

## July 2016 VSP Newsletter

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Hi folks! This is the monthly installment of a Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) informational newsletter. Please sign up to receive the newsletter [here](#). Feedback is welcome at [beller@scc.wa.gov](mailto:beller@scc.wa.gov).

COMMISSION VSP WEB PAGE: The Commission's VSP web page is available [here](#): <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.

ECOLOGY VSP WEB PAGE: The Department of Ecology recently published a web page to help Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) counties develop, implement, and monitor their VSP work plans. You can find the web page at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/VSP/index.html>. The current focus of the web page is providing VSP counties with general information and links to mapping data on three critical areas (wetlands, critical aquifer recharge areas, and frequently flooded areas), as well as information on clean water standards and the shoreline management act. Ecology recommends you check the web page periodically for any updates regarding benchmarks and measures, and other parts of VSP plans, as opting-in counties begin developing the VSP watershed work plans.

ECOLOGY VSP STAFF LEAD: The Department of Ecology has also designated Zachery Meyer, from the Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program, Central Regional Office, as Ecology's Voluntary Stewardship Program Coordinator. He can be reached at [VSP.Coordinator@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:VSP.Coordinator@ecy.wa.gov) or 509-454-3619. Don't hesitate to contact Zach with your questions, especially since Ecology has limited capacity to engage directly in the many VSP work plans being developed this biennium. Although Ecology staff is not able to routinely attend meetings, they can provide technical support and review sections of draft VSP work plans related to Ecology's areas of expertise - wetlands, critical aquifer recharge areas, frequently flooded areas and water quality protection.

JOINT VSP TECHNICAL PANEL AND STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING ON JUNE 30, 2016: The TP and SAC met on June 30, 2016 and discussed policy, procedure and timelines for getting work plans done. They are still working on all of these topics. Notes from that meeting are being developed. 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 meetings in person.

FUTURE VSP TECHNICAL PANEL MEETINGS: Subsequent meetings of the TP still, generally, on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month. For 2016, they will be held on the following dates: Aug 23,

Sept 27, Oct 25, Nov 22 and Dec 27, 2016. NOTE: The July 26<sup>th</sup> meeting of the TP has been rescheduled and will be held in conjunction with the SAC. That meeting's date has not yet been chosen. Please check the [TP web page](#) or [SAC web page](#) for the latest information. The TP schedule will be posted on the [VSP TP 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 July 14**. 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, July 14, from 9am-10am**. Links to past webinar recordings are available on the [VSP Workgroups web page](#).

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](#).

VSP BILLING FOR TRAVEL: Travel is an allowable cost to be billed for under the VSP county contract with the Commission. Travel costs are to be documented as outlined in the FAQ on billing. Travel costs must also abide by all rules and regulations for state travel. For instance, travel must be within state per diem rates (i.e. mileage is currently at \$0.54). If there are any hotel expenses, those would also have to be within state per diem rates. Out of state travel is prohibited without prior authorization from the Commission. State travel rules and regulations are included in the Statewide Accounting & Administration Manual (SAAM), Chapter 10. A link to the SAAM is [here](#). For more information, please see the [Billing FAQ](#) or contact [Karla Heinitz](#).

VSP QUARTERLY REPORT FORM: The [VSP quarterly report form](#) is used by the Commission to partially fulfill its reporting obligations under the VSP statute. Each responsible party for each County is required to submit the forms quarterly. There have been some issues lately with using the form. The person who fills out the quarterly report is required to supply their email on the quarterly report form. Once the quarterly report form is filled out, an email goes back to that person with all the same information in it that the person supplied on the form. Please make sure you are receiving the email's back from the Commission (the sender would be the "Conservation Commission") when you submit the quarterly reports. The email will come immediately (within 10 seconds of submitting the quarterly report). If you are not receiving the emails back, please double check to ensure you entered your email address correctly and / or check your spam filter.

VSP WORKPLAN TEMPLATE: The Commission is working in conjunction with the TP and Statewide Advisory Committee (SAC) to develop guidance policies related to a successful work plan. Part of those polices may involve a template and/or checklist for counties to use. The Commission, TP, and SAC understand that each county in the VSP is unique and will need to tailor their work plan for their own unique circumstances. However, the work plan must meet certain statutory requirements in RCW 36.70A.720 and 725 in order to be successful.

**VOLUNTARY INCENTIVE PROGRAMS:** Many of you tell me that you have encountered questions about the benefits of voluntary incentive programs during your work group outreach on VSP. The Conservation Commission has created a set of talking points that you can use as a resource to discuss how voluntary incentive programs provide benefits at the local, state, and federal level, as well as to society in general. The link to the voluntary conservation programs talking points can be found [here](#).

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