

September 2020 VSP Newsletter

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VSP MONITORING FORUM WEBINAR – SAVE THE DATE (9/8/2020 1PM – 4:00PM): Please join us for a VSP Monitoring Forum on Tuesday, September 8th from 1pm-4:00pm. Topics will include: the use of GIS for prioritizing monitoring activities and conservation practices, approaches to landscape change detection for 5-yr reporting, collating/analyzing on-the-ground data for use in VSP, utilizing paired watershed studies to estimate the effects of conservation practices on soil

erosion, and using mapping platforms to facilitate reporting on participation and BMPs. Presenters include VSP work group members from across Washington. Additionally, Kenneth Pierce Jr. (WDFW) will present about the High Resolution Change Detection (HRCD) project and data.

Key objectives of the VSP Monitoring Forum are to: (i) facilitate collaborations/connections between VSP work groups, counties, and other VSP-related organizations via shared goals, (ii) highlight different approaches to VSP monitoring to provide tangible options for VSP groups who may need to adjust/develop additional monitoring for VSP – e.g., for Adaptive Management ahead of the 5-yr reports, and (iii) build technical capacity within VSP-associated groups.

More details on the VSP Monitoring Forum will be coming soon. If you have questions or comments regarding the forum, please contact Levi Keesecker by phone at (360) 789-3650 or by email at lkeesecker@scc.wa.gov.

VSP Monitoring Forum
Tue, Sep 8, 2020 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

(PDT)

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/125309053>

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<https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/125309053>.

FIVE YEAR REPORT TEMPLATE

WEBINAR: The Commission will host a webinar of the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) five year report template on September 25, 2020 at 1 p.m.

The Commission, with the assistance of the VSP Technical Panel and Statewide Advisory Committee, has been working on a Guide, template, and instructions for county work groups to use for their five year reporting requirements under VSP.

The webinar will assist county work group members, technical service providers, county staff and others who are implementing VSP to understand and use the template to provide the Commission with the information

needed to review and evaluate the five year report.

Please register for VSP Five Year Report Template webinar on Sep 25, 2020 1:00 PM PDT at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8788890530782421515>

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

If you have questions or are a person with a disability and need special accommodations, please contact the Conservation Commission at (360) 407-6200.

JOINT TECHNICAL PANEL AND STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING: Due to the ongoing pandemic, and to continue protecting the health and safety of our staff, volunteers, and the public, this meeting will be conducted via online web meeting and teleconference. All members of the public are welcome. If you would like to join us online, please follow the link included in the agenda to receive additional information on how to participate.

The next joint meeting of the Statewide Advisory Committee and Technical Panel will be Friday, September 25, 2020, at 9 a.m. Links to join are below:

Please join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/397635525>

You can also dial in using your phone.
 United States: [+1 \(224\) 501-3412](tel:+12245013412)

Access Code: 397-635-525

New to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/397635525>

The agenda and other materials will be posted on the Commission VSP web page.

VSP QUARTERLY REPORTS PAST-DUE: The April 1 through June 30 report was due July 10, 2020. **We are still waiting for quarterly report from the following counties:**

- Cowlitz
- Grays Harbor
- Skagit
- Yakima

If you are having trouble completing the quarterly report due to COVID-19 considerations, please contact [Bill Eller](#). Thank you!

QUARTERLY REPORT DUE OCTOBER 10, 2020: October will be here before you know it! Just a friendly

reminder that the [VSP quarterly report](#) for July 1 – September 30, 2020 is due October 10, 2020.

FIVE YEAR REPORT DUE DATES:

COUNTY	5 YEAR REPORT DUE
Kittitas	11.17.20
Mason	11.24.20
Garfield	11.30.20
Asotin	12.14.20
Grant	12.14.20
San Juan	12.21.20
Cowlitz	12.22.20
Pacific	12.22.20
Okanogan	12.28.20
Benton	1.12.21
Skagit	1.19.21
Whitman	1.19.21
Columbia	1.20.21
Yakima	1.21.21
Douglas	1.22.21
Pend Oreille	2.2.21
Franklin	2.24.21
Walla Walla	3.7.21
Stevens	3.10.21
Ferry	3.14.21
Grays Harbor	3.21.21
Lincoln	3.21.21
Lewis	4.18.21
Spokane	4.22.21
Adams	5.23.21

CONSERVATION COMMISSION REVAMPS WEB SITE: Last month the Commission sent out a special notice outlining our new web site and how to access VSP from it. Changes were necessary for cyber security and accessibility considerations. Please be

prepared for this change when you next access our VSP web page.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION VSP FY 21-23 BUDGET REQUEST: The Conservation Commission (SCC) is seeking funding to continue implementing the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP), including all 27 county work plans, and provide for state agency participation in the evaluation, review, and monitoring of work plan success.

