

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

The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is a new, non-regulatory, and incentive-based approach that supports individual farm operations while protecting critical areas and maintaining agriculture viability in Kittitas County through **voluntary stewardship strategies and practices**.

Failure to meet protection and associated participation goals in the County will trigger the **traditional regulatory approach** to critical area protection under the County's Critical Areas Ordinance process.

How Can the VSP Support Operations on Your Farm?

VSP allows farmers to have more flexibility through ongoing agricultural stewardship practices, than traditional regulatory approaches for protecting critical areas. VSP also requires that this approach maintain and enhance the long-term viability of agriculture. Many farmers in the County are already conducting and tracking stewardship activities and practices that promote farm viability while also providing protections to critical area functions. This Self-Assessment Checklist will allow farmers to take credit for the actions they are already implementing.

Balanced Approach of Critical Area Protection and Agricultural Viability



Kittitas County VSP Self-Assessment Checklist

The main objectives of the Self-Assessment Checklist are to:

- Identify and document existing stewardship strategies or practices you have implemented since 2011 (effective date of VSP), either through existing publicly funded programs or voluntarily implemented through producer-funded practices.
- Identify opportunities to:
 - Maintain or improve existing stewardship strategies and practices
 - Implement additional stewardship strategies and practices on your land and connect you with technical service providers for implementing these practices
- Encourage high producer participation, through implementation of voluntary stewardship strategies and practices to help ensure the success of VSP.

What are critical areas?

Critical areas include:

- Wetlands
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas
- Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas
- Geologically Hazardous Areas
- Frequently Flooded Areas

Stewardship Practices on Your Farm

Stewardship practices are broadly defined as any practice that, when implemented, further protects critical areas directly or indirectly, and maintains or improves agricultural viability whether or not they meet a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation practice or other standard recognized by VSP.

This checklist can assist in documenting all stewardship strategies and practices currently being implemented by producers in the County and identify additional stewardship practices that might apply to your property. Because stewardship strategies and practices may fall under multiple categories, please include each implemented practice **only once**.

Privacy Note:

The Self-Assessment Checklist can assist producers in developing an “individual stewardship plan” in coordination with the KCCD. “Individual stewardship plans” that a conservation district helps a producer develop are confidential and exempt from disclosure, similar to farm plans developed by conservation districts per RCW 42.56.270(17)(a) and (b).

Stewardship practices information shared by producers with the KCCD will be used to quantify, at the County-level, stewardship measures that have been implemented, as well as associated critical area protections and enhancements and agricultural viability benefits.

General Location (voluntary information):

If you are inclined to share, what Community Area is your farm located within?

- Forested Upland
- Shrub Steppe Upland
- Intensive Cropland – Kittitas Valley
- Intensive Cropland – Northern Kittitas County

Land Management and Agricultural Viability:

What types of land management or agricultural viability concerns do you have on your property?

- Water availability
- Fish screening and passage
- Soil loss (erosion)
- Weed management
- Pollinator/beneficial organism management
- Yield/fertility
- Inputs reduction (e.g., crop protection tools and/or nutrients)
- Other(s) please list: _____

Water Management



Water availability is a major concern in Kittitas County. Stewardship practices that reduce the overall water consumption benefit the farmers that rely on irrigation water while increasing the amount of water available for fish and wildlife.

Grazing



Managing grazing to improve plant communities helps to reduce run-off, increases water infiltration, restores degraded habitat, and maintains healthy plant communities.

What Stewardship Practices Are Being Implemented on Your Farm Since 2011?

Conservation Practices Examples ¹	I do this	I'm interested in this	Does not apply	Not interested	Average units/year (acres/feet/other)
Water Management					
Sprinkler Systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ acres
Irrigation Water Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ acres
Micro-irrigation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ acres
Other(s): _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ (unit)
Pest and Nutrient Management					
Pest Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ acres
Nutrient Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ acres
Other(s): _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ acres
Range Management					
Managed Grazing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ acres
Stock Watering Facilities/Wells	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ no.
Other(s): _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ (unit)
Soil Management					
Conservation Cover	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ acres
Residue Management, No-Till	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ acres
Residue Management, Reduced Till					_____ acres
Other(s): _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ acres
Habitat Management					
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ acres
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ acres
Riparian Forest Buffer					
Tree/Shrub Establishment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ acres
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ feet
Other(s): _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ (unit)
Stream Enhancement					
Streambank and Shoreline Protection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ feet
Channel Bed Stabilization					_____ feet
Aquatic Organism Passage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ no.
Structure for Water Control (fish screen)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ no.
Other(s): _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ (unit)

¹ There are a variety of implementation methods that are acceptable within each type of stewardship practice. Under VSP, a goal is to document and take credit for all conservation practices that provide benefits to critical areas functions and values.

Additional Information and Assistance

Critical areas exist throughout the County. You can direct questions about the presence of critical areas on your property or participation in the VSP to the Kittitas County VSP Coordinator by using the contact information below. Additional information on the VSP can be found at the Kittitas County Conservation District website <http://www.kccd.net/VoluntaryStewardship.htm>.

VSP Technical Assistance Providers

Kittitas County Conservation District
Anna Lael (VSP Coordinator) District Manager Kittitas County Conservation District 2211 W Dolarway Road, Ste 4 Ellensburg, WA 98926 a-lael@conserveva.net (509) 925-3352

Other Local Resources:

- Washington Cattlemen's Association: <http://www.washingtoncattlemen.org/>
- Organization of Kittitas County Timothy Hay Growers and Suppliers: <http://www.kittitastimothy.org/>
- Kittitas County Water Purveyors: <http://www.kcwp.org/>
- Washington Farm Bureau: <https://wsfb.com/>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/national/home/>
- Washington State University Extension: <http://extension.wsu.edu/>