



January 2021
Whitman County Voluntary Stewardship Program

5-Year Status Report - Supplement



Introduction

This document is submitted as a supplement to the Whitman VSP 5 Year Report. It provides context and clarity for the reported achievements for stewardship actions for the 3 WRIA's, the 5 critical areas, goals, and the Benchmarks (or stewardship actions) from the Whitman VSP Work Plan and in the 5 Year Status Report. The Whitman County VSP Work Plan was completed and approved in August 2017. The stewardship practices in the Work Plan were selected for their conservation benefit based on NRCS Conservation Practice Physical Effect, which identifies the effect of specific practices on diverse natural resource concerns or the 5 critical areas.

Benchmarks were set at the county-wide level and Whitman County has three WRIA's, but we developed an interactive Action Map to get stewardship actions on the farm scale and the information was collected and rolled up at the WRIA level. The data that was voluntarily gathered from participating landowners and was trothed by CD staff. The summarized practices are only a portion of project implementation in Whitman County. We have more outreach planned in Hangman Creek in particular since we have not gotten any project information to date from landowners in the northeastern part of the County in the small portion of Hangman Creek within Whitman County. Only 3% (14,000 ac) of Hangman Creek is within Whitman County. The Work Plan indicates whether a practice was likely to protect critical areas, we documented the critical areas with a direct impact from stewardship actions and believe that most, if not all projects have an indirect impact to downstream critical areas.

COVID-19 Challenges

In March of 2019, COVID restrictions greatly impacted one-one landowner meetings and also shut down the County Fair that we attend and have a booth and limited the number of meetings that we could attend and get information regarding VSP to individual landowners. We believe that after COVID restrictions are lifted we will again have more individual meetings with landowners and get more acreage into our VSP Action Map. Even with COVID we still have quarterly VSP post card mailings, but our Work Group believes that not having grower meetings or one-one meetings VSP participation has suffered.

Summary of Accomplishments

Strategies, Performance Metrics & Benchmark Results. Stewardship actions are grouped into six Management Actions and 1 to 11 stewardship actions are assigned to each Management Actions. Protection and Enhancement Goals were identified for each stewardship action and this was set for the County, not by WRIA's.

All of the Protection Goals for 2021 were exceeded, and All of the Enhancement Goals for 2021 were also exceeded.

Table 1 shows the Stewardship Actions and Progress Towards Goals and Objectives County-Wide.

Table 1. Stewardship Actions and Progress Towards Goals and Objectives County Wide.

Management Action	Stewardship Actions	Critical Areas Effected (D) = Direct (I) = Indirect	Num. of Proj.	Acres/Feet Number	2021 Objectives from Work Plan	Progress
Residue and Tillage	No-Till/Direct Seed/2-Pass Systems	(I) – WET, FWH, GHA	60	82,159 ac	7,004 ac (protected) 20,018 ac (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
Pest	Pest Management	(I) – WET, FWH, CARA, GHA	69	83,962.71 ac	3,492 ac (protected) 13,968 ac (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
Nutrient	Nutrient Management	(I) – WET, FWH, CARA	58	86,499 ac	6,519 ac (protected) 26,075 ac (enhance)	Exceeded Goals
Range	Prescribed Grazing	(I) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	23	11,192 ac	750 ac (protected) 4,150 ac (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
	Range Planting	(I) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	17	1,312.5 ac	100 ac (protected) 1,000 ac (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
	Watering Facilities	(I) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	25	106	1 facility (protected) 9 facility (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
	Water Well	(I) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	6	13	1 facility (protected) 9 facility (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
Soil	Conservation Crop Rotate	(I) – WET, FWH, GHA	15	24,794 ac	204 ac (protected) 815 ac (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
	Cover Crop	(I) – WET, FWH, GHA	18	1,449 ac	204 ac (protected) 815 ac (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
Habitat	Conservation Cover	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	46	6,568.14 ac	447 ac (protected) 1,786 ac (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
	Critical Area Planting	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	27	3,962.43 ac	447 ac (protected) 1,786 ac (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
	Grassed Waterway	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	32	188,740 ft	5,280 ft (protected) 15,249 ft (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
	Herbaceous Weed Control	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	50	12,836 ac	800 ac (protected) 3,400 ac (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
	Tree & Shrub Establishment	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	37	873.14 ac	100 ac (protected) 600 ac (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
	Wetland Wildlife * Habitat	(D) - WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	7	37.96	2 ac (protected) 4 ac (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
	Upland Wildlife	(D) - WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	21	1,180.43 ac	200 ac (protected) 800 ac (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
	Hedgerow Planting	(D) - WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	7	5,325 ft	1,500 ft (protected) 4,000 ft (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
	Open Channel	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	13	68,481 ft	5,280 ft (protected) 15,249 (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
	Fence	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	24	137,900 ft	5,280 ft (protected) 15,249 (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals
	Streambank Protection	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	6	15,650 ft	2,500 ft (protected) 6,600 ft (enhanced)	Exceeded Goals

Number of Projects are individual landowners who filled out the Action Map on their stewardship actions on a farm scale. This table summarizes generally what is in the first 1,115 pages of the Whitman VSP 5 Year Status Report for Strategies, Performance Metrics & Benchmark Results. Table 2 shows WRIA's and associated acres.

