



Website: <http://www.co.pacific.wa.us/dcd/VSP.htm>

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## **For Immediate Release**

# **Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) for Pacific County Ag Lands Explained in Upcoming Workshops**

South Bend, WA, August 10, 2016:

Washington State's newly-introduced Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is a first-in-the-nation approach to promoting agriculture while protecting environmentally sensitive areas on agricultural lands — including streams, wetlands, aquifers, and geologically hazardous areas (collectively called “critical areas”). Enabled under the state's Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.700), the VSP uses a collaborative process to identify, coordinate, and build upon existing programs and practices that address agricultural impacts on critical areas.

In Pacific County, the VSP will build upon local knowledge and best practices for farming and conservation activities to help individual farmers create voluntary, site-specific stewardship plans for their lands. “The VSP is not a new set of regulations,” notes Tim Crose, Director of Pacific County's Department of Community Development. “Instead of imposing new regulations on agricultural lands, the VSP provides an opportunity for the agricultural community to voluntarily work together for effective, locally-tailored environmental stewardship.”

To introduce the VSP to county landowners, four workshops will be hosted at locations throughout the county:

- Monday, August 22nd, 4:30-6:30PM  
Naselle-Grays River Schools  
793 State Route 4, Naselle, WA 98638
- Tuesday, August 23rd 4:30-6:30PM  
Willapa Valley High School  
22 Viking Way, Raymond, WA 98577
- Tuesday, August 30th, 4:30-6:30PM  
Shoalwater Bay Tribal Center  
2373 Tokeland Road, Tokeland, WA 98590
- Wednesday, August 31st, 4:30-6:30PM  
Pacific Coast Cranberry Museum  
2907 Pioneer Road, Long Beach, WA 98631



In each workshop, the VSP process will be described using maps and visual displays to show where agricultural activities and critical areas intersect in Pacific County. Existing conservation strategies and agricultural practices will be discussed with regard to how County critical areas can be stewarded under the VSP while promoting sustainable agricultural activities at the same time.

All interested stakeholders, including farmers and farm associations, tribal representatives, local environmentalists, government agencies, and other public parties are encouraged to attend a nearby workshop to learn more about the VSP, and are also invited to the regular meetings of the Working Group developing the VSP plan for Pacific County. These meetings are held on the “Third Thursday” of each month at the Commissioners Meeting Room at 1216 W. Robert Bush Drive in South Bend, from 5pm to 7pm. More information on all meeting opportunities can be found online at <http://www.co.pacific.wa.us/dcd/VSP.htm> or by calling (360) 875-9356.