

## Watershed Group Meeting notes for December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Attendants: CJ Jones, Brian L, Emmett Wild, Bill Blake, Bill Dewey, Kara Symonds, Mike See, Leslie Michel, Brandon Roozen, Jason Vander Kooy, Ron Wesen, Emily Derenne, Kerry Julvezan, Kevin Jackman

### Welcome & Introductions

#### Staffing Updates

- Kara leaving, CJ is new

### Statewide Perspective

#### Quarterly Monitoring Symposiums

- Next meeting on January 26th

### Joint VSP Technical Panel & Statewide Advisory Committee Meetings

- January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Skagit County presentation – May 12<sup>th</sup>
  - o Bring any issues to the committee for comment.

### Additional VSP Resources

- Cascades to Coast Landscape Collaborative
  - o Web-based tool for connecting landowners to discover conservation incentive programs
- EPA developing nutrient inventory tool
  - o Listening session was on Nov 30<sup>th</sup> – next TBA
- Additional Comments
  - o Bill Blake: The county and CD should work together to increase voluntary actions in the county to better respond to the 5 Year Report concerns
  - o Brandon Roozen: There should be a focus on incorporating different landowners into the program
  - o Ron Wesen: There is a concern about there not being enough outreach. The cover crops are great, but what problems do they solve?
  - o Bill Blake: We should also focus on figuring out the barriers to buffer planting incentives and try to address them.
  - o Leslie Michel: WSDA has an RFP out for soil sampling. There may be monitoring value in getting landowners to participate in the county.
    - Wesen: When does this take place?

- Michel: Date not set, but it is set to look at factors associated with soil health to see if certain practices are having an impact.
  - Roozen: What are the measurements?
    - Michel: They are typical soil sample metrics
  - Wesen: There is real concern over publicly available information about dairy farms. Will the data be publicly requestable?
    - Michel: There is an effort to protect the data collected, but everything is open to public disclosure.
  - Wesen: Dairies will probably not want to participate due to the information being available to the public.
    - Vander Kooy: Agreed, these are sensitive topics that open dairies up to lawsuits.
  - Roozen: Will this be brought up at the state level?
    - Michel: Policy makers need to hear these concerns from the producers.
    - Vander Kooy: The Dairy Federation is a valuable resource.
- Brandon Roozen: Commissioner Wesen, is there a desire to further incorporate shellfish protection measures into VSP reporting?
  - Wesen: Agreed that they are important, but what can we show?
  - Dewey: Benefits downstream from VSP efforts will be shown with fewer closures, but not sure if they can be helped.
    - Roozen: Will follow up with commissioners at the county level.

### Skagit Conservation District Interlocal Agreements

#### Cover Crop Program

- Emmett Wild: Was able to allocate most of the funds within the first week. There were 10 participants, and 618 acres planted. All 30k in funds were used.
- Bill Blake: Think about future funding for cover crops, and increase available funds.
  - Wild: Other programs are also useful to be funded.
  - Dewey: Avoid crops that are bird forage.
    - Vander Kooy: Agreed about crop types.
  - See: 9k budgeted for VSP projects in 2022.
    - Will see at the end of the year if the county can increase the amount.

### Skagit VSP Updates

- John Anderson (Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland) and Oscar Lagerlund

### Open Discussion / Questions

- Brandon Roozen: Should we be tracking estuary restoration projects?
  - The county should be supporting the Skagit Tidegates Initiative. A lawsuit has been issued in respect to the program, and tidegate repairs are needed.
    - Symonds: The Commissioners have been responsive to the initiative, and it should be addressed at that level.
- Brandon Roozen: The ag viability piece of VSP needs to be addressed somehow
  - Will talk at a later date to get up to speed.
  - See: The county should discuss more about what it should be supporting.

### Watershed Group Future Meeting Schedule

March

Adjourn