Table 2. Stewardship Actions and Progress Towards Goals and Objectives by WRIA.

Management Action	Stewardship Actions	Critical Areas Effected (D) = Direct (I) = Indirect	WRIA 35	WRIA 56	WRIA 34	County Wide Totals
Residue and Tillage	No-Till/Direct Seed/2-Pass Systems	(I) – WET, FWH, GHA	16,738 ac	0 ac	65,421 ac	82,159 ac
Pest	Pest Management	(I) – WET, FWH, CARA, GHA	22,928 ac	0 ac	61,034.71	83,962.71 ac
Nutrient	Nutrient Management	(I) – WET, FWH, CARA	18,988 ac	0 ac	67,511 ac	86,499 ac
Range	Prescribed Grazing	(I) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	5,602 ac	0 ac	5,590 ac	11,192 ac
	Range Planting	(I) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	1,190.5 ac	0 ac	122 ac	1,312.5 ac
	Watering Facilities	(I) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	43	0	63	106
	Water Well	(I) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	8	0	5	13
Soil	Conservation Crop Rotate	(I) – WET, FWH, GHA	1,902 ac	0 ac	22,892 ac	24,794 ac
	Cover Crop	(I) – WET, FWH, GHA	653 ac	0 ac	796 ac	1,449 ac
Habitat	Conservation Cover	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	3,645 ac	0 ac	2,923.14 ac	6,568.14 ac
	Critical Area Planting	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	2,407 ac	0 ac	1,555.43 ac	3,962.43 ac
	Grassed Waterway	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	35,730 ft	0 ft	153,010 ft	188,740 ft
	Herbaceous Weed Control	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	6,056 ac	0 ac	6,780 ac	12,836 ac
	Tree & Shrub Establishment	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	98 ac	0 ac	775.14 ac	873.14 ac
	Wetland Wildlife * Habitat	(D) - WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	0 ac	0 ac	37.96 ac	37.96 ac
	Upland Wildlife	(D) - WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	504 ac	0 ac	676.43 ac	1,180.43 ac
	Hedgerow Planting	(D) - WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	100 ft	0 ft	5,225 ft	5,325 ft
	Open Channel	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	11,000 ft	0 ft	57,481 ft	68,481 ft
	Fence	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	38,900 ft	0 ft	99,000 ft	137,900 ft
	Streambank Protection	(D) – WET, FWH, GHA, FFA	1,000 ft	0 ft	14,650 ft	15,650 ft

WRIA 56 Hangman Creek has 3% of the total watershed in Whitman County or ~14,000 acres, we will do more outreach and education in the northeastern corner of Whitman County to get stewardship actions that have been completed and have it included the upcoming 2 Year Status Review and the 2026 5 Year Review. Stewardship actions have all Exceeded **both the Protection and Enhancement Goals that were identified as County-Wide in the VSP Work Plan as shown in Table 1.**

Participation Strategies and Performance Metrics. We have nothing to point out in the section as it is described in the 5 Year Status Review and shows that we have met all our Goals and Benchmarks for outreach and Education for VSP.

Critical Area Monitoring. Once again, we believe that this section in the 5 Year Status Review is complete. We would only add that we are using an Ecology gauge that has been in operation since 1960 and having plenty of pre 2011 was not an issue but only having 7 years of post-implementation data makes it hard to be statistically valid or at least met the Normality test. Since this is an Ecology gauge, we assume with more post implementation data points we will be able to have normality with future water quality data.

Conclusion

The information provided shows that the Work Plan was methodical in selecting stewardship actions that would protect or enhance Whitman County critical areas. We have worked tirelessly to get whole farm data from interested producers to document stewardship that is occurring on the farm scale, which in turn is reported at the WRIA scale. Having a county-wide goal for both protection and enhancement does not do each WRIA justice, but the Whitman Counties portions of both the WRIA 35 Middle Snake and WRIA 56 Hangman Creek portions are very small portions of larger WRIA's. The WRIA 34 Palouse River has over 2/3 within Whitman County. The Whitman County VSP Work Group can hang its hat on not only the awesome implementation and documentation of stewardship actions, but also an excellent outreach and education program and good water quality data that supports critical area monitoring efforts.

One thing that is lost in the 5 Year Status Report is "Maintain the Viability of Agriculture" and we understand that it was not part of the 5 Year Status Report, but without mentioning it or at least showcasing that some of the stewardship actions would not be completed without cost-share programs seems to miss the mark. Agriculture is ever changing and having robust funding and cost-share opportunities is key to getting stewardship on the landscape.