



SKAGIT COUNTY  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA 98273-5625  
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**Skagit Voluntary Stewardship Program  
Watershed Advisory Group**  
March 18, 2024, 8:00-9:00 am

**Meeting Notes**

**Attendees:**

Remote: **Shannon Rupert, Emmett Wild, Maggie Taylor, Mikala Staples Hughes**, Kara Rowe, Ron Wesen,

In Person: **Brian Lipscomb, Terry Sapp**, Rebecca Rising, Jonathan Worley

The meeting began with about 15 minutes of attempting to resolve technical difficulties with the audio-visual equipment. The stopgap solution was to use Rebecca's laptop instead of the meeting room equipment, which, in addition to shortening the available time, made it more difficult for the in-person attendees to see details of the projects.

Projects were presented in the order laid out in the Agenda. Emmett Wild presented the Skagit Conservation District projects and Jonathan Worley presented for Skagit Land Trust.

➤ **New Project Proposals (50-55 min)**

▪ **Site maintenance at McDougall (Skagit Conservation District)**

Fairly straightforward, little discussion before general agreement to go forward with this.

▪ **Native planting at Skagit River Maple (Skagit Conservation District)**

Concern was expressed at loss of this acreage to be no longer used as agriculture, particularly pasture. Is it too wet to be used / why not continue using as pasture? Emmett showed that this area is a mapped wetland according to the National Wetlands Inventory.

Aerial photos observations: The area is a different color in aerial photos compared to the surrounding pasture. On the parcel to the south, the continuation of this depressional wetland is vegetated.

Reminder that VSP's purpose is to protect critical areas while maintaining agricultural viability and that we have enhancement goals at critical areas. The wetland areas brought up in this meeting will count towards our enhancement goals.

- **Minkler Lake Wetland Restoration (Skagit Land Trust)**

Concern: Using funds to support projects on SLT lands when SLT is perceived to have sufficient funding. Jonathan informed the group that SLT is providing about 50% of the funding and VSP the remaining 50%.

- **Review budget increase for Blanken (Skagit Conservation District)**

Concern: Cost of concrete – are there other sources that could be cheaper? Other(s?) expressed that costs are variable but can increase dramatically and that this is not outside the range of normal expectations.

**General Notes:**

- Loss of farmland and ag viability concerns were raised several times.
- Funding is being returned from one project, which frees it as available to other projects.
- Reminder that VSP's purpose is to protect critical areas while maintaining agricultural viability and that we have enhancement goals on critical areas. The projects brought up in this meeting will count towards VSP enhancement goals in wetlands, which have not been as much of a focus, but is certainly relevant to VSP.

By the end of the meeting, all project funding requests were agreed-upon although concerns were raised and considered. This brings the total funding approved in today's meeting to \$53,581.33. Therefore, total funds remaining would be between \$425,458.15 and \$475,458.15, depending on whether cultural review will be needed for any of the projects.

Items not covered from the original agenda were:

- Open Discussion / Questions (0-5 minutes)
- General VSP Update (0-5 min)
  - Recent presentations, monitoring plan, funding update

## Agenda

- New Project Proposals (50-55 min)
  - Site maintenance at McDougall (Skagit Conservation District)
  - Native planting at Skagit River Maple (Skagit Conservation District)
  - Minkler Lake Wetland Restoration (Skagit Land Trust)
  - Review budget increase for Blanken (Skagit Conservation District)
- Open Discussion / Questions (0-5 minutes)
- General VSP Update (0-5 min)
  - Recent presentations, monitoring plan, funding update
- Adjourn

Additional Thoughts / Interpretations / Recommendations