

**WHITMAN COUNTY
VOLUNTRY STEWARDSHIP
MEETING
April 25, 2022
Zoom meeting – 4:00 p.m.**

MEMBERS:

**Alan Thomson
David Swannack
Nancy Belsby
Joan Folwell**

**Kim Weerts
Jon Jones
Art Swannack
David Lange**

Others: Brad Johnson; Casey Lowder; Brandon Johnson; Elinor Huber, Clerk.

4:04 p.m. – Brad Johnson called the meeting to order. Introductions were held.

Brad Johnson – I sent out the January 24th meeting minutes. Does anybody have any additions or corrections?

Kim Weerts – One of the things that we were going to include was the information in the chat section. It wasn't included in the official minutes.

Brad Johnson – Okay, I will find out how we get information in chat. I remember that. I'll work off line with Brandon after this meeting.

Kim Weerts – Elinor did send me an email with it so I will look and see if I have the email that includes those remarks. I will send them to you.

Brad Johnson – Thank you. Do I have a motion to approve the January 24, 2022 minutes?

Kim Weerts – Are you going to approve the minutes as amended or as written?

Brad Johnson – As written.

Kim Weerts – Those notes need to be attached to the meeting minutes.

Brad Johnson – So, we wouldn't be able to do anything with them today, then?

Kim Weerts – No, you could do it as amended saying that those would be included.

Brad Johnson – Art, do we need to start over or just make sure that it says that approving the minutes as amended?

Art Swannack – If the maker and the second approve agree, you could say, "The minutes as corrected to include the zoom chat notes."

Alan Thomson – I agree to the amendment.

David Swannack – I agree.

Art Swannack – So, the maker and the second both agree that you approve the minutes with the correction to add the chat notes. Then you are good to go.

MOTION by Alan Thomson and seconded by David Swannack to approve the minutes with the correction to add the chat notes. Motion passed.

Brad Johnson – Okay, I just wanted to talk briefly since January 24th, I have been working. Alan sends out the newsletter for VSP and there has been some Statewide Advisory Committee and Technical Panel meetings that I have been attending. Those have been really informative and I believe that the Washington State Conservation Commission is really getting a better handle on how the Technical Panel will score and look at future 5-year reports is basically one of the biggest things they are looking at.

I've been pleased to hear how this discussion has gone away from more the parcel level but at the WRIA level which is the intent of VSP. Then, also there are a lot of work groups that have been presenting back to them on their 5-year plan like we will be doing here on the 4th item that we are discussing. There has been a lot of really dialog back and forth between the Statewide Advisory Committee and the Technical Panel and the work group members.

Also, we have worked and got a fair number. I wouldn't say I'm happy with the number, but we have put out a couple of post cards. I attended a meeting. Art was there, I think Kim. Who else was there in Colfax? We got a couple of sign-ups based off of the post cards and also that meeting that was held between the three conservation districts, Whitman, Pine Creek, and Rock Lake in Colfax.

We've got some other people I've been trying to track down and they are saying they are going to do it. They haven't got quite done yet. So, we are getting more sign-ups on the action map and just working on different things that I will be presenting here in the meeting. Are there any questions on different things that have been going on with all the CDs between since January 24th and the VSP that has occurred in WC?

Okay, so leading right into that VSP presentation with the Statewide Advisory Committee and the Technical Panel, I wanted to pull up, I hope I have it, I had the notes. I think I can pull up a recollection. When we did our 5-year report, I think you will remember that we had three agrees and we had a partial agree from WDF&W.

So, on May 12th we have the opportunity to talk to the Technical Panel. We have discussed this at other meetings and one of the things that came out of those discussions was just talking with them about what we are doing in WC to show that critical areas, function and values are being protected. I wanted to visit with them a little bit on how we have a lot of different producers. We've got 2,000 producers in the County.

Currently, we have 87 action map sign-ups. Prior to the 5-year report we were in the high 60's, so we have gotten some more but between now and the next 5-year report we are going to get more. I just wanted to find out what are some of the things that you guys are interested in getting out of that presentation to the Technical Panel?

