
VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

POLICY ADVISORY #02-17

THE SCHEDULE OF THE REMAINING VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM WORK PLANS TO BE REVIEWED BY THE TECHNICAL PANEL

AUGUST 2017

SUMMARY

The Conservation Commission (Commission) is empowered to establish policies and procedures for implementing the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP).¹ The Commission, after consultation with the VSP Statewide Advisory Committee, provides this advisory to the VSP county work groups to advise them on the schedule of the remaining VSP work plans to be reviewed by the VSP Technical Panel.

BACKGROUND

The VSP was codified in RCW Chapter 36.70A. The Commission administers the VSP.² Under VSP, the Commission is charged with establishing the Statewide Advisory Committee.³ “The role of the statewide advisory committee is to advise the commission and other agencies involved in development and operation of the program.”⁴ The SAC is comprised of representatives of county, agricultural, and environmental organizations and invited tribal governments.⁵

The Commission has a number of other duties in the VSP that relate to the Statewide Advisory Committee, including

- To provide administrative support for the program's statewide advisory committee in its work.”⁶
- To maintain a web site about the program that includes times, locations, and agenda information for meetings of the statewide advisory committee;⁷

¹ [RCW 36.70A.705\(2\)\(a\)](#)

² [RCW 36.70A.705\(1\)](#)

³ [RCW 36.70A.745](#)

⁴ [RCW 36.70A.745\(2\)](#)

⁵ [RCW 36.70A.745\(1\)\(a\)](#)

⁶ [RCW 36.70A.705\(2\)\(h\)](#)

⁷ [RCW 36.70A.705\(2\)\(i\)](#)

- In conjunction with the statewide advisory committee, conduct a review of the program beginning in 2017 and every five years thereafter, and report its findings to the legislature by December 1st;⁸
- Consult with the Statewide Advisory Committee upon receipt of a report by a watershed group under RCW [36.70A.720](#)(2)(b);⁹ and
- Consult with the statewide advisory committee and other state agencies, not later than August 31, 2015, and each August 31st every two years thereafter, and report to the legislature and each county that has elected under RCW [36.70A.710](#) to participate in the program on the participating watersheds that have received adequate funding to establish and implement the program.¹⁰

THE SCHEDULE FOR THE REMAINING VSP WORK PLANS TO BE REVIEWED BY THE TECHNICAL PANEL

The issue of VSP Technical Panel's review of the remaining VSP County work plans continues to be a topic of discussion among work groups. The Commission previously provided direction on this topic in April 2016, but now provides this update.

As of this issuance of this Advisory, six county work plans have been approved by the Commission (Thurston, Chelan, Grant, Skagit, Pacific and Whitman). Yakima County has expressed its intent to submit for formal review their work plan in September 2017. That will leave 20 counties to submit their work plans through the Technical Panel. Each of those 20 counties has its own unique deadline associated with when it must have a completed work plan approved by the Commission and when that plan must be submitted to the Technical Panel for review (among other deadlines). The table below sets forth those deadlines.

Please note though, that during the last legislative session and as part of the 2017-2019 biennium operating budget bill¹¹ the legislature amended RCW 36.70A.725 (2) to change the time period in which the Technical Panel conducts a review of a work plan formally submitted to the Conservation Commission. The Technical Panel now has ninety days (instead of forty-five) to review the work plan and report to the Commission whether or not at the end of ten years after receipt of funding, the work plan, in conjunction with other existing plans and regulations, will protect critical areas while maintaining and enhancing the viability of agriculture in the watershed. This important change has affected the schedule the Technical Panel uses to conduct work plan reviews.

The Commission, after consultation with the Statewide Advisory Committee, advises that the Technical Panel will continue to try to abide by the process it has established to review work plans - specifically, it will continue to try to review two work plans submitted each month. The established schedule of two work plans reviewed a month will facilitate the work plan approval process, allowing for the timely and orderly processing of the remaining 20 work plans. That schedule is provided for you in the table below in yellow. In order to abide by that schedule, county work groups would have to submit their work plans no later than the date that is set out in the yellow column in the table.

⁸ [RCW 36.70A.705\(2\)\(k\)](#)

⁹ [RCW 36.70A.730](#)

¹⁰ [RCW 36.70A.740\(4\)](#)

¹¹ [SSB 5883, §961](#)

There is another set of dates on the table below set out in red. That schedule is different than the one in yellow. That is because the set of dates in red are the final dates the work plan must be submitted to the Technical Panel for each county. Counties technically have until these dates to submit their work plans to the Technical Panel. However, if all 20 remaining counties wait until their actual submittal deadlines, that could cause processing problems for the Technical Panel.

Therefore, the Commission and Statewide Advisory Committee continue to encourage counties to work with the Commission's VSP Coordinator to submit their work plans sooner than their actual submittal deadline listed in red in the table. However, it is the choice of each county on how it wants to proceed - to either submit sooner, or at the deadline.

REMAINING VSP WORK PLANS TO PROCESS THROUGH THE VSP TECHNICAL PANEL - JULY 27, 2017

	County	Receipt of VSP funding	2 work plans per month*	Final date WP must be submitted to TP (TP approval deadline minus 90 days)	Deadline for WP approval via the TP review process (2 yrs, 9 mo)	Deadline for WP approval via the SAC review process (3 yrs)
1	Yakima	1.21.16	n/a	7.21.18	10.21.18	1.21.19
2	Kittitas	11.17.15	12/31/2017	5.17.18	8.17.18	11.17.18
3	Mason	11.24.15	1/31/2018	5.24.18	8.24.18	11.24.18
4	Garfield	11.30.15	1/31/2018	5.30.18	8.30.18	11.30.18
5	Asotin	12.14.15	2/28/2018	6.14.18	9.14.18	12.14.18
6	San Juan	12.21.15	2/28/2018	6.21.18	9.21.18	12.21.18
7	Cowlitz	12.22.15	3/31/2018	6.22.18	9.22.18	12.22.18
8	Okanogan	12.28.15	3/31/2018	6.28.18	9.28.18	12.28.18
9	Benton	1.12.16	4/30/2018	7.12.18	10.12.18	1.12.19
10	Columbia	1.20.16	4/30/2018	7.20.18	10.20.18	1.20.19
11	Douglas	1.22.16	5/31/2018	7.22.18	10.22.18	1.22.19
12	Pend Oreille	2.2.16	5/31/2018	8.2.18	11.2.18	2.2.19
13	Franklin	2.24.16	6/30/2018	8.24.18	11.24.18	2.24.19
14	Walla Walla	3.7.16	6/30/2018	9.7.18	12.7.18	3.7.19
15	Stevens	3.10.16	7/31/2018	9.10.18	12.10.18	3.10.19
16	Ferry	3.14.16	7/31/2018	9.14.18	12.14.18	3.14.19
17	Grays Harbor	3.21.16	8/31/2018	9.21.18	12.21.18	3.21.19
18	Lincoln	3.21.16	8/31/2018	9.21.18	12.21.18	3.21.19
19	Lewis	4.18.16	9/30/2018	10.18.18	1.18.19	4.18.19
20	Spokane	4.22.16	9/30/2018	10.22.18	1.22.19	4.22.19
21	Adams	5.23.16	10/31/2018	11.23.18	2.23.19	5.23.19

* means that two work plans per month are formally reviewed and completed by the Technical Panel, beginning in December 2017 and ending in October 2018, working backwards from the last work plan due date. Work plans must be submitted no later than the date listed.

Counties with approved plans: Grant, Skagit, Thurston, Chelan, Pacific, Whitman