

May 2019 VSP Newsletter

2 YEAR STATUS REPORTS: ***The two-year status report required in [RCW 36.70A.720 \(1\) \(j\)](#) is due on August 30, 2019.*** Some of you have already begun preparing this report, even though the due date is after the end of this fiscal year. That is a best practice and we encourage such planning and forethought.

All work groups, county staff, conservation district staff, and other staff responsible for VSP implementation should review [Policy Advisory 05-18](#) to ensure they understand the two-year report and deadline.

The Commission suggests setting up a project management system to track reporting requirements and deadlines. More details and a complete schedule for submittal of the two-year report is in [PA 05-18](#). All policy advisories can be found on the VSP web page [here](#) and on the SAC web page [here](#).

The guidance found in [PA 05-18](#) is currently the main resource to use when writing your 2 year reports.

A word of caution to those who have not yet begun to plan for the two-year report:

As the Commission has outlined in [Policy Advisory 03-18](#), [Policy Advisory 05-18](#), and [the statement on cost-share for VSP](#), after a county VSP work plan has been approved by the VSP Technical Panel, VSP funds are to be used for implementation. Each county is free to choose how to allocate those funds, but regardless of how the funds are allocated, each county must continue to meet all the requirements of the VSP (RCW Chapter 36.70A), and must also meet the goals and objectives of their own VSP work plan. Some of those obligations include:

- Maintaining a regularly-meeting VSP work group which oversees work plan implementation
- Conducting periodic evaluations of the county work plan
- Instituting adaptive management
- **Providing a detailed, written report every 2 and 5 years of implementation efforts and success**

- Meet contract obligations with the Commission and others responsible for VSP implementation
- Conducting outreach and education to meet work plan goals
- Providing technical assistance, or contracting with an entity to so provide, to VSP participants
- Meet the goals and objectives of the county work plan
- Staffing needs, including salary, equipment and other items required to perform their job

The Commission suggests setting up a [project management system](#) to track reporting requirements and deadlines, and to ensure that each county's VSP implementation budget accounts for completing the 2 year and 5 year reports. A [sample spreadsheet](#) is available for use as well to track duties and tasks, including report writing.

VSP BUDGET: The Legislature funded VSP for FY 19-21 at \$8,456,000. The Commission had sought \$9,925,000. The budget includes funds for implementation for each county, administration of VSP through the Commission and other agencies, and supported funding for the expansion of WDFW's [HRCD](#) to serve all VSP counties. The budget still needs to be signed by the Governor to be official. In the meantime, Commission staff will be developing the budget allocation for the

2019-21 biennium. More details will follow.

Remember, for the current fiscal year, which ends on June 30, 2019, counties have been allocated up to \$110,000 to support their VSP efforts. None of the current years' funding can be pushed forward into the next biennium.

VSP, CAO'S AND "NEW AGRICULTURE": The Commission, in conjunction with the VSP Statewide Advisory Committee (SAC) and Technical Panel, has finalized the guidance for counties on how VSP interacts with critical areas, agriculture, and critical area ordinances. That Policy Advisory 04-19 has been posted on the [Commission's SAC web page](#) and available as a direct link here.

UPCOMING JOINT MEETING OF THE VSP TECHNICAL PANEL AND STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

The VSP Technical Panel and Statewide Advisory Committee continue to update their meeting schedules. The most complete and up-to-date meeting schedule and meeting agendas can always be found on the [Technical Panel web page](#) and the [Statewide Advisory Committee web page](#). All meetings will be held at the Farm Bureau building, 975 Carpenter Rd NE #101, Lacey, WA 98516, unless otherwise noted. The next meeting is set for Wednesday, May 29, 2019, from

9 am – 12 pm. The meeting is available by webinar and we encourage webinar attendance.

To register for the May 29th webinar meeting, please use the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3692863032082361858>

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

VSP TECHNICAL PANEL CHANGE IN MEMBERS: Please welcome a new member to the VSP Technical Panel, representing the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) – Mary Huff. Terra is the Land Use Conservation and Policy Section Manager for WDFW and will be taking over for Keith Folkerts. The [Technical Panel agency member list](#) has been updated. Mary can be reached at the following address: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, mailing: POB 43200, Olympia, WA 98504-3200; physical: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington St. SE, Olympia, WA 98501; Office: 360-902-8306; Cell: 360-480-4503; email: mary.huff@dfw.wa.gov.

