry Cochran – We will know more when you get that monitoring plan written.

Brad Johnson – Definitely, so it wouldn't hurt to have that \$12,000 to allocate after July of next year. And maybe between now and then whether it is Casey, Caitlin, Josh, Whitman CD, if there are some things out there that are a need, we can bring it in front of you and see if you are interested in funding it.

Larry Cochran – So, who is going to write that plan?

Brad Johnson – I'm going to, at the last meeting, I think it is in the notes, I'm recommending that we work with Ryan Boylan, who has done all the monitoring and he knows what is going on and he is thinking he could take that on.

So basically, the analysis work down below, Ryan has done that for us in the past and Ryan said he would be interested if the work group is interested in that \$20,000 to develop the plan. Basically, Ecology has quality assurance protection plans and Ryan has written a lot of them and that is what this monitoring plan needs to have. Ryan is going to go through all the different monitoring that he has and fill it out. He doesn't know if it is going to cost \$20,000, but again, like I said if it doesn't, we'll have money left over.

But up above, you know, the deliverables and everything I thought I brought my plan, but I can send you out the list of what we are monitoring, what is identified in VSP, low temperature, and then its (inaudible) nitrogen maybe.

Kim Weerts – I just think the work group should see the list so that we are familiar with it.

Brad Johnson – I'll send out the participation and the water quality monitoring.

Kim Weerts – Do we need to approve this budget today?

Brad Johnson – Yes.

Kim Weerts – And we need to approve the other budget.

Brad Johnson – I just broke out what we recommended for the \$47,000, so, yes. The motion at this point is the only thing we are taking off is the flow monitoring device would be a motion to approve the budget minus the flow monitoring device which leaves \$12,000 remaining to be allocated over the biennium.

Jon Jones – So, it would be \$35,000 and that would be the motion.

Brad Johnson – We have \$167,000 over the biennium, so you take \$12,000 off of that and we would allocate.

Kim Weerts – So that \$47,000 is in your budget.

Brad Johnson – Correct, on the first page you see, \$112,342.56 for salaries and benefits, there is \$1,857.44 for travel, \$5,000 for postcards mailings, \$800 for the action map, \$47,000 which would go to \$35,000 and the total would be \$155,00 with \$12,000 left to allocate over the biennium.

John Pearson – Should we not approve the \$12,000?

Brad Johnson – It would be in the motion that you would allocate it at a later date. You could approve the \$167,000.

Kim Weerts – We would approve the \$47,000 which is the total amount that the State is giving us for the monitoring. But we don't have to allocate all of it at this point?

John Pearson – Do we have to change the name of that line item?

Brad Johnson – Just get rid of it.

Kim Weerts – In the budget we've got goods and services, which is the postcard mailings. So, there is \$5,000 for that. What are we going to do, how do we use that additional \$4,000 that we are getting for VSP education and outreach?

Brad Johnson – You will give me some direction and we will work together as the technical service providers and send you examples before we send anything out on it. We've got the previous postcards but we would just try to maybe send them out more frequently.

The thing that I thought about with the postcards is we are sending them quarterly and they hit a guy during harvest. We want to maybe send another one out during the low periods after spring seeding and after harvest. So, we could add two more mailings with that \$4,000. I mean, I am open to anything.

Kim Weerts – My question is, is it redundant? What you are saying is now you just do additional work.

Alan Thomson – Are you ready for a motion? Or are there more questions?

Larry Cochran – I really like the idea of approving the total amount and then not spending it if we don't need to.

Jon Jones – I would move to approve the budget as it is written here, with the caveat that we can do what we want with the \$12,000 allocated for monitoring.

Brad Johnson – You've got \$12,000 that you can change.

Jon Jones – Leave it in the budget and call it something else. We can move that extra \$12,000 when we think we need it.

MOTION by Jon Jones and seconded by Larry Cochran to approve the budget for \$167,000. Getting rid of the flow monitoring device but leaving the \$12,000. All those in favor say aye, opposed, nay. Motion passed. Thank you. We will work with Alan and Mark.

Alan Thomson – Wait a minute. David Lange needs to vote. We don't have a quorum without him.

Brad Johnson – David, are you on mute? Give him a call.

Kim Weerts – He won't answer. I just texted him.