I'll start here at the beginning and show you just a slide show based on what I did for Garfield County. This is pretty similar to what was said for Garfield County when we go down through here. Maintaining the viability of Ag. I think that is really important within WC. We are doing action map entries based solely on voluntary participation and we completed the first two-year, five-year report and the two-year status report. Talk a little bit more about how we are doing that on a one farm at a time with the previous current practices, future goals of the land, and help that's needed.

Then this is one thing that came out of talking with Brian Cochrane and Levi. We are following the laws of VSP. We are working, we are gathering those stewardship practices that can protect and/or restore the critical areas, and then touch back in on the action map participation, implementation, effectiveness, aerial imagery for landscape change and statistically significant monitoring.

So, then use modern data to validate whether stewardship action for protecting and/or restoring critical area functions. Then get back to, because prior to Garfield's plan, one of the things the Commission was asking us the local work groups was make sure that we are not using project locations or parcel numbers. We are reporting on this in the WRIA's scale based off of what is in VSP.

Then, based off of WRIAs, and then we have three of them within WC. The critical areas are documented in the plan. The stewardship practices are documented in the plan, our goals and objectives. We are reporting on that and just keep hitting them that this is on the WRIA scale, not on the parcel scale. So, with that I was going to dive into just quickly show them this is the public pins that are on the map. This is what can be shown, if it is a public pin here is an example of a critical area in the County.

I've got to update this. We've got 87 now instead of 84, and so these next two I'll update prior to the 12th and then just see if they have any questions for us. Is there anything the work group thinks that I should ask of the Technical Panel in this presentation? Again, after we go through the next couple of things in the agenda, we can circle back to this if anyone has anything that they think of and between now and the 12th. If anyone comes up with anything, but really, getting the three agrees to the one partially agreeing, we faired out really well in that review. But we did get a few things pulling out that are in the next two topics coming up in the work group meeting.

Art Swannack – So, a couple of questions. One is, is this a mandatory thing or something you are choosing to do?

Brad Johnson – No, every work group is given an opportunity to come and just inform the technical panel on what we are doing with VSP. It is not mandatory.

Art Swannack – What is your goal? Other than, don't take this wrong Brad, this isn't meant as critical. Other than covering them with wonderful BS about what we are doing, what is our goal with this presentation in terms of the technical panel?

Brad Johnson – The biggest thing is to make sure that they understand. It is just one of the Technical Panel members actually, and they've got a new representative just to make sure that they are not focusing too far into the weeds getting into the farm or the track size. This is a WRIA-based plan and WRIA- based goals and ours is actually County-based goals.

We don't even have three different goals for the three different WRIAs in our plan. The other thing is Art, this is an approved plan that is being implemented and if they are getting us off into the weeds, we are trying to help the Commission reign in some of one of their Technical Panel groups to understand this is a WRIA based plan.

As long as we can show them on the WRIA that we are protecting and restoring critical area functions and values, we should pass. It is more of a time to get together, get to know them and let them know us, let them see what we are doing. Because when they got that 5-year report, that 300 and some pages, they were looking at numbers. There was no writing, no justification for what we had done.

I was talking to one of the work group members, we are trying to as work groups, and there are four of us that are working with the Commission on a 5-year status review. I'm one of the ones and I want them to put more text boxes in there so we can explain things a little bit better, as opposed to just the total number of stewardship or the total number of critical area acres. To talk to them a little bit more about what is really occurring on the landscape so there is a little bit of history and a little bit of description that goes into that.

So, it is more to get to know them and get them to see what we are doing and get them to understand. I don't want to hit them with anything. I don't think they hit below the belt but they were close to the belt on a couple of their comments. But I think those people that made those comments have moved on and those agencies understand that it is a WRIA plan.

Art Swannack – Okay, I was just trying to figure out what our goal in presenting at this meeting was. If it is, "Building relationships, and here's the good things we are doing," statements. If it's, "You have something you want to change their mind about," that is a different presentation.

Brad Johnson – No, and I think after they have heard some things from us after, once they gave us the agrees or partially agrees, they weren't going to change their mind. But I got a chance to talk with F&W and once I had a chance to talk to them, they were like, "Wow, yea, there are some pretty neat things going on down there for F&W in different areas." So, it is just a relationship building presentation, Art.

