

Voluntary Stewardship Program Work Group Virtual GoToMeeting

November 17, 2020

Meeting Summary Notes

Staff Present: Greta Holmstrom, Mark Taylor

Work Group Members:

Lynn Simpson- Cowlitz Conservation District

Jeff Wilson – Interested Citizen

Jan Wilson – Farmer

Steve West- Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board

Levi Kessecker – Washington State Conservation Commission

Joel Rupley contact VSP staff to send his regards and let us know he mixed up the dates, but will be at the next meeting.

Welcome and Introductions:

Mark Taylor reviewed information regarding the **Carbon Capture Foundation**, a new nonprofit in Longview, Washington for members of the Work Group who were unable to attend the last meeting.

Norm Dick and his wife, Valdeane were unable to attend, but are very interested in working with Cowlitz County VSP to procure and provide funding to plant trees throughout Cowlitz County in order to sequester carbon from the atmosphere and enhance habitat for native fish and wildlife. They are very interested in protecting and enhancing riparian habitat for native salmonids that have been Federally Listed, under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as threatened in SW Washington.

They are also interested in providing trees for the City of Longview, which has thousands of inner city areas. In addition, they are interested in finding out which native trees and shrubs would best grow inner city and rurally, and also if the local school districts (FFA chapters and science classes) would be interested in operating native tree nurseries to grow plants for the foundation to donate for conservation purposes.

Their one requirement is that landowners leave the trees up **in perpetuity** (forever) and never harvest the timber to sell for lumber.

VSP Work Group materials sent out: Mark Taylor emailed the following digital information prior to the meeting for the work group's review:

- October 27, 2020 VSP Work Group meeting summary notes
- November 17, 2020 Work Group meeting agenda

VSP Implementation project update: *Hagen Beef Farm* in Toutle, Washington.

Hal and Judy Hagen have completed two phases of the Hemlock Creek Farm Protection and Habitat Enhancement Project: 1) removal of and replacement of the majority of the barbed-wire fencing with "wildlife-friendly" fencing. 2) construction of a mud-free livestock sacrifice area (winter feeding station)



VSP Implementation project update continued:

Hagen Beef Farm project yet to complete:

- Riparian restoration with planting of native trees and shrubs
- Bio-engineered bank stabilization

Please note: unexpected circumstances may temporarily postpone the last two goals, as the last time that I visited the farm, I spotted a fresh beaver track in the mud through the opening of an underground burrow... the beaver will either need to be humanely trapped and relocated or a large portion of the riparian planting will need to be fenced off from the beaver until established (with either protective planting tubes or wire around them, as well), and/or over-planting of willows and cottonwoods to increase odds of establishment until willows are thick and thriving.

VSP Work Group PowerPoint presentation:

- WA Conservation Commission – Five-Year Report process
 - Mark Taylor reviewed VSP Work Plan Goals and benchmarks
 - Steve West commented on how VSP can help enhance habitat for impacted native salmonids
 - Jan Wilson commented that Cowlitz County VSP was beginning to make real progress with lots of landowners turning out for Community Watershed Meetings (CWMs) until Cowlitz County Department of Health and then Washington State closed down all public meetings to prevent and/or reduce the risk of spreading and contracting the COVID-19 virus.

Jan wants the work group to write a letter to the State Conservation Commission and Technical Review and Advisory groups to inform them that the VSP is very important to Cowlitz County, and that the *Stay Home, Stay Safe* state mandates are greatly impacting VSP recruitment of new farms.

Work Group Challenges:

- Meeting Continued until November 24th meeting due to unexpected GoToMeeting scheduling conflict.

Adjournment: 5:00 pm