Brad Johnson – While we are waiting to hear from David, currently, we have work group members who have stepped off. Tracy Ericksen let Art and I know he is no longer. David Lange let Art and I know. And then John Stuhlmiller. So, it would be nice to ask the BOCC to reduce the number of work group members and not have seats there until they are filled. Because now we need seven members for a quorum. So, Art was going to look into it but it sounds like it is number of seats and it doesn't matter if someone is sitting in it or not.

Then the other thing I was going to ask about and see what this group felt, August 30th is the due date for our 2-year status report. I will, we did a really good review on it the previous two years. A lot of people's edits and everything and the only thing that is going to change are the metrics, the number of acres and a little bit of information on monitoring updates.

Would this work group want to have a small work group put together so we don't have to rely on the farmers who are going to be harvesting during that time to come in? So, like it goes out to a full work group but a smaller working group approves that plans so they could submit it August 30th or do we need the whole work group there, the end of July to approve this?

I believe we are okay, if this group makes a motion that a work group reviews it, and if they are okay with it, we submit it. I'm just trying to think ahead.

Alan Thomson – Any action has to be from the full body. Then number seven, nothing less right now for any business. Unless the BOCC can shrink the body.

Brad Johnson - Okay, if we shrink it by three then the number is five?

Alan Thomson – If you shrink it by two and you get to eleven you get a quorum of six.

Brad Johnson – If the BOCC appoint someone they can also increase the number.

Alan Thomson – Yes, they can.

Larry Cochran – Worse comes to worse you can do that one online. I can do it from the combine cab.

Alan Thomson – It would be a good idea to try and get people to come online, if they can't be here. Like Joan Folwell, if you can't be here, can you be available by zoom so we can actually have a vote?

John Pearson– What would help if we do that is to shorten the meetings so any time we do zoom, it just seems if you are not participating at two meetings max on zoom. I try to keep mine or try to keep mine to an hour. If we could come in and just approve a budget on zoom in an hour, it would be a lot easier.

Brad Johnson – We have the cost-share program that was approved and I think that we would just need a quorum to do any business. We've got, I was hoping we would have a call for cost-share projects that are listed in the plan.

If you could pull up the Whitman County VSP Cost-Share Program User Guide. I hope I captured at the last meeting they wanted us to define what the five critical areas were, maps, seed, action map, has the critical areas on that and then the eligible stewardship practices identified in the WC VSP Work Plan. They wanted projects, just some examples for eligible projects and what critical areas were protected and then the cost-share application wouldn't have to be that in depth.

Just a few things in each box, the planned BMPs and then this group would have to score and rank those projects. I was hoping to have budgets in by August and maybe at that meeting where we approve the (inaudible) eligible alternative water developments for cattle. I was hoping to get that.

On the agenda, the June 29th cover crop tour from 8-2 has been cancelled. I will be going to Spokane on July 13th and then October 12th. The technical panel and statewide advisory committee will be in Pullman. If you are available, it would be a really good meeting to come to.

October 12th in Pullman, they don't have the time or location yet. I will send that out when we get that.

We really need a July VSP work group meeting. I forgot about the 2-year status report that is due in August.

John Pearson – Do you have any idea on the dates for the July meeting?

Brad Johnson – No, I was going to send out a doodle poll and see what works best for people.

Jon Jones – It would be a short meeting.

Brad Johnson – I hope so.

Jon Jones – Do the CDs have some projects that you know about?

Casey Lowder – I was anticipating submitting an application to support the ongoing little Hangman Creek restoration project. Specifically, to cover some budget overruns on plant materials. So, it will be a relatively small request, but I do plan to put one of those in.

Caitlin Harrold – I think there are always projects in my district, but to benefit some VSP budget. So, I have no doubt that we will be submitting some applications as well.

The Ewan project, from what I have heard, is something very complex and so I am not sure if that would be something that would be thought through by our (inaudible) but definitely, I have heard from the work group that Ewan is a priority. So, that definitely could be an option as well.

Jon Jones – It seems to me, and this is only my own thought, that VSP projects are currently best used if they are in support of a bigger project. It needs some big parts and gaps in some bigger projects. It can also be used for stand-alone projects.

Brad Johnson – So, we can't vote on anything until we hear from David.

Alan Thomson -We could have a zoom meeting tomorrow or the next day just for the vote.

Kim Weerts – Can we suspend this meeting and let him text in a vote?

Alan Thomson – No, I think we all have to, the only other possibility is to do it by zoom with everybody.

John Pearson – Or email to everybody?

Alan Thomson – No, it has to be in-person or zoom for communication.