Background

The SCC is tasked by statute to implement the VSP. In the past two years VSP counties have finished developing their local work plans and all counties have begun implementing their plans. By the end of April 2021, all counties will have submitted their first five-year review and evaluation report.

Proposal

The decision package will fund:

Implementation of 27 local county VSP work plans (\$6,750,000). VSP counties have developed work plans describing the application of VSP. All work plans have been completed and were approved by the end of the 2017-19 biennium. Counties are now implementing their work plans, which includes outreach to landowners, developing individual landowner stewardship plans, monitoring the progress of implementation of these individual plans, and monitoring the

status of protection and enhancement of critical areas.

Funding to accomplish this is calculated at \$250,000 per VSP county for the biennium. Last biennium's funding was at \$240,000 per VSP county. The increase is based on feedback from the VSP counties as to the resources needed for implementation. Many counties requested more, but the SCC believes the \$250,000 amount is a reasonable state contribution. The SCC encourages each VSP county to make their own financial contribution to local VSP implementation.

The use of these funds is up to each VSP work group, but includes meeting statutory reporting requirements and ensuring progress on their plans.

SCC administration of the VSP

(\$500,000). The SCC is charged by the VSP statute to oversee and administer the VSP. The administrative tasks include formulating the VSP Technical Panel and Statewide Advisory Committee, conducting their meetings, having staff serve on the Technical Panel, creating a five-year reporting template and process, serving as the statewide clearinghouse for VSP information, policy and procedure, assisting counties with monitoring and data collection, conducting outreach and education events, meetings, and webinars, and creating and managing a VSP web page.

Additionally, SCC staff provide critical scientific guidance to local VSP work groups in relation to monitoring approaches, analysis, and reporting to assess both environmental quality and agricultural viability.

Other agency participation in VSP (\$600,000). The WDFW, WSDA, and ECY join with the SCC to serve on the VSP Technical Panel, which approves all plans. Now that all VSP counties are implementing their plans, the Panel's role shifts to the review and evaluation of five year reports of the VSP work groups for the on-going success of the plans and their adaptive management actions. Agencies will also be coordinating with counties on VSP monitoring in the field.

WDFW's High Resolution Change Detection (HRCD) (\$575,000). VSP counties must monitor and document their work plan implementation so that, at a minimum, their plan protects and does not impact critical areas. Monitoring these potential impacts allows the VSP work groups to adaptively manage their plans to achieve the resource protection goals. This is a requirement of VSP not found in non-VSP counties. A key tool for many VSP work groups is the use of High Resolution Change Detection (HRCD) technologies at WDFW. HRCD is visual imagery from the air that allows technicians to determine whether

changes are happening on the ground. Some VSP county work plans rely on this technology to support their outreach and landowner assistance work. Although WDFW has used this technology in a few counties, more resources are needed to support the use of HRCD in VSP work plan implementation. WDFW requests \$575,000 per biennium for High Resolution Change Detection (HRCD) for counties using VSP.

The Commission understands the need during the COVID-19 pandemic to maximize productivity while maintaining quality service with less resources. The Commission's VSP budget proposal seeks to achieve that with a nearly 15% reduction for the 2021-23 biennia over the FY 19-21 biennial proposal.

Total funding request for VSP for the 2021-23 biennium is \$8,425,000.

COMMISSION SEEKS ENVIRONMENTAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE SAC: An important part of the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is the Statewide Advisory Committee (SAC) appointed by the director of the Conservation Commission (Commission).

The SAC is comprised of environmental, agricultural, and county members, and tribal representation is also sought. The SAC serves to advise the director of the

Commission on a variety of policy and programmatic aspects of VSP.

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

The Commission is currently seeking an environmental representative to serve on the SAC. The term is for two years. Meetings are generally held every month or every other month. Members serve as volunteers to help the Commission achieve the goals of VSP, which include protecting critical areas while maintaining agricultural viability.

More information on the SAC can be found at the [Commission's VSP web page](#). If interested in serving, interested persons should contact Ron Shultz, Director of Policy and Inter-governmental Relations, rshultz@scc.wa.gov or by phone at 360-407-7507.

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.