

June 2016 VSP Newsletter

Hi folks! This is the monthly installment of a Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) informational newsletter. Feedback is welcome at beller@scc.wa.gov.

COMMISSION VSP WEB PAGE: The Commission's VSP web page is available [here: http://scc.wa.gov/vsp/](http://scc.wa.gov/vsp/). There was an older link (<http://scc.wa.gov/voluntary-stewardship-program/>) that directed folks to an older version of our page, but that has been updated. So, either link will now get you to our live VSP web page. Our web page will be updated as permitted by staff availability. Let me know if you see any errors, mistakes, or edits that need to be made.

VSP JOINT STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND TECHNICAL PANEL MEETING: The VSP Technical Panel (TP) last met on May 24, 2016. At that meeting, they cancelled the meeting set for Tuesday, June 28, 2016 at the Department of Ecology Building. Instead, they set a joint meeting with the Statewide Advisory Committee for **Thursday, June 30, 2016, from 9am-4pm in Lacey (location TBD)**. Please check either the [TP web page](#) or [SAC web page](#) for more details. Commission staff is working on options for a teleconference or webinar format for those who cannot attend the June 30, 2016 meeting in person.

VSP TECHNICAL PANEL MEETING ON MAY 24, 2016: The TP met on May 24, 2016 and discussed policy, procedure and timelines for getting work plans done. They are still working on all of these topics. Also, at the May 24, 2016 meeting, Chelan County (one of two pilot VSP work groups (Thurston is the other) that have been working for 2+ years on their work plan already) presented the work they have done so far on their work plan to the TP. Notes from that meeting are being developed.

FUTURE VSP TECHNICAL PANEL MEETINGS: Subsequent meetings of the TP still are on the 4th Tuesday of each month. For 2016, they will be held on the following dates: July 26, 2016, Aug 23, 2016, Sept 27, 2016, Oct 25, 2016, Nov 22, 2016, and Dec 27, 2016. The schedule will be posted on the VSP web page. Meeting notes, when available, will be posted there as well.

VSP MONTHLY CONSULTANT Q&A: The monthly teleconference/webinar for all those interested in VSP at a statewide level is coming up on **Thursday June 9**. This conference call is meant to be a Q & A on VSP for all 27 VSP opt-in counties. The purpose of the

call is to be a forum to disseminate information about VSP on a statewide level and to answer VSP related questions. It is open to any who want to phone in, but mainly directed at County staff, Conservation District staff, and consultants and facilitators responsible for VSP. The next call is **Thursday, June 9, from 9am-10am**. Please register here. Links to past webinar recordings are here (and will be posted to the VSP web page):

5-12-2016: <https://vimeo.com/166976982>

4-14-2016: <https://vimeo.com/166976742>

VSP BILLING FOR LIGHT REFRESHMENTS AT MEETINGS: The Commission's financial staff report that they have recently received reimbursement requests for light refreshments at VSP work group meetings that cannot be processed because the required list of meeting attendees did not accompany the request. Please remember, as per the VSP billing FAQ's, that **a list of meeting attendees must accompany any request for reimbursement for light refreshments at meetings**. For more information, please see the [Billing FAQ](#) or contact [Karla Heinitz](#).

ELEVEN VSP CONTRACT AMENDMENTS: The Commission is waiting on just one of the 11 Counties (Mason) who entered into the VSP contract with the Conservation Commission only through June 30, 2016 to sign the revised contract so they can be reimbursed for expenses beyond this month. The other ten counties have already signed their contract extensions and are good to go.

DOCUMENTATION OF OUTREACH ON VSP: In the May 4, 2016 VSP newsletter, I provided some guidance on outreach to the work groups. Here is the excerpt from May 4, 2016 VSP newsletter:

STRATEGIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT AT THE WORK GROUP LEVEL: "A county must confer with tribes and interested stakeholders before designating or establishing a watershed group", and "[t]he watershed group must include broad representation of key watershed stakeholders and, at a minimum, representatives of agricultural and environmental groups and tribes that agree to participate. The county should encourage existing lead entities, watershed planning units, or other integrating organizations to serve as the watershed group." RCW 36.70A.715 (2) and (3), emphasis added. Some suggested strategies for workgroup participation by environmental groups, tribes and other stakeholders:

- Engage stakeholder groups early in the process – before establishing the workgroup.
- Engagement should take the form of written communication, but can also include direct face-to-face meetings, phone calls, or other outreach methods.

- Engage stakeholder groups after the workgroup has been established. Continue to engage those stakeholders with written communication through workgroup progress updates.
- Document all attempts to communicate with those stakeholders in writing.

Building on that outreach strategy, the TP believes that outreach efforts should be documented in the VSP work plan. A section of the work plan could be about how the work group was established and efforts made to include stakeholders (see RCW 36.70A.715). In addition to the outreach requirements in RCW 36.70A.715 mentioned above, there are requirements in other sections of the VSP statute that apply ([RCW 36.70A.720](#) (b) and (d) specifically) that should also be addressed in the work plan.

A work group would want as much documentation in writing of its outreach efforts as possible. As such, letters, meeting advertisements, media articles, and documented phone calls should be kept as materials that support the work plan and work group effort. A summary of such efforts should be included in the work plan, but the background documentation materials should be retained by the work group in case they are needed in the future.

Bill Eller | beller@scc.wa.gov | 509-385-7512 | Washington State Conservation Commission