

March 2017 VSP Newsletter

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 - please direct it to [Bill Eller](#).

SUBMITTAL OF VSP COUNTY WORK PLANS IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT: VSP work plans are beginning to come to the Conservation Commission for consideration by the Technical Panel. The Technical Panel has just 45 days to complete their review. To help them facilitate their review, please submit your county VSP work plan and supporting materials to the Conservation Commission electronically.

We ask that VSP work groups please submit work plans to the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) in electronic format. This allows the SCC to quickly post the plans and other supporting documents on our website for public review.

Some work plan files will be very large, exceeding the 20MB limit for email attachments. We ask that work groups upload files to a cloud-based file storage system (such as Dropbox or Google Docs) and submit the file link to the SCC. If you cannot use a cloud-based system for submittal, please save work plan documents on a thumb drive and mail it to the SCC main office (PO Box 47221, Olympia, WA 98504-7721). Unfortunately we cannot accept paper documents. Please use this form [[County VSP Work Plan Submittal Form](#)] to choose cloud-based (electronic uploading), thumb drive (through the mail), or both to submit work plans. The work plan submittal form is also located on the [Commission's VSP web page](#) under the "What's new" heading.

The Commission will provide the materials to the Technical Panel as soon as possible after receipt from the County work group. Please contact [Bill Eller](#) at 509-385-7512 or [Alicia McClendon](#) at 360-407-6200 to coordinate submittal.

VSP WORK PLAN PUBLIC COMMENT: The public is invited to comment on any VSP work plan submitted to the VSP Technical Panel within 14 days of submittal. The public can use this public comