

# September 2018 VSP Newsletter

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

**VSP WEB PAGE UPDATE:** The Commission has substantially updated its VSP web page. Since most VSP counties have approved work plans, the Commission has eliminated the “Counties and Workgroups” tab on its web page and replaced it with a tab dedicated to [implementation of the work plan](#). There, in one place, you will find information related to VSP implementation: reporting, roles and responsibilities, project management, monitoring, outreach and billing / finances.

**VSP IMPLEMENTATION:** The Commission, after consultation with the VSP Statewide Advisory Committee (SAC), has amended [Policy Advisory \(PA\) 03-18](#) to add some additional clarity around the roles and responsibilities during VSP implementation. All work group members, county staff, conservation district staff, and other persons interested in VSP implementation should review their roles and responsibilities, as outlined in [PA 03-18](#).

**VSP 2 YEAR AND 5 YEAR REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:** A new Policy Advisory, [PA 05-18](#) deals with implementation reporting requirements for VSP. All work groups, county staff, conservation district staff, and other staff responsible for VSP implementation should review [PA 05-18](#) to ensure they meet these two-year and five-year deadlines. The Commission suggests setting up a project management system to track reporting requirements and deadlines. More details and a complete schedule for submittal of two year and five year reports are in [PA 05-18](#). All PA's can be found on the VSP web page [here](#) and on the SAC web page [here](#).

**UPCOMING JOINT MEETINGS 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. There are two joint meetings set for the month of September – Monday, September 17<sup>th</sup> from 10 am – 2:15 pm at the Conservation Commission office located at 300 Desmond Drive SE, Lacey, WA 98503 and Friday, September 28, 2018, from 8 am – 3 pm at the Farm Bureau building, 975 Carpenter Rd NE #101, Lacey, WA 98516. Both meetings are available by webinar and we encourage webinar attendance.

To register for the September 17<sup>th</sup> webinar meeting, please use the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2413098562520336899>

To register for the September 28<sup>th</sup> webinar meeting, please use the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4098976438252416771>

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

VSP FUNDS USED FOR PROJECT COST-SHARE: Though the Technical Panel is still working to approve some plans, those counties that have approved VSP work plans are already working on implementation. Some are looking into providing a cost-share program for VSP participants.

After receiving funding from the Legislature for VSP, the Commission makes funds available to each of the 27 participating counties. After a county VSP work plan has been approved by the VSP Technical Panel, VSP funds plans may be used for implementation.

Each county is free to choose how to allocate those funds, but regardless of how the funds are allocated, 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.

The Commission urges counties contemplating creating a VSP cost-share program to review all of the obligations in RCW Chapter 36.70A and to review Policy Advisory [03-18 Roles and Responsibilities during VSP implementation – Amended](#), and [05-18](#)

[VSP Implementation Reporting – 2 year and 5 Year Reports](#) for a summary of some of those obligations before making its decision. 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 urges counties to create an implementation budget and project management protocols in order to meet the statutory requirements. The Commission also urges counties who might want to use VSP funds for cost-share projects to partner with an entity (such as your local conservation district) that already has the training, knowledge and experience with administering a cost-share program using the Commission's cost-share policies and procedures. Finally, the Commission urges counties to review the [Commission's cost-share policies and procedures](#), specifically the [Grant and Procedure Manual](#) and [Cost Share Process](#) before making a decision to offer VSP funds for cost-share.

If VSP funding will be spent on cost-share projects with landowners, there are a few requirements:

- The county work group will need to approve any cost share program used in the implementation of VSP.
- [Washington State Conservation Commission cost-share policies](#) would need to be abided by, regardless of who is administering the cost-share program (conservation district or some another implementing entity (such as the county)). Since WSCC funds are being used as the basis for the cost-share funding, WSCC policies apply.

- If the entity administering the cost-share program and otherwise involved in contracting with landowners for project implementation using VSP funds has not already been trained in the Conservation Commission cost-share policies and procedures, that entity must be so trained before funds can be used from the Commission. Please contact the Commission staff below to schedule a training.
- VSP projects that are funded using any Commission funds will need to be reported in the five year report under RCW 36.70A.720 (2) (b) (i) and (c) (i).

Anyone implementing VSP and seeking to use VSP funds for cost-share must consult with Commission staff before funds are available. The staff person at the Commission responsible for VSP cost-share is Karla Heinitz. Please contact her by email at [kheinitz@scc.wa.gov](mailto:kheinitz@scc.wa.gov) or by phone at 360-407-6212.

VSP OUTREACH TO OTHER STATES: Commission staff was invited to present on the VSP and at the annual meeting of the [Council of State Governments West Legislative Council on River Governance](#) in Butte, Montana. Along with presentations from Wyoming and Montana, legislators from four northwest states (Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana) were able to hear about VSP successes and challenges as a means to engage landowners in conservation efforts near critical areas. Staff stressed the voluntary nature of VSP and the watershed scale for monitoring and adaptive management.

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