Joan Folwell – I've got a question. I'm playing catch up all the time because I haven't really been focusing on VSP very much. But is the fact that it is WRIA-based rather than individual parcel based, this is my first question, is it because the RCPP grants or funding that all the CDs have to improve stream side areas? That goes pretty much hand in hand with what's happening as far as VSP is concerned, too, isn't it?

Brad Johnson – You are correct, (inaudible) is the WRIA 34 of Palouse but that had nothing to do with it. At the State level when these plans were put together, we identified in Whitman and Garfield County to write our plan at the county scale and then afterwards the WRIA terminology was brought into it.

Garfield County is one WRIA. For Whitman County there is WRIA 35, a small portion in the south and the west portions and then the Palouse is the huge part of it and 14,000 acres in the Hangman. So, the WRIA came out of the legislation. It had nothing to do with any implementation that was occurring with any county or anything like that.

Art Swannack – The reason they went with WRIs verses individual parcels was with the hope of voluntary compliance and participation. By going by WRIA you get more people willing to participate if it didn't have any (inaudible) aspect. So, it was written that way under the legislation it was negotiated.

Joan Folwell – I think you get a more comprehensive approach too, if you couldn't get neighbors or whatever involved in improvements. My second question Brad, when you make a report, do you itemize how many acres are dedicated to each one of the critical areas?

Brad Johnson – So, can you see my screen, Joan? Okay, so, the first one is conventional farming and we're not tracking that other than just in the future if we wanted to see what the percentages were. It is a question that we ask but residue and tillage, management all the rest down were stewardship actions that were identified. Okay?

So, you can see by WRIA, what the acreages are and then our county-wide total goes with the benchmark of 10,000 acres and we have an enhancement of 59,000 acres. So, the 88,294 is well over that. So, currently, we are getting into the next agenda topic, but currently we asked producers what critical areas are on their farm but we don't have any way of tracking that and we could have a way of tracking that with the action map could give us those acres.

That is what I've asked on that next agenda item, is to be able to track it because Art, I really appreciate your email and I hope it kind of made sense. Right now, residue and tillage management affect F&W habitat, geological unstable areas, there's the critical areas identified in the plans, frequently flooded and wetlands.

So, through the whole 88,000 acres at each one of those and the comment back from the Technical Panel which didn't hurt us. It just said how can your acres for residue and tillage management affect all your critical areas the same? It doesn't, but I didn't have a way to break it out prior to if we choose to have the action map break those acres out for us by critical areas.

So, the goals still remain in there for each one of these and we are exceeding the enhancement and the benchmark. It is just when they ask us about critical area function and values, it would be nice to know how many of these 88,000 go towards geologically unstable areas. How many of them went towards people at F&W habitat or wetlands or something like that? It's going to show, this goal is going to show one number and then each critical area is going to have a different number if we choose to do that.

Joan Folwell – Okay, I guess that's what my question was and I can see how you are putting this chart together and also the other consideration of applying specifically to acreage to a specific critical area.

Brad Johnson – What we have here, and I just, so you are crystal clear on this and I want to make sure like right up here, David and Art, is it okay if I use you examples? So, David and Art have given me some acreage but I don't report on David or Art's farm. Their acreage goes into the Palouse Watershed because they both farm in Palouse Watershed.

Now, back here if they choose to make their pin public, which I believe this is Art's pin up here. If you click on it, you can see all the different stewardship that Art has done on his property. But it does not give his name. Now, David would know or other people who know that Art lives there and know what he does, so we've tried to really protect the individual landowners like Art has said and we are reporting on it by the three different WRIs.

Art Swannack – Is there a potential that we could end up losing some of the anonymity by breaking these out by critical areas?

Brad Johnson – I don't see how Art, because we are still taking in the middle Snake and then under residue and tillage management, I was going to pull that, give me one second here. I don't think so. I've been throwing this around trying, I don't own land in WC or Garfield County but the bottom line is we have a table in our plan that lists out all of our stewardship actions like this. Then off to the side we have whether it is an indirect or a direct affect to critical areas.

