

## June 2017 VSP Newsletter

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This is the monthly installment of a Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) informational newsletter. Please sign up to receive the newsletter [here](#). Feedback is welcome - please direct it to [Bill Eller](#).

**VSP END-OF-FISCAL-YEAR VOUCHERING:** All vouchers for VSP eligible expenditures must be received no later than Monday, July 10, 2017 to be processed and eligible for reimbursement. *Vouchers received after July 10, 2017 will not be reimbursed.* Submit vouchers to [Karla Heinitz](#) at the Commission.

**SKAGIT AND GRANT COUNTY VSP WORK PLANS SUBMITTED TO THE COMMISSION:** Both Skagit and Grant County submitted their VSP work plans to the Commission on March 22 and 23, 2017. The public is invited to comment on any VSP work plan submitted to the VSP Technical Panel within 14 days of submittal. The public can use this [public comment form](#) to capture any comments made. The work plans can be accessed from the Commission's VSP web page [here](#).

**VSP WORK PLAN PUBLIC COMMENT:** The public is invited to comment on any VSP work plan submitted to the VSP Technical Panel within 14 days of submittal. The public can use this public comment [form](#) to capture any comments made. The Technical Panel will be provided with any comments received at the end of that period. The form is available on the Commission's VSP web page [here](#).

**SUBMITTAL OF VSP WORK PLANS TO THE COMMISSION:** During the work plan approval process for Thurston and Chelan county's VSP work plans, it became apparent to the Commission and the VSP Technical Panel that no more than two VSP work plans could feasibly be formally processed by the Technical Panel in a month. As a result, the Commission has set up a schedule for the formal submittal of VSP work plans. Two plans can be reviewing in any given month. Plans must be formally submitted no later than the first of the month in which the review meeting is set for that plan. Counties wishing to formally submit work plans must contact [Bill Eller](#) at the Commission before submitting their work plans so that the plan can be assigned a meeting. [Bill Eller](#) can be reached at 509-385-7512 or by email at [beller@scc.wa.gov](mailto:beller@scc.wa.gov). *Action by Work Group on Work Plan:* remember, the action the VSP work group needs to take in sending the work plan to the Commission is that the work group should submit the work plan to the Commission and VSP Technical Panel, not "approve" the work plan.

- **UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE VSP TECHNICAL PANEL:** The VSP Technical Panel has revised its meeting schedule. The most complete and up-to-date meeting schedule and agendas can always be found on the Technical Panel web page [here](#). All meetings will be held at the Farm Bureau building, 975 Carpenter Rd NE #101, Lacey, WA 98516. A summary of the revised meeting schedule is below:

**Friday, June 9, 2017** - This will be a half day meeting from 1 pm - 5 pm, for initial work plan review. This meeting is available by webinar. To register for the webinar, use this link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3530845580227449603>

- **Tuesday, June 20, 2017** - This will be a full day meeting, from 9 am - 4 pm, for formal work plan review. This meeting is available by webinar. To register for the webinar, use this link:
- <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8997829599089975811>
- **Tuesday, July 18, 2017** - This will be a full day meeting, from 9 am - 4 pm, for formal work plan review. This meeting is available by webinar. To register for the webinar, use this link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6773296574446463234>
- **Friday, July 28** - agenda to be determined
- **Friday, Aug 25** - agenda to be determined
- **Tuesday, Sept 5** - agenda to be determined

**HOW TO FIND VSP WORK PLANS:** To find VSP Work Plans that have been submitted to the Commission, please go to the main VSP web page [here](#). Once there, click on the map the county that you are interested in. An informational box will appear that has the link to the county work plan (if it has been received by the Commission) and whether any public comment was received by the Commission on the plan.

**VSP WORK PLAN “PRACTICE POINTERS”:** During its deliberations of the Thurston and Chelan County VSP work plans, the Technical Panel identified a number of “practice pointers” that the other 25 VSP work groups would want to review to incorporate into their work plans before they are submitted to the Technical Panel. Those practice pointers are in the minutes to the meetings on the two work plans, and have been posted on the [VSP web page](#).

**VSP BUDGET:** On March 27, 2017, the House released its operating budget. It continues funding for the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) at \$7,602,000, the same amount proposed in the Senate’s operating budget. The Governor’s proposed operating budget for VSP is \$7,622,000 (a difference of just \$20,000 from the House and Senate). The Commission is encouraged by these budget proposals. Though they do not reflect the Commission’s original budget request for VSP (\$9.35 million), they all contain a similar amount of VSP funding in their budgets. Since the Commission’s current agreements with all 27 VSP counties end on June 30, 2017, the Commission will work with each county to develop new VSP agreements for FY 17-19 - once the Legislature crafts a budget. We anticipate that the Commission will have agreements ready by July or August. Please remember that any expense incurred between July 1, 2017 and the effective date of the new VSP FY 17-19 agreement between your county and the Commission will not be able to be reimbursed, so please plan VSP activities accordingly.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH FOR VSP WORK GROUPS:** In June 2016, the Commission provided work groups some guidance on how to engage stakeholders in the VSP process. “A county must confer with tribes and interested stakeholders before designating or establishing a watershed group”, and “[t]he watershed group must include broad representation of key watershed stakeholders and, at a minimum, representatives of agricultural and environmental groups and tribes that agree to participate. The county should encourage existing lead entities, watershed planning units, or other integrating organizations to serve as the watershed group.” [RCW 36.70A.715 \(2\) and \(3\)](#), emphasis added. Some suggested strategies for workgroup participation by environmental groups, tribes, and other stakeholders:

- Engage stakeholder groups early in the process - before establishing the workgroup.
- Engagement should take the form of written communication, but can also include direct face-to-face meetings, phone calls, or other outreach methods.
- Engage stakeholder groups after the workgroup has been established. Continue to engage those stakeholders with written communication through workgroup progress updates.
- Document all attempts to communicate with those stakeholders in writing.

Building on that outreach strategy, the Technical Panel believes that outreach efforts should be documented in the VSP work plan. A section of the work plan could be about how the work group was established and efforts made to include stakeholders (see RCW 36.70A.715). In addition to the outreach requirements in RCW 36.70A.715 mentioned above, there are requirements in other sections of the VSP statute that apply ([RCW 36.70A.720](#) (b) and (d) specifically) that should also be addressed in the work plan.

A work group would want as much documentation in writing of its outreach efforts as possible. As such, letters, meeting advertisements, media articles, and documented phone calls should be kept as materials that support the work plan and work group effort. A summary of such efforts should be included in the work plan, but the background documentation materials should be retained by the work group in case they are needed in the future.

VSP MONTHLY CONSULTANT Q&A: The next Q&A webinar for all those interested in VSP at a statewide level is coming up on **Thursday, June 8 from 9am-9:30am**. Please register for Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Monthly Q&A on Jun 08, 2017 9:00 AM PDT at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5557700707848942339>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

This conference call is meant to be a Q & A on VSP for all 27 VSP opt-in counties. The purpose of the call is to be a forum to disseminate information about VSP on a statewide level and to answer VSP related questions. It is open to any who want to phone in, but mainly directed at County staff, Conservation District staff, and consultants and facilitators responsible for VSP.

Links to past webinar recordings are available on the [VSP Workgroups web page](#).

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