

February 2020 VSP Newsletter

NEW VSP STAFF AT THE COMMISSION: The Conservation Commission has gone through many applications and interviews these past few months to search for a Natural Resource Scientist and we're excited to share with you who we've hired to join the team.



Meet our new Natural Resource Scientist: Levi Keesecker. On January 16th, Levi joined the

team reviewing five year reports, providing workgroups assistance with monitoring design and analysis, conducting spatial analyses for critical area functions that span more than one county, and developing a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) guidance document for VSP monitoring.

His background in study design and GIS, with experience in agriculture, marine, freshwater, and terrestrial systems worldwide will be a great asset to this position. A graduate of UW and

University of Idaho, Levi will be working out of Spokane, serving the 27 VSP counties statewide. Welcome Levi!

NEW DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY VSP STAFF: The Department of Ecology is pleased to introduce Chelsea Benner. Chelsea is the new Shoreline Master Program/Voluntary Stewardship Program planner. Chelsea will be based out of Ecology's Central Regional Office in Union Gap.



Chelsea has worked with local government planning implementing their SMP; she helped

Ecology and Kittitas County maneuver through an SMP appeal that resulted in a well-crafted negotiated settlement agreement, and Chelsea also worked directly with Kittitas County in the development of their Voluntary Stewardship Program.

Chelsea Benner came to Ecology from working as a Land Use Planner for Kittitas County out of Ellensburg. She is originally from the west side of the state, and moved to the east side to attend Central Washington University where she graduated with a Public Health Degree. Welcome Chelsea!

JOINT MEETING OF THE VSP TECHNICAL PANEL AND STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE: The Voluntary Stewardship Program (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 are held at the Farm Bureau building, 975 Carpenter Rd NE #101, Lacey, WA 98516, unless otherwise noted.

The next meeting is set for Wednesday, February 19, 2020, from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm. The meeting is available by webinar and we encourage webinar attendance.

To register for the February 19th webinar meeting, please use the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2434722668874386444>

After registering, you will receive a

confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

TRAINING RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON VSP WEB PAGE: The Commission has established a place on our VSP web page for training materials related to VSP. It can be found on [our web page here](#), under the “Training Resources” tab. It will serve as the place to find materials for state agency, county, and work group member resources related to VSP topics. Look for new materials to be posted there periodically.

INTRODUCTORY VSP TRAINING FOR STATE AGENCY STAFF: The Conservation Commission hosted a training for state agency staff last month entitled an “*Introduction to the Voluntary Stewardship Program*.” The [webinar recording](#) is available on the [Commission’s web page](#).

REMINDER: COUNTIES, PLEASE SEND THE COMMISSION YOUR VSP BUDGET: New this biennia, the Commission requires each county to send its VSP implementation budget to the Commission. This requirement is part of the contract for VSP implementation between the Commission and each VSP county. We are still waiting for budgets from the following counties: Columbia, Ferry, Lewis, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, San Juan, Skagit, Spokane, Stevens, Thurston, and Walla Walla.

Please send the budget electronically (a PDF or Excel spreadsheet is fine) to [Karla Heinitz](#). Example budgets can be found [here](#).

The requirement is designed to ensure all requirements related to VSP implementation are accounted for during the performance of the contract with each county, and to ensure that the two year and five year reporting requirements will be met. The budget is due to Karla within 120 days of signing the contract.

Please send the budget to Karla by email at kheinitz@scc.wa.gov or by phone at 360-407-6212.

VSP VOUCHERING: Remember, the Commission's agency policy requires monthly reimbursement requests for all VSP contracts (as well as any other contracts). However, we have noticed that some counties are sending in reimbursement requests quarterly. Monthly reimbursement requests allow entities to stay on top of expenses and contract end dates. So, please **remember to voucher monthly** for VSP expenses.

VSP WORK GROUP MEETINGS:
Please add Bill Eller (beller@scc.wa.gov) to your email notices for your local VSP county work group meetings. Commission staff want to attend as many of those meetings as we can in order to be a resource to you

and your work group as you move forward with VSP implementation. Not all counties list their work group meetings on their county web site, so the easiest way to get notice of the meetings is to join your email list. Thank you!

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