Brad Johnson – We have two actions items left. Approve the budget, July 1st, 2023-June 30th 2024, and set a cost-share application period. So, if we want to start a cost-share call for projects those would be the two remaining items and then discuss the meeting to approve the 2-year status report prior to August.

Alan Thomson – That’s for the next meeting, right?

Brad Johnson – Yes.

John Pearson – If we did a zoom, we don’t need Dave, we just need one of the others.

Alan Thomson – I think we have to have Dave because hopefully, he has been a part of this conversation. Otherwise, somebody else is coming in cold turkey and have no idea what we were talking about. It has to be Dave. So, if we can get in touch with him and get a time frame and just meet really quick on zoom, we can suspend this meeting. So, tomorrow or whenever we can get another meeting.

Brad Johnson – What time works for tomorrow?

John Pearson – If it is short, anytime works for me.

Kim Weerts – Anytime.

Alan Thomson – And we can take a vote. What we just voted on and then let’s get David up to speed and know if he is available. And stay available.

Jon Jones – Well, Joan Folwell,

Alan Thomson – David has been part of the conversation and Joan wasn’t in on the conversation.

Brad Johnson – I will get a hold of David and be in contact with Brandon to set up the zoom for tomorrow morning.

John Pearson – Can you text me or call me because I don’t check my email?

Kim Weerts – Can you text us?

Brad Johnson – Okay.

Alan Thomson – So, is everybody going to be able to do that?

Brad Johnson – So, we will send an email as well as a text.

Alan Thomson – We need to adjourn this meeting to continue tomorrow.

Kim Weerts – Did you say you needed us to decide when we are going to open and close this? Then we should do that now. We just need dates, right?

Brad Johnson – I would open it July 1st and close it mid-August and have a meeting and have a chance to get everything together, send it out to you and have a September meeting. I don't know how busy everyone will be in September to score and rank projects.

Kim Weerts – I think those dates sound fine. We just need to have to make sure,

Brad Johnson – Tomorrow there will be a motion made to have a cost-share program that starts July 1st and ends the middle of, the end of August with a September score and ranking meeting.

John Pearson – So, they have to have a plan.

Brad Johnson– They have to go to the local conservation district and fill out the cost-share assistance, which I will send out to everybody. Then once this group approves that, the CD has to put the project into the CPDS system and then it gets to the Commission. The Commission just verifies that it is in our plan, protects critical areas, and then they send the County the money and they work with the individual CD first with the producer, gets everything back into CPDS, sends it to the Commission, money will come to the County and then to the CD.

Kim Weerts – When does this money have to be spent?

Brad Johnson – At the end of the biennium, June 30, 2025.

Kim Weerts – So, we have time.

Brad Johnson – You can have as many calls for projects as you want as long as the projects can be completed by the end of the biennium.

Kim Weerts – I think we should do the,

Brad Johnson – We will get the information out and let them know. Basically, it's going to be talking about the eligible practices and go to the individual CD to fill out the cost-share program.

Kim Weerts – Right, I'm just saying, can we get that out by July 1st and then we close by the end of August?

John Pearson – So, we have approximately half million,

Brad Johnson – I thought it was 3 million dollars. I will look that up.

John Pearson – We have 3 million? Statewide, what do we have?

Brad Johnson – We applied for projects and then,

John Pearson – So, we don't have a minimum amount to spend? The next question is you already have a bunch of projects ready to go, haven't you?

Casey Lowder – I was just saying that I have one project ready to go. We can quickly fill that out. We will also send out a letter, emails to folks that we already work with, letting them know there's more opportunity but I don't anticipate additional projects for this first round. But I'm glad that Brad mentioned there can be as many sign-ups as the workgroup wants, so for those future sign-ups, I will anticipate getting more interested landowners to apply.

John Pearson – The other districts probably have,

Caitlin Harrold – Since the priority of the work group is to be a funding gap like you guys mentioned, I think that makes me a little more confident in being able to get some applications in. I also agree with Casey that July 1-mid August could be a little difficult to bring in a whole new project but since in that week we would be able to make a call for applications in the future, I think brand new projects at that point in time would be realistic.

Casey Lowder – We'll also, have a better chance if we go for an earlier application round like the one that is being proposed in July-August or even if we just had a project or two to propose. We will be some of the first to get that 3 million or have an opportunity to go for that 3 million. The earlier the better for this first round from my perspective.