VSP END-OF-FISCAL-YEAR VOUCHERING: The end of the fiscal year is fast approaching. **As a reminder, all vouchers for VSP eligible expenditures must be**

received no later than Monday, July 10, 2019 to be processed and eligible for reimbursement. Vouchers received after July 10, 2019 will not be reimbursed. Submit vouchers to [Karla Heinitz](#) at the Commission.

VSP VOUCHERING: Counties and those that work with counties on VSP are in danger of missing out on reimbursement for VSP implementation expenses incurred. Monthly reimbursement requests for all county VSP contracts (as well as any other contracts) is required. If no expenses have been incurred during a month, a voucher should still be done showing a zero expenses incurred. So, please **remember to voucher monthly** for VSP expenses. Questions about vouchering? Please contact [Karla Heinitz](#) at the Commission.

Question: *How often should a watershed work group meet during VSP implementation?* **Answer:** As often as it takes to successfully implement the county VSP work plan and meet the other obligations under the VSP Statute, RCW 36.70A.700-760.

[Policy Advisory 03-18](#) identifies the roles of each of the entities responsible for VSP implementation, and further explains that the watershed work group should meet “regularly”. Regularly gives each county watershed work group flexibility on how often to meet. When there isn’t business to conduct, the work

groups shouldn't meet. However, a county watershed work group shouldn't go six months between meetings. This is because there is a lot of business for a work group to conduct related to implementation of the county VSP work plan and meeting the obligations under the statute, and six months without a meeting to monitor progress and take adaptive management actions might lead to failure of the work plan.

The watershed work group has an important oversight role to play during implementation. [Policy Advisory 03-18](#) explains, in summary fashion, that the watershed work group has many different duties during implementation, including

- Overseeing implementation;
- Providing leadership on VSP in the local county;
- Meeting regularly;
- Participating in outreach efforts, fosters and builds partnerships with other natural resource entities;
- Providing direction and oversight to the VSP technical service provider on compliance with VSP goals and objectives;
- Establishing a succession plan for the work group, i.e. what will you do when work group members leave, how will you maintain your commitment to a diverse work group;

- Working with the VSP County Commissioners, County Staff and Fiscal Staff Responsible for the County – Commission VSP contract, and VSP Technical Service Providers to establish a budget for VSP implementation that outlines tasks, amount allocated for outreach, monitoring, technical provision, and any other task or deliverable needed;
- Every 2 years, periodically evaluating (programmatic, economic, and resource) and reporting on the VSP;
- Adaptively managing implementation if not meeting the established goals and benchmarks in the work plan; and
- Every 5 years, reporting to the Commission and the County on whether the work plan's protection and enhancement goals and benchmarks have been met.

County watershed group members should read the county's VSP work plan, understand its terms and requirements; receive training in the background and history of VSP, as well as how the work group functions as an entity of the county. Watershed work group meetings are open public meetings under the [Open Public Meetings Act, RCW Chapter 42.30](#), so all volunteer members of the watershed work group will need to be familiar with the OPMA

and should undergo the [attorney general's OPMA training](#). Remember, [OPMA refresher training is required every four years](#).

For more detail on VSP watershed work groups during implementation, please see last year's [December 2017 VSP regional meeting presentation materials](#) on implementation and [our implementation page on the VSP web page](#). This topic will also be addressed during the VSP regional meetings December 4 in Chehalis and December 11 in Moses Lake.

VSP REIMBURSEMENT FOR LIGHT REFRESHMENT: Please remember to submit a receipt, meeting attendee list, **AND a meeting agenda** in order to receive reimbursement for light refreshments as part of a VSP meeting. All requests for payment should be emailed to sccgrants@scc.wa.gov. There is a specific A-19 form that needs to be sent in for VSP reimbursements, it can be found on our website at this link: <http://scc.wa.gov/vsp-counties-workgroups/>. For other details of the changes, please see the updated Billing FAQ [here](#) on the [VSP County and work group web page](#). If you have any questions, please contact [Karla Heinitz](#) at the Commission.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE VSP NEWSLETTER: New subscribers should access this link and choose the subscription for the "Voluntary

Stewardship Program (VSP)" under the *Programs and Policy* tab:

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WASCC/subscriber/new>.

If you have any questions on how to sign up, please contact Bill Eller (beller@scc.wa.gov) or Laura Johnson (LJohnson@scc.wa.gov) at the Commission.

Bill Eller | beller@scc.wa.gov | 509-385-7512 | Washington State Conservation Commission