

Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting Q4

December 2, 2022

Slide 1: Welcome

- Introductions – welcoming Nathan White, Habitat Restoration Manager at Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group as a guest
- Committee members in attendance: Bill Dewey, Bill Blake, Brian Lipscomb, Jason Vander Kooy, Jeff McGowan, Mikala Staples Hughes.
- Additional attendees: Brandon Roozen, Commissioner Wesen, Jenn Johnson, Nathan White, Emmett Wild.

Slide 2: Review Agenda

- Developing a regular structure for these meetings beginning with local and statewide updates followed by ongoing discussion topics.
- Hoping to talk about improving communication methods for VSP

Slide 3: Goal Context

- Putting our progress in the context of the goals I've established more generally for the program
- These goals based on informal conversations with VSP-stakeholders, research, and specific review of the VSP Workplan. I believe working toward these goals will support meeting the benchmarks established in the Workplan.
- I am revisiting them now as context for VSP updates. I think it is important to link progress to established goals.
- *Reviewed goals*

Slide 4: Mailing Campaign

- Sarah Stoner and I of the Farmland Legacy Program strategized a mailing campaign to increase the visibility of our two programs among the agricultural community.
- With a similar audience, we were able to combine resources to fund the campaign and reach nearly ~3,000 households.
- The campaign worked toward meeting my first goal of establishing VSP as the point-person, middle-man, etc. for voluntary programs in Skagit
 - o Increase visibility of VSP and align it with a more established and quite successful program, Farmland Legacy.
- 13 inquires about VSP and implementing enhancement projects on their property
 - o Scheduling at least four site visits with partner – conservation district staff and Emily Derenne
 - o In process with others
- Need a detailed review of the success of the campaign to determine if it should be budgeted for in the future in the new year.
- *From committee:*
 - o *In the future, this should be a more targeted mailing to avoid duplicates being sent to landowners with multiple parcels in Ag-NRL.*
 - o *When we did the initial advertising campaign for the Natural Resource Stewardship Program, we sent mailers just to folks with watercourses on their property. Did this mailer include information about NRSP?*
 - *Kate – Because the audience needed to also include Farmland Legacy-eligible landowners, it didn't make sense to target the mailer to just folks with Critical Areas. That is something I am considering in the future. And no, there was no direct mention of*

NRSP. The mailer was very simple. When I talk to interested folks, I make them aware of all the programs available to them, including NRSP.

- *The campaign served the purpose of reminding people of VSP, bring it to the front of minds. We should consider doing this regularly if there is funding.*
- *What was the cost of the campaign? Is there a specific reason this hasn't been done in the past?*
 - *Kate – Total cost was about \$900 for VSP. The mailing was split between FLP and VSP budget.*

Slide 5:

- *Applied for VSP Supplemental funding for four projects. I'm glad to announce that 3 applications were accepted by the Conservation Commission. The final project is still pending review but is also promising.*
- *Nathan from Skagit Fisheries, who has been working on these projects previously in collaboration with Emily Derenne's Natural Resources Stewardship Program, gave project details.*
 - *VSP dollars will allow SFEG to do additional site prep in the form of noxious weed control.*
 - *What resources will landowners have to maintain these projects?*
 - *SFEG maintains sites for three years and can always look for additional funding for maintenance on a site-by-site basis. SFEG is supportive of spending more time/resources on the front end of projects to properly prep the site for planting. Exploring ways to plant sites to allow for mechanical maintenance by landowners, this reduces the time spent on weed control.*
 - *Great if a site can be easily mowed by a landowner rather than planted in a way that requires more time/resources to maintain.*
 - *These projects represent a great example of what can be done quickly when dollars are available to VSP (through the Supplemental Funding). These will be 21 acres planted/prepared for planting that are specifically identified by a technical expert (SFEG).*
 - *These projects and project like them need to be communicated to policy makers as examples of how quickly work can get done.*
 - *When sites are identified deliberately, the money is better spent.*
 - *Consider talking to Bill Eller at Conservation Commission about how Skagit can share successes through communication tools like a Story Map.*

To end on time, the meeting concluded after the discussion of the project updates with Nathan from Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group

Next meeting likely in February. Discussion topic – How to communicate VSP better to agricultural audiences?