GRANT COUNTY VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION
PLAN ELEMENTS

• Message
• Audience
• Process
• Timelines
• Outcomes
• Measurable/Reporting
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

• Are there critical areas in my County?
• What process will be used to determine where the critical areas are?
• Who will be responsible for determining if there is a critical area?
• Will I know if there are critical areas on my land?
• If there is a critical area, what is my responsibility?
• What will I have to do to protect critical areas? (Farming/Conservation Practices)
• Will there be an outside entity that will be looking for critical areas on my farm?
• If I participate in this program is there anonymity?
• Will there be a cost to me?
• What happens if I do nothing?
# GRANT COUNTY VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM OUTREACH PLAN

**OBJECTIVE:** Ensure outreach is provided to the agricultural community and all interested parties with interest in or impacted by the Voluntary Stewardship Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Goal</th>
<th>Next Steps/Resources</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Progress Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEVELOP VSP COMMUNICATIONS PLAN</strong></td>
<td>Workgroup meeting notices</td>
<td>Marie Lotz</td>
<td>1 week before meeting</td>
<td>Agenda/Minutes and packet information sent to list 1 week prior to scheduled meeting. Legal notices sent in local newspaper 2 weeks prior to each meeting. GCCD website lists all meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FSA Newsletter</td>
<td>Crose</td>
<td>10/14/16</td>
<td>Published Community Dates and information about VSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WSU Newsletter</td>
<td>Lotz</td>
<td>10/6/16</td>
<td>Published Community dates and information about VSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newspaper articles</td>
<td></td>
<td>5/23/16</td>
<td>Introduction VSP and let us come speak to your board. Why you need to be involved in process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GCCD Newsletter</td>
<td>Marie Lotz</td>
<td>April 2016</td>
<td>VSP information in newsletter with future articles to be added. VSP process and importance to be involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paid advertisement Community meetings</td>
<td>Marie Lotz</td>
<td>10/3/16</td>
<td>All Community Meetings advertised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GCCD Website</td>
<td>Marie Lotz</td>
<td>4/1/16</td>
<td>VSP information on website and meeting dates being updated as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postcards</td>
<td>Marie Lotz</td>
<td>9/13/16</td>
<td>Upcoming Community Meetings announced Community meetings date, place, time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEVELOP OUTREACH MATERIALS</strong></td>
<td>Develop VSP Fact Sheet</td>
<td>Crose/Crose/Lotz</td>
<td>April 2016</td>
<td>VSP Fact sheet produced and updated as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Power Point presentation for Community Group meetings</td>
<td>Crose/Lotz/Anchor</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Hartline – 10/27/16; Ephrata – 11/1/16; Moses Lake – 11/3/16 Royal Slope – 11/10/16; Warden – 11/15/16; Mattawa – 11/17/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>News Articles</td>
<td>Crose/Lotz</td>
<td>9/23/16</td>
<td>Columbia Basin Herald IFiber News</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9/22/16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newsletter VSP</td>
<td>Lotz/Crose</td>
<td>10/5/16</td>
<td>Grant County VSP Newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11/2/16</td>
<td>Grant County VSP Newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>News Reporters</td>
<td>Lotz/Crose</td>
<td>9/9/16</td>
<td>Columbia Basin Herald Reporter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9/14/16</td>
<td>IFiber News Reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEVELOP CONTACT LISTS</strong></td>
<td>Farmers and Ranchers</td>
<td>Marie Lotz</td>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>200 agriculture producers mailing addresses. Add to when new producers request to be added.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DEVELOP MATERIALS FOR OUTREACH

- Localized VSP Fact sheet
- PowerPoint presentations for targeted audiences
- News articles
- VSP website
- VSP newsletter
- Postcard to agriculture producers
- Packets of VSP information when visiting stakeholders
- Frequently Asked Questions
Voluntary Stewardship Program

Critical Areas Protection
- Wetlands
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas
- Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas
- Geologic Hazard Areas
- Frequently Flooded Areas

Ag Viability
- Maintain/enhance land production
- Reduce input costs
- Flexibility to respond to markets
- Financial incentives

Balanced Approach

Regulatory Underpinning: Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act, Etc.
TARGET AUDIENCE

TARGETED/SPECIFIC
- Communities
- Food processors
- Federal, state and local government
- Tribes
- Environmental groups

AGRICULTURE SUPPORT
- Agriculture organizations
- General public
- Ag technical support
COMMUNITY MEETINGS

• Schedule local community meetings during low production periods (winter) for the agricultural community
• Get on agenda Grower annual meetings
• Local government (city and county)
• Agencies (FSA, irrigation districts, conservation districts)
• Agriculture private-sectors (Food processors, fertilizer companies, agriculture dealers)
• Agriculture associations (Potato/Wheat/Soil/Hay/Seed/Hop/Vegetable/onion/apple/wine/dairy/beef/cattleman/fruit/sheep/horticulture)
  • NRCS Local Working Group
• Informational booth (Fairs and agriculture conventions)
ONE ON ONE

• State Representatives and Senators
• US/State Fish & Wildlife agencies
• Regional Department of Ecology
• Regional Department of Agriculture
• Tribes
• Local environmental groups
• Local Resource providers (WSU Extension, FSA, NRCS, etc.)
• Farm Bureau
• County Commissioners – Planning Department
Voluntary Stewardship Program
An alternative approach to protect critical areas on agricultural land

WHAT IS THE VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM?
The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is an optional, incentive-based approach to protecting critical areas while promoting agriculture. The VSP is allowed under the Growth Management Act as an alternative to traditional approaches to critical areas protection, such as “no touch” buffers. Twenty-eight counties have “opted in” to the VSP by nominating watersheds in their county where the program would apply. One of the benefits of the VSP planning process is that it’s a local, grassroots planning effort. Producers cannot be required to participate or take any action to enhance critical areas under VSP, and those who choose to participate do so without risk. They can withdraw at any time without penalty. The goal is to broaden participation by making VSP a producer-friendly process developed by, with and for producers. Grant County will be developing a VSP plan over the next several months. Check the Grant County Conservation District website for meeting dates and updated information at columbiabasincds.org or call the office to be added to the e-mail list.

PROGRAM GOALS

- Promote plans to protect and enhance critical areas where agricultural activities are conducted, while maintaining and improving the long-term viability of agriculture in the state of Washington and reducing the conversion of farmland to other uses.
- Focus and maximize voluntary incentive programs to encourage good riparian and ecosystem stewardship as an alternative to historic approaches used to protect critical areas.
- Leverage existing resources by relying upon existing work and plans to counties and local watersheds, as well as existing state and federal programs to the maximum extent practicable to achieve program goals.
- Encourage and foster a spirit of cooperation and partnership among county, tribal, environmental, and agricultural interests to better assure program success.
- Improve compliance with other laws designed to protect water quality and fish habitat.
- Rely upon voluntary stewardship practices as the primary method of protecting critical areas and not require the cessation of agricultural activities (RCW 36.70A.700).

WHAT ARE CRITICAL AREAS?
Critical areas include fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, wetlands, frequently flooded areas, geologically hazardous areas, and critical aquifer recharge areas used for potable water. GMA requires their protection while managing growth and resource activities.

1. **Fish and wildlife habitat areas:** Land and waters managed to maintain populations of fish and wildlife species in suitable habitats within their natural geographic distribution over the long term within connected habitat blocks and open spaces. Includes: Ranges and habitat elements where federal and state listed endangered, threatened and sensitive species have a primary association. Does not include: (when no salmonids are present) Artificial features such as irrigation delivery systems, irrigation infrastructure, irrigation canals, or drainage ditches maintained by port district or an irrigation district or company.

2. **Wetlands:** Areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater supporting a prevalence of vegetation adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Includes: Swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.

3. **Critical aquifers recharge areas:** Areas with critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water, including areas where an aquifer that is a source of drinking water is vulnerable to contamination that would affect the potability of the water, or is susceptible to reduced recharge.

4. **Geologically hazardous areas:** Areas susceptible to erosion, sliding, earthquake, or other geological events, where development is not suitable due to public health or safety concerns.

5. **Frequently flooded areas:** Lands in the floodplain subject to at least a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year, or within areas subject to flooding due to high groundwater. Includes: Streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, and areas where high groundwater forms ponds on the ground surface.

Grant County Conservation District
1107 S Juniper Dr, Moses Lake, WA 98837
509-765-9618
www.columbiabasincds.org
TA – FA Assistance

VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM
ASSISTANCE
TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL

TECHNICAL
• Private sector
• State agencies
• Federal agencies
• Organizations (Bass Club, Walleye Club Pheasants 4Ever, etc.)

FINANCIAL
• Conservation district programs
• NRCS
• FSA
• Department of Ecology
• Department of Agriculture
TRACKING AND REPORTING

- Develop an implementation plan
- Establish key contacts
- Communication
“This is a voluntary program until nobody volunteers.”

Harold Crose