In the 5-year report, they are asking us how do we know that we are addressing those critical areas? We know in the report how many acres of geologically unstable ground we have in the County and we don't break it out by crop land or range land. But we, the bottom line is I'm already reporting that 88,000 acres, per every one of those critical areas and we're being asked how can it apply equally to those? Which it doesn't. So, with that action map putting those acres in it is not going to pull it down to a parcel level, Art, I don't think. Is that your question or am I missing your question?

Art Swannack – No, that's what I'm wondering about and you almost need to do a test run without committing to this to make sure that you don't run into that issue of pulling certain things down if you have low acreage it could end up like your range management ones.

Brad Johnson – Oh, I see where you are coming from. I don't know, we are always going, so range management only has 11,000 acres but we are still above our goal, right? So, just hear me out on this Art. Let's keep, you can see range management where I am highlighting it? We are at 11,000 acres.

So, we are going to have less critical areas that we affect with that but we are also, the only goal we have in our plan is to protect 1,000 acres and enhance 6,500. So, they can't ding us on that Art, because we are meeting our goal but our critical area affect is going to be less because we are not dividing 88,000. We are only dividing 11,000. Am I on the right track with that answer, Art?

Art Swannack – I'm not sure, to be honest with you. I'm sitting here thinking about that. I can tell you that when they start doing surveys and they look for sheep in WC and when you fill out you've got 600 or you've got 2,000 with just two of us that show up on that survey, it pretty much de-anonymizes that data. That is what I was looking at.

Brad Johnson – No, David Lange, I don't know if David was able to join us. David and I had a brief conversation and he was wondering not quite on that line, but he was wondering why we had to get down in the critical areas. I said because they asked us for critical area functions and values. So, we either have the 11,000 acres or we break it up in, I've got to find that, give me just one second to go back here and find that table that talks about,

Art Swannack – Joan, one of the other reasons they did it by watershed was so that you could look at a whole watershed. If you had somebody that was doing a crappy job of farming, your watershed could still be in pretty good shape, even if you have one in there. But that way you're dealing with voluntary compliance. Most of the people are complying. You've got one or two that aren't, yet your watershed is in decent shape. So why would you need specific regulation of every farmer up that watershed if you can get to the environmental quality you are looking for without it.

For example, you look at the guys that are over there. What is his name? That one on Sand, the guy with the cattle operation south of Pullman. I can't think of his name right now. He's got the whole mess there on the farm. He's also got one down there by the Snake River that has a mess. Why would you ding everybody else with a regulatory requirement around him that is doing a good job, if you just have that one person that is causing kind of a little mess in their area, but by the time it gets to everybody else's it is okay?

That was kind of some of the logic behind why you did it by WRIs and, by "Let's deal with this creek, not with every little parcel up and down the creek?" Because Nature has its own blow outs without us having to do it times two.

Joan Folwell – I understand.

Brad Johnson – So, here on the screen now, thank you Art, for passing the time there talking to Joan. Each one of these stewardship actions, we have either an indirect, and down here further you can see we have direct affects with the critical areas. So, that 88,000 would be divided up into those three indirect critical areas and as you go down you can see that some have four critical areas, some have three. I don't know if any of them have five.

It's been a while since I've looked at this. Most of them have four and then the next most common is three. I don't know Art, I don't think so, but I guess like you said, if we get that information and we don't want to use it that's, but it's going to, they have to rewrite a program to gather all that information. I think I sent out the cost. I don't have it in front of me right now, I will put it up in a minute. We are still kind of talking about the Technical Panel comments still here, too. But this is the reason why I was looking at trying to get acres by critical area for each one of the stewardship practices and just for the critical areas that they affect.

Art Swannack – Can you zoom in on that a little bit?

Brad Johnson – Absolutely, give me just a second.

Art Swannack – The bottom right corner slider.

Brad Johnson – Okay, thank you. I always forget about that. I went the wrong way.

Art Swannack – Okay, now it's too far. For example, you go down there, watering facilities. So, you've got water well, you've got six wells. Okay, those are the type of numbers if you start parceling out by which critical area it affects, you could identify them very fast. That is what I would look at when you're looking at those things is just make sure you can maintain the anonymity because that is the reason people are willing to participate.

