

**Yakima County Voluntary Stewardship Program
Workgroup Meeting #3
June 3, 2016 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
North Yakima Conservation District Office**

In attendance:

Eric Bartrand	Dave Holland
Betsy Bloomfield	Frank Lyall
Donna Broers	Kelly McLain
Stuart Crane	Evan Sheffels
Lynn Deitrick	Arden Thomas
Steve George	Gail Thornton
Byron Gumz	Michael Tobin
Ranie Haas	Kerry Turley
Frank Hendrix	

Project Staff: Neil Aaland, Lisa Grueter, Sarah Sandstrom.

Welcome and introductions:

Facilitator Neil Aaland opened the meeting and asked attendees in the room to introduce themselves. He reviewed the agenda.

Review latest mapping

Lisa Grueter opened this discussion, and noted that for the last meeting the Wenas Creek basin was used as a test case. Several maps were brought to the meeting, and 4 full sets were available for review today (the full set is available for all to review by following the web link sent with the agenda for today's meeting). Lisa will send a link for Yakimaps, where the new maps are being uploaded. The hydrology maps were shown and discussed. The workgroup asked about denoting private lands on the map; this category will be added. Mike Tobin noted if the land is irrigated, the information available for that allows for a high degree of accuracy.

Discuss conservation practices currently being used

This topic is intended to provide an overview of the general conservation practices being used by producers in Yakima County. Mike Tobin showed a PowerPoint presentation that discussed several practices, and included example sites where these are being used. Several key practices:

1. Tree and shrub establishment (combined with herbaceous weed control and mulching)
2. Fencing (out of water bodies) – he noted that solar powered tensile fencing is best for this area
3. Watering facilities – different types, help with livestock health

He noted the goal is to work with willing landowners, and a lot can be achieved this way.

Questions and comments:

- When cattle are removed from riparian areas, the areas can get over-run with weeds [Mike noted that is why he emphasized weed control]
- Seems that in some pictures vegetation is choking off streams
- How do we sell these practices if flooding is caused?
 - Two flavors of flooding: destructive flooding, and type that gets land wet (which can be a benefit to the land)
 - These conservation practices often stop the destructive flooding
- Is some kind of maintenance allowed? [Yes]
- What if a beaver moves in? [WDFW does not require a permit to hand-remove a beaver dam]
- In Wenatchee basin, worked to restore similar types of stream channels by putting them back the way they were; in the 1996 flood those channels survived better than others
- Regarding the picture of a field, this serves as a big storage facility for floodwaters
- Will a build-up of organic materials be a fire hazard? [Fires are natural, and don't need to watch this]
- Financial incentives are needed for these practices
- The benefits to these practices are sometimes captured in “ecosystem markets”; might need a small task force to explore this

Summary of plans

Sarah Sandstrom discussed the summary included with the agenda materials. She would like input on the summary, and provided an overview. The plans help identify specific critical areas as they affect agricultural areas.

Comments and questions:

- Would be helpful to add an additional column that helps identify specific critical areas/ag intersections
- Dave Holland noted that WRIA 31 has a detailed implementation plan
- County comprehensive plan currently under development may have some relevant information
- Need to think how to build in the “maintain and enhance agriculture” requirement
- Page 6 table 3 mainstem refers to “protect” – need to define what that means here

Discuss key agricultural sectors in Yakima County

Prior to the meeting, members were asked to send in their perspectives on agricultural sectors in Yakima County. Only one listing was received, from Frank Hendrix that discussed livestock. Frank led this discussion, and said we need an accounting of agriculture in Yakima County, that includes all the commodities. Neil noted that the Chelan producers were very keen to get a good description of local agriculture, and met several times with Lisa Grueter to write it up. Lisa is willing to meet with a subset of Yakima producers to do the same thing here.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:45 pm.

Next meeting: Thursday, June 23 from 1 to 3 at North Yakima Conservation District.