

October 2019 VSP Newsletter

QUARTERLY REPORT DUE OCTOBER 10: The [VSP quarterly report](#) is due every quarter as a deliverable in the contract between the Commission and each of the 27 VSP counties. If you are the responsible party for the VSP contract in your county, please remember to set a reminder for yourself to timely submit the quarterly report.

The quarterly report and schedule for submittal can be found on the new [“Implementation”](#) page of the Commission’s VSP web page, under the “Reporting” tab. It can also be found on the [quarterly report form](#) itself.

For your convenience, the remaining quarterly report schedule is reproduced below:

Jul 1 – Sep 30, 2019: **Due Oct 10, 2019**
 Oct 1 – Dec 31, 2019: Due Jan 10, 2020
 Jan 1 – Mar 31, 2020: Due Apr 10, 2020
 Apr 1 – Jun 30, 2020: Due Jul 10, 2020
 Jul 1 – Sep 30, 2020: Due Oct 10, 2020
 Oct 1 – Dec 31, 2020: Due Jan 10, 2021
 Jan 1 – Mar 31, 2021: Due Apr 10, 2021
 Apr 1 – Jun 30, 2021: Due Jul 10, 2021

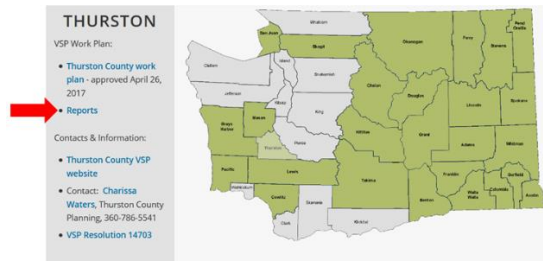
2 YEAR AND 5 YEAR REPORTS AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING: 2 year VSP status reports and 5 year VSP review reports (most 5 year review reports start arriving in winter 2020) will be posted on the [Commission’s VSP web page](#) under each corresponding county on the map. To view the reports, select a county on the map. Once a county is selected, use the sidebar to the left of the map to find the link to “Reports”.

Directions:

1. Go to the [SCC VSP web page](#)
2. Click on a county on the map (in this example, we choose Thurston)



3. Click on the “Reports” link



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 Thursday, October 3, 2019, from 9 am – 12 pm. The meeting is available by webinar and we encourage webinar attendance.

To register for the October 3rd webinar meeting, please use the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8321025234886739724>

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 Department of Ecology (ECY) – Rick Mraz. Rick is the Wetland Policy Lead for ECY and will be taking over for Lauren Driscoll. The [Technical Panel agency member list](#) has been updated. Rick can be reached at the following address: Washington State Department of Ecology Headquarters, 300 Desmond Drive, Lacey, WA 98503-1274; Main Line: 360-407-6000; Office: 360-407-6924.

VSP INTRODUCTORY TRAINING FOR STATE AGENCY STAFF: The Conservation Commission will present an “*Introduction to the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)*” training for state agency staff on **Thursday, October 3, 2019 from 1 pm – 2:30 pm at the Washington State Farm Bureau Building, 975 Carpenter Rd NE, Lacey, WA 98516** ([Map](#)). State agency staff are encouraged to attend in person, but there also is an option to join by webinar using the following link:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6219635313522046988>

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

The purpose of the training is to provide an introduction to VSP for new agency

staff, and to refresh established staff with the current state of VSP.

Topics to be covered will include:

- History and creation of VSP
- VSP work plans
- Implementation of VSP
- Roles in VSP (with an emphasis on state agencies)
- VSP Technical Panel
- VSP Statewide Advisory Committee
- Where to find current information about VSP

The focus of the training will be an exchange of information about VSP. So, while webinar attendance is an option, state agency staff are encouraged to attend in-person to facilitate conversation.

The training will be directed at state agency staff. If you are not state agency staff, but would like an Introduction to VSP training, please contact [Bill Eller](#).

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. Please send the budget electronically (a

PDF or Excel spreadsheet is fine) to [Karla Heinitz](#).

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.

NEW COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, COUNTY OR STATE AGENCY STAFF, OR TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDER? Commission staff and VSP Technical Panel members are available to provide VSP training to new county commissioners, county planning staff, state agency staff, and VSP technical service providers.

We understand that the VSP has been around since 2011, and funded since 2015, and since that time there have been personnel changes throughout the VSP partnership. We want to make sure that all who play a role in making VSP a success receive a basic training on what VSP is, how it came to be, why it is important to the local community, and how it works to protect critical areas while maintaining agricultural viability.

We can also provide training to other interested parties, as needed. However, we will prioritize those that have a direct role in VSP - county commissioners, county staff, state agency staff, and technical service providers. Please contact the Commission's [VSP coordinator Bill Eller](#) with training needs.

VSP FUNDS USED FOR PROJECT COST-SHARE: Each county is free to choose how to allocate VSP funds, but regardless of how the funds are allocated, each 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 or by phone at 360-407-6212.

UPDATED INFORMATION FOR THE COMMISSION'S VSP WEB PAGE? If your county has information related to VSP that needs to be updated on the [Commission's VSP web page](#), please contact [Bill Eller](#) so that information can be updated.

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.

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Conservation Commission