Brad Johnson – I appreciate that Art, but the thing is that this group, the Technical Panel is never going to see a map. We won't have a map associated with this. We are just going to have it within the WRIs. But like you said, if they come back, so yea, I appreciate that.

Alan Thomson – When you are dealing with critical areas, there are five different critical areas and they are everywhere. They are all in WC. Every landowner has a bunch of them. I don't see any way how you could even distinguish a particular landowner just because they've got wetlands on their land.

Everybody probably has wetlands on their land. It is not like sheep. Sheep are easily distinguished from anything else. Wetlands are everywhere.

Brad Johnson – Point well taken, Alan. Okay, let me get back to my agenda. We’ve heard from Art and Joan and Alan. John, Kim, David, Nancy, I’ve talked a little bit about (inaudible). It’s a discussion item. I’m going to present in front of the Technical Panel on May 12th if you guys agree, and just more of a “meet and greet,” and talk about the different things that we’re doing, both education outreach, monitoring and gathering stewardship information. Do you, I don’t want to beat this like a dead horse but I want to give everyone else a chance if they have a thought or comment.

David Swannack – You show all those dots on that one map about who is participating. Which of those two maps are you showing to them?

Brad Johnson – Just the public ones, not the private ones. Those are going to be so quick they won’t be able to, we are not going to belabor anything on either one of those.

David Swannack – So, your slide #6, it tells quite the story for WC. It actually shows that we have quite a bit of participation whether people understand that or not. Those represent a large area.

Brad Johnson – This is only the public pins there. If I pulled the private dots up there, there are twice as many.

David Swannack – Okay, I’ll shut up.

Brad Johnson – No, I appreciate it David, thank you. We finally thanks to Casey, I see Casey has arrived, we’ve got one pin in the Hangman and we’re real close with another one. I thought we already had it. I’ll have to give him a call. I worked with him on one pin in Palouse and then he told me he had one in the Hangman and I told him I needed the Hangman more than the Palouse. We’ll get and we will get some more. It is really interesting.

Kim Weerts – I agree with David. I think that is a good point to make to the Technical Panel, those two items. First there is a private and a public map, and secondly, that these pins are not just two-acre plots or five-acre plots. These pins are significant amounts of land. Then the other thing that I would like to see them hear quite often is what I said in the last meeting. That is, WC with our three WRIs are unique in and of themselves and that is the way they should be looking at all of these WRIs that they are their own entity and not compare them to any other WRIA, or in our case county.

Brad Johnson – Yes. Appreciate that, Kim. The one comment that frustrated me was that we didn’t have any pins on the 5-year report for Hangman. The Technical Panel F&W said, “We know there have been a lot of great things that have gone on in the Hangman. Why couldn’t you get it?”

Well, we were voluntarily trying to get information and I thought, if you know what’s going on in the Hangman, you know there are also good things going on in the Palouse that we don’t have, you know. It is funny how different comments come out and perceptions come out. But Kim, that was one thing I wanted to drill home to them that this was only half of the pins were made public. But they never see that map so they are only seeing that stewardship based off of this slide #10 right here.

Kim Weerts – If they want to know about Hangman, tell them to go talk to Riverkeeper.

Brad Johnson – Exactly. No, we are actually moving in the right direction with the Technical Panel. Anybody else have any comments on the presentation? The Statewide Advisory Committee is made up of some county commissioners and the department, John Stuhlmiller is with the Farm Bureau, isn't he? So, there are a few members on that committee who actually hold the Technical Panel's seat to the fire. It is kind of interesting. Okay, I hope that some of the discussion for the presentation has shed a little bit of light and I appreciate Art's comments about the anonymity.

I sent the cost of this, give me a second to find that, aerial imagery dashboard enhancement. So, hopefully, everyone had a chance to look over this. It's not cheap, and Art, I don't know how you feel about it if we get it. Obviously the 5-year report, we still got 2.5-3 years before we are going to do it. I don't know what everyone feels about spending this \$3,000 to get the critical acreages also included.