Kim Weerts – I would agree except that I would like us to remain cognizant of the fact that we want to look at Ewan so we don't want to spend money here and there just because there are projects. We have talked significantly about our projects being a little different, not just throw a little more money to a CD project.

Caitlin Harrold – I just worry about Ewan for this first round of call for applications. I'm just not sure that it is plausible to get something in, but I definitely agree that Ewan has been stated to be a priority so we should, if that is something we want to go for then start working on a plan so that the very next round of applications we could submit things like that.

Larry Cochran – So, there has been an Ewan plan for almost ten years. You would think it wouldn't take much to finish that up.

Alan Thomson – So, here is what it would take. Hiring the correct engineer to go and do a study of the whole floodplain above and below the highway. That is really what is missing. Come up

with a plan to see how much of vegetation is going to be removed and what it will be replaced by. A lot of it is already kind of mixed up on the table and nothing has been done about making it real. So, the engineering thing is really the hang-up.

Kim Weerts – So, can the VSP work group direct the CDs to,

Alan Thomson – I think the CD needs to hire a specific engineer,

Kim Weerts – Right, but can we at this point, is there anybody in any CD who is working on this project? If not, can one of the CDs contact whoever is in charge of the project and work with them on an application?

Alan Thomson – Yes, we kind of already have it opened up. It just got cold because there is no real floodplain analysis. That is what is missing.

Kim Weerts – Can Brad make that a priority under somebody's salary to work on that?

Brad Johnson – I guess the question is we would have to ask if money can be spent on that if it is eligible to get that completed. I wouldn't say we would want to take that out of anybody's budget because it is, I get what you say about looking into that.

Kim Weerts – I want someone to lead the point to get information. You can get information on whether or not we can send it to the engineer but somebody has to contact whoever is in charge of the project and at least get from them everything that has been done for the last several years.

And let them know that VSP may be available for them and they would need to complete an application. Otherwise, you're just putting something in the paper and who is going to see it from Ewan and say, "Oh."

Alan Thomson – It is the Rock Lake CD in charge of that one. The landowners wanted Rock Lake started. They initiated the process but it broke down.

Brad Johnson – Do you want to take VSP money and start that back up?

Caitlin Harrold – I would be willing to find out that information and dig a little further and then I'd be happy to present what I find and who I contact at our next board meeting in July. Then we can go from there.

Kim Weerts – At this point you can't use VSP budget money to do that. That has to come out of the CD.

Brad Johnson – Yes, probably. There is a little bit of leeway with that \$13,000 that she has and could use some of it because it could potentially be a project. Then once the Ewan project, if it would be funded by the VSP there is money to help administer it through that 3.5 million dollars.

Kim Weerts – What I'm saying is to spend the VSP money at this point, contacting them I don't think legally we could do that, and I think it would certainly show a bias to a project. That needs to come from Palouse Rock Lake if they are the CD that is involved then they need to figure it out.

Larry Cochran – I think we've already made that point clear.

Alan Thomson – This group here can prioritize the project. So, we can make a decision as to what project we want to work on. If we say let's do the Ewan thing, we can fund it through the VSP?

Kim Weerts – Yes, but can we fund a CD employee to gather information?

Alan Thomson – The information is going to come from an engineer. A floodplain engineer. That's what these guys do, they hire people to do that.

Kim Weerts – Yes, but what Brad was implying when he spoke earlier was that Caitlin could take some VSP money to get information on this project.

Alan Thomson – We don't need that. I can give you the information. Contact this guy and get him on board to do a floodplain analysis. This is a critical area problem. So, contact Evan Laubach in Pullman. Get him out there and have him do the work.

Caitlin Harrold – So, the funds to do that to pay for the engineer that would be,

Alan Thomson – VSP.

John Pearson – Do you have an estimate on what the engineer would charge? In your experience how long would it be before he gets it done?

Alan Thomson – He is a busy guy. Getting him on board and a definite time for him to be out there is difficult. So, it would take a little bit of time to do that whole floodplain analysis. Then the removal of trees is part of that floodplain analysis. Whatever it takes to get the water to flow through there freely. That means taking out some trees as well. I don't know how much that would cost.

John Pearson – But that has to be done,

Alan Thomson – That is part of the engineering. The trees are the blockage. There is also a beaver dam in there. All of that has to be analyzed by an engineer. Do this and it will clear things up and you'll have good flood flow all the way down south. That is the main thing that is missing on this project.

