

Voluntary Stewardship Program

Joint Technical Panel & Statewide Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, October 29, 2020

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Facilitator – Bill Eller, VSP Coordinator, WSCC

Joint VSP Technical Panel & SAC Meeting

Session Objective: Receive VSP update, discussion of Five Year Report Guide, database, discuss five year report review meetings, and continue discussion of the definition of agricultural activities and its application to local land use decisions in [Policy Advisory #04-19](#).

Opening Comments, Introductions, Session Objective & Agenda

Attendees: Bill Eller, Brandon Roozen, Brian Cochrane, Charissa Waters, Chelsea Benner, John Stuhlmiller, Kelly McLain, Leslie Michel, Levi Keesecker, Marguerite, Mary Huff, Ron Wesen, Sean Williams, Barbara Adkins

VSP Program update – Bill Eller, Ron Shultz, WSCC

Bill Eller explains that Ron Shultz is still out on leave, and as a result the policy discussions on the agenda, including a report on the Legislature / VSP budget, UW Growth Policy Framework, discussion of the regulatory backstop and proof of protection in the five-year report and the continued discussion of applying the VSP definition of agricultural activities will be held over until the next joint VSP meeting.

- WDFW new VSP staff – Sean Williams

Bill Eller brought up that WDFW just hired a new VSP staff member, Sean Williams, and he will be formally introduced at our next joint VSP meeting as he is still transitioning from another position at WDFW.

- Update to NRCS on the VSP 5 year report - October 22, 2020

Bill Eller reported on an update he gave to the NRCS STAC to expect additional contacts from VSP work groups and TSP's as they prepare their 5 year reports.

- 5 year report training webinar – November 5, 2020, 1-3 pm

Bill Eller reported that there is a 5 year report training webinar coming up next week. It is the third in a series that Commission staff have conducted to prepare county work groups and TSP's on how to fill out the template to successfully submit their five year report to the Commission. It will be recorded and posted to the Commission web page.

Charissa Waters asks if there will be a similar training for the 2 year report, since Thurston County has to report their 2 year report soon.

Bill Eller explained that the 2 year status report is different from the 5 year report in that the 2 year status report is a status report and isn't reviewed or evaluated by the Technical Panel or Commission. As a result, the Commission doesn't contemplate providing any training for the 2 year status report. He explained that there is a full explanation of the differences between the two kinds of reports in [Policy Advisory 05-18 VSP Implementation Reporting – 2 Year and 5 Year Reports](#). He offered to talk further about that as needed.

- VSP "Monitoring 101" webinar – December 8, 2020, 9-10:30 am

Bill Eller reported that Commission staff (Levi Keesecker and Brian Cochrane) will be presenting a training on basis monitoring and statistical principals for county work groups and TSP's who might need basic or refresher information on those topics as they prepare their five year reports. It will be recorded and posted to the Commission web page.

- VSP report and monitoring briefing to Commission - January 21, 2021

Bill Eller reported that the Commission will have a VSP presentation on VSP implementation and monitoring at its regular Commission meeting on January 21, 2021. It is expected that a few conservation districts will be presenting on their involvement and implementation of VSP during that meeting. Notice about this meeting will be on the Commission's web page, and likely Bill Eller will put a notice about this meeting in the VSP newsletter as it gets closer.

Five Year Report Guide / Instructions updates – Bill Eller, WSCC

Bill Eller explained that the 5 year report template (user, download and upload) are finished and have been posted on the Commission VSP web page for county work groups and TSP's to use when they submit their five year report. He said that the template was released at the end of September to Garfield, Mason and Kittitas Counties since they have November 2020 due dates, and on October 20, 2020 it was made available to the other 24 counties by email. He reminded counties to contact him if the right person at the county or TSP does not have access to the template so that they can get access.

Bill Eller reported that the Commission is working further with the contractor who developed the template for ongoing template and database maintenance and for another contract to allow Technical Panel members direct electronic access to the database so that they could make their comments. Unfortunately, there was neither time nor funds available in the original contract to incorporate that piece into it, but the Commission hopes to have those next contracts in place soon.

Brian Cochrane said the focus of the database and template was on making sure that the county work group and TSPs understood what was in their plan and how they were going to report it using the template. The scope of the first contract with the contractor was to code the database and to make sure it was prepared in time for the first three counties.

Mary Huff asks how the Technical Panel members will make comments or provide feedback on the reports.

Bill Eller explains that until we have the ability to allow for electronic comments directly in the database, Technical Panel members will have to provide their comments separately, on paper or electronically and they will be emailed to each member for consideration – the time for that comment process is built into the proposed schedule for five year report review and evaluation. Bill Eller says that the [Guide](#) has set out the general procedure, but that he will work with Commission staff for detailed instructions for the Technical Panel members.

Mary Huff says that she is still wondering how the Commission will address the open public meeting act aspects of whether or not the Technical Panel members would be having a meeting if they discuss the reports outside of an open public meeting.

Ron Wesen says that the county would consider the communication between two such members as subject to the open public meeting act. Bill Eller agrees with that and says that is why we have the public meetings for each report.

The attendees discuss the proposed joint five year report public meeting schedule. Bill Eller reviews the proposed schedule and explains that it has expanded from 120 days to 180 days from start to finish. He further explains how that pushes back the meeting start from January to March, with completion in September 2021. He stresses that this schedule is a work-in-progress, subject to many factors, and will be adaptively managed as we move forward.

Technical Panel and Statewide Advisory Committee members express their meeting day preferences. Friday's have been the traditional day we've held VSP meetings, and Tuesdays are difficult for the commissioner members to attend, so the consensus was to use either Thursdays or Fridays. Bill Eller says he will revise the schedule and have a final proposal at the next joint meeting.

Next meeting

The next meeting date will be Wednesday, December 16, 2020, from 2:30 pm – 5 pm, by webinar only.

Adjourn – 10:15 am