No one sees that, what I was showing you and what I showed the Technical Panel. No one sees that back door to it except for me. I can't remember if Casey, I know James Schierman used to see it, but we pull that information forward and put it in the report. All that information is protected just like the farm plan is Art, and others of the work group.

But we are asking producers now Art, David, Kim, those of you that have filled it out. We have asked you what critical areas you have so we can get those acreages. Seems like a lot of money to me but there is a lot of buildup that has to go into that to get that into that action map. We had \$11,000 identified.

I've got this and that other thing with Amanda Stahl and I've got a little bit of local monitoring for stream flow that I was going to look into and get some costs because temperatures and our 5-year plan show they were going up. But there has been more data on some stream flows and that won't cost that much. But these big-ticket items here, this one especially need a motion or more discussion or whatever to move forward with this.

Art Swannack – I hope they do GIS work or that type of work better than they do spelling. If you read through the special notes and instructions its,

Brad Johnson – I missed that, Art.

Art Swannack – Just read it. You'll notice.

Brad Johnson – I've been really pleased, and there have been other counties, of course. Garfield did it after Whitman put it together and there have been some other counties and everybody really talks about how awesome it has been. What I was going to say earlier is we've got 2,000 producers in WC and we've got 87 pins on the map. In Garfield County, I'm at 82-83, so it has been successful in both counties, but.

MOTION by David Swannack and seconded by Jon Jones to pay the contract for the action map for \$3,000 to get critical area acreages broken down by stewardship actions. Motion passed.

This again, is \$1400. I really, in fact with the Commission I have to wait until we get the meeting notes before I can send the previous one off to the Commission and they will look at it. They probably will not deny it because the work group approved it.

But the same thing goes with the aerial imagery that we had prior to the 5-year report. I got in touch with Amanda Stahl with WSU. We talked about it. We talked it over to see if now was too soon to be doing it and there is actually a little bit extra that she could do but she thought that it would be worthwhile.

We've got the 2-year report coming up, so it is just free running the same stuff that she had done before with the, what was it that she added to this? I talked to her prior to my vacation. Basically, it is rerunning what we have done before prior to the 5-year report. This stuff here, if there are any questions, I might have to call Amanda.

This isn't looking at anything other than intersect. She's doing it all off of Google search, Google engine and then some aerial imagery that is all out there in space. She is taking it and looking at areas to see if there has been any change area intersect from A to urban or any change on the priority habitat mapping and stuff like that. This is Greek to me and this is something I told you from the beginning that I don't have the ability to do. Amanda did a bang-up job for us before and got good reviews from the technical panel. They liked the way she had done it. That's why I'm sticking with her.

Art Swannack – We ran this in 2019 last?

Brad Johnson – Yes, it was the end of 2019 early 2020.

Art Swannack – It would be interesting to see a comparison, I'll move we do this but I'd like to see a comparison between the new image and the old one.

Brad Johnson – Okay, Art, so she gave us a spreadsheet. She'll give us the old, I called her and I said we want to keep the old spreadsheet and then have a new spreadsheet. There won't be any imagery, it will just be numbers on a spreadsheet.

MOTION by Art Swannack and Joan Folwell seconded to pay \$1400 to Amanda Stahl to do some aerial imagery recon for us. Motion passed.

Kim Weerts – I have a question related to what Art said. Could Amanda add an extra column on that spreadsheet and give us the differences so that we don't have to do the math?

Brad Johnson – Yes, good point. Add column on spreadsheet that shows the differences between the two different runs. David, are you on the call here? David Lange sent me a text just now. He must have been listening in. FSA puts out a form every year that talks about the different producers and David was thinking it was closer to 1,000 and I had 2,000 in my mind. I've got it right here.

It is a WC Washington, have you seen these? It talks about base acres and number of farms in the County. Total farms in WC are 2,284 but it comes out through fsausd.gov. Art, you are smiling. Give it to me, am I looking at the wrong area for getting the number of farms in the County?

Art Swannack – You just had a blurry background and a blurry document.

Brad Johnson – I realize that. So, each county in the State has this run by the land use statistics, base acres, conservation data based on CRP and top ten commodities. That's where I got that number from. So, it says 2,284 in WC.