It would take several thousand dollars to do that, but that is up to Evan to decide. Once we get this thing going, contact Evan and get him on board and now, we have a project. But we have to vote on that one first. Are we going to vote for doing this, moving ahead with this and if so, hand it off to the CD?

Casey Lowder – All of the WC CD's have access to an area engineer that is based out of Pomeroy. He is fully funded already so the engineering work, if he has the correct certifications to do this kind of work, maybe that would be a way. Because, did we confirm that the VSP money can be used for engineering? It is not a practice in the work plan.

Alan Thomson – I don't know. Are you familiar with the history, Casey? I would oppose that. I'm not really going to go into depth as to why, but we tried to go through your engineering and we have not succeeded. So, I would approve a motion to hire someone else. Someone I know would do a thorough job to get it done efficiently. I don't want to disparage your engineer but we've run into a road block with him and it won't work.

Kim Weerts – To answer the second question, I want to say that Art looked into this and I thought it was possible to use VSP money for the engineer. We could just confirm that. My thing was we stated that Ewan is a priority. We just need a connection between a CD and the engineer to help them fill out the application and get it done.

Alan Thomson – That would work.

John Pearson – Bring the proposal to the next meeting and we can vote on it.

Brad Johnson – As complex as it is, hopefully we can, but like Caitlin was saying there are a lot of things that have to be done, so it would be the second application, the second time we run projects. But get a lot of that information so that we can do it.

Kim Weerts – Why doesn't a CD employee contact him and ask him? We are speculating on a lot of information that we don't know.

Alan Thomson – We would have to vote first to approve that project and then you could do that.

John Pearson – We need a proposal, amount it is going to cost, what they are going to do, and,

Kim Weerts – If he's been involved in this, he will know exactly what he needs to do. We just need to put that application process in his hand so he can finish it. I'm not sure that we have to wait until the second time.

Alan Thomson – Well, that would work. I can get you in touch with him. He has already been involved in this project. He has been working with the Town of Ewan with the flooding by the church. He is pretty familiar with the floodplain. This guy is top notch as far as floodplain analysis goes.

Kim Weerts – So, I don't think it would take him that long to complete that application on what we need the money for. So, I don't see why we would have to go to the second round.

Caitlin Harrold – Yes, Alan, if you could get me his contact information, I would really appreciate that.

Alan Thomson – I will make contact with Evan first to let him know and give him a headsup, yes. It is a project that needs to be done.

Brad Johnson –So, I guess David bailed on us completely. I just texted him and asked him if he could get on quick so we didn't have to have a meeting tomorrow. I think based on him not being here, we will suspend this meeting.

Kim Weerts – Do we need a motion on the date so we have it available on the application process so that we just vote yea or nay tomorrow?

Alan Thomson – How does 10:30 sound for tomorrow? Does that work? Okay.

MOTION by John Pearson and Kim Weerts seconded to open up applications for that time period, July 1-August 30th.

Kim Weerts – Brad, have we approved those applications?

Brad Johnson – Yes. Not having a quorum, we can't take more on that, but tomorrow at 10:30 a.m., if that time works with David. If that doesn't work, I will get in touch with everyone. We will suspend the meeting until tomorrow at 10:30 a.m. in a Zoom meeting. I will send out the zoom information.

Meeting suspended – 3:55 p.m.

June 28, 2023 – VSP Zoom Meeting

Members present by Zoom -Alan Thomson, Kim Weerts, Larry Cochran, Nancy Belsby, David Lange, Jon Pearson, Jon Jones.

10:30 a.m. - Brad Johnson - We've got seven members. We've got two action items to go over.

The first one is to approve the budget for \$167,000 with \$12,000 of that in monitoring not allocated to be allocated at a future date by the work group. Any discussion on that? All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. **Motion carried.**

The second action item that has been moved and seconded is that we will have discussion of having a VSP cost-share program that starts July 1, and application period closes August 30th for projects that are identified in the work plan and can be funded with VSP cost-share. Is there any discussion on that? All those in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. **Motion carried.**

I really appreciate everyone's time. The districts will work on getting the word out that we have a VSP cost-share application open from July 1 to August 30th.

I will send out a doodle poll, and we will have to have a meeting in September with the full work group members to approve those projects to be submitted to the Washington State Conservation Commission. So, you should be hearing from me in mid-August to see what date and time in September works best.

I appreciate everyone's time and I hope you all have a great afternoon. Thank you.

Meeting adjourned – 10:45 a.m.