

Pend Oreille County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)

VSP Coordinator:
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What is VSP?

VSP is a non-regulatory, incentive-based approach to protecting critical areas on agricultural lands, while maintaining agricultural viability. VSP provides the opportunity for farmers to continue agricultural operations without regulation under Pend Oreille County's Development Regulations (Chapter XX.36 Environmentally Sensitive Areas) by promoting voluntary conservation practices that producers can implement to protect critical areas and maintain and enhance agricultural viability. VSP is not a replacement for compliance with other laws and regulations, but participation in the program can often help agricultural producers comply with these requirements.

Under VSP, critical areas on lands where agricultural activities are conducted are protected under this voluntary program through conservation practices. Lands used for non-agricultural purposes continue to be regulated under Pend Oreille County's Development Regulations.

VSP Work Plan

Pend Oreille County developed a VSP Work Plan for use by farmers that is tailored to the region and local producers. The VSP Work Plan was developed by the Pend Oreille County Work Group convened by the County and comprised of agricultural producers, representatives from the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, local government elected officials and staff, agency representatives, and interest groups. The VSP Work Plan identifies conservation practices that are or can be implemented by producers and identifies future goals and benchmarks for continued protection and enhancement of the County's critical areas.



Photo credit: Travis Hanson

What are Critical Areas?

The five critical areas in protected under state law (RCW 36.70A.030) include:

- wetlands
- fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas
- frequently flooded areas
- critical aquifer recharge areas
- geologically hazardous areas

The key functions and values provided Pend Oreille County's critical areas can be summarized into four major functions, which include: 1) water quality, 2) hydrology, 3) soil, and 4) fish and wildlife habitat. Each critical area provides one or more of these key functions and values.

To find out if you have critical areas on your property, check the Pend Oreille County VSP webpage or VSP Work Plan maps. If you have any questions, you can contact the Pend Oreille Conservation District for more information.



Photo credit: Ecology



Pend Oreille
Conservation
District

For more information on VSP in Pend Oreille County, visit:

pendoreilleco.org/your-government/community-development/vsp/ or
pocd.org/voluntary-stewardship-program



What Does VSP Participation Look Like?

Many farmers and ranchers in Pend Oreille County are already conducting conservation practices that promote agricultural viability while also providing protections to critical areas. Agricultural producers have flexibility in how they participate in VSP, ranging from continuing current agricultural operations without sharing conservation practices with the Conservation District to developing and implementing an individual stewardship plan with additional conservation practices and annually sharing practices implemented with the Conservation District. Producers do not have to be part of a federal program to be involved in VSP.

How Do I Get Involved in VSP?

To get involved in VSP, producers are asked to share conservation practices implemented on your land with the VSP Coordinator. Additionally, producers can consider if additional conservation practices might be implemented on their property that benefit critical areas and maintain agricultural viability. Conservation practices information shared by producers with the Pend Oreille Conservation District will be reported for VSP at the watershed and County scales, with reported information kept confidential.

Contact David Marcell at the Pend Oreille County Conservation District for more information on ways to participate in VSP: davidm@pocd.org, (509) 447-1155



Photo credit:
Travis Hanson

Help keep critical areas protection voluntary.

Working together, farmers and ranchers can use voluntary efforts to avoid additional regulatory controls.