So, going forward between now and the end of June is the end of our first, we are going to do more targeted outreach trying to get people into the action map. We are coming into a slow time. I mean I appreciate those of you that are sitting in here today as opposed to sitting on a tractor. I really do. You guys, thank you for your time today.

I would assume that sometime in July, late July early August, we have to have a meeting to approve the budget for the following year. I can't remember when the Commission asked for that but, I will pull together a budget and get it sent out to everybody. The legislature identified some additional funding for VSP. All I'm going to say is that. I was talking with Jon Jones today.

I haven't heard anything more from the Commission but there might be some for projects, but salmon centric projects which doesn't bode well for WC. The salmon centric projects would be in the very small portion of WRIA 35 within the southern part of the County. So, until I know more on that, I don't have anything unless, Art, there was more money appropriated for VSP about what I know, and then I was told they were going to give some money out for projects for salmon centric projects. Art, do you have any more on that?

Art Swannack – I haven't heard much. I'd bounce it off of Alan. We are operating off of our County budget year but for the State we should get some sort of notification of funding shouldn't we, Alan?

Alan Thomson – Yes.

Art Swannack – We haven't seen anything yet but the State year is July 1-June 30th. It may be another month or so before we hear from the State.

Brad Johnson – So, I will work with Casey, and Glen and Andrew to come up with our budget. It will probably be something similar to what we have had every year that the conservation districts have been working with you on this. I appreciate everything that we've got going on and I appreciate all the dialog that we have. We will put something together and work with Alan and Mark and then get it out to the work group. I would assume July or somewhere in that time frame we will have to get something to the Commission. We have to approve it prior to sending it the Commission.

Art Swannack – We will be in the second year of the biennium. But you are saying there is extra money they passed beyond what the regular VSP budget was?

Brad Johnson – That's what I understand. I am assuming we are going to do the 1175 and then there would be an amendment if we got anything above that. But we only get a budget for VSP for the first fiscal year of the biennium so we have to approve the budget on the second 1175.

Art Swannack – So, you have the 1175 budget and then you would have whatever amendment to it that might be needed if we get extra funding. Does that sound right, Alan?

Alan Thomson– Yes, and the Conservation Commission would send out that info if it is available. If I get that I will pass it on to you guys.

Brad Johnson – I really appreciate everyone's time. I was hoping to keep it to an hour. Is there any more to follow on the budget? If there is any additional funding available and I'll be working with the

conservation districts and getting that information to Alan and Mark and once we get it flushed out, we will send it to you guys and obviously the work group is the one who approves the budget.

Art Swannack – When are you planning on the next meeting?

Brad Johnson – July is what I am thinking. It could be the end of June depending on when we get information back on the state budget for VSP. Any additional funding. We know we have the 1175 for the second fiscal year.

Alan Thomson – To Kim’s comment earlier about in-person meetings. That is going to be extremely difficult because the courthouse is in the auditorium. We usually have meetings at this time of the day rather than evening meetings so I’m not really sure if that is possible to do that. What do you think, Art?

Art Swannack – I think VSP probably ought to stay virtual through July. The courthouse project is supposed to get done in June. Then we have to move all the departments back and superior court will be last. The superior court courtroom is full of furniture with all the stuff that was stored from the courthouse. The superior court uses the auditorium when the BOCC aren’t using it. So, I’d recommend the VSP in July be virtual and then somewhere September or October, in person.

Alan Thomson – What do you think, Kim. Is that okay? The auditorium is out of commission.

Kim Weerts – I’d forgotten about that.

Brad Johnson – Thank you, Art and Alan.

David Swannack – It would be nice if the next meeting was early July instead of late July.

Brad Johnson – Thank you, David. I appreciate everyone’s participation and thank you guys for everything. Alan, I’ll be waiting for these meeting minutes and then I will send out the information to the Commission so I can get these contracts put in order, but I have to have the minutes, which I know you send them out as soon as you get them so I will be watching for them.

Alan Thomson – Yes, as soon as I get them from Elinor.

Brad Johnson – Everybody have a good afternoon.

Meeting adjourned – 4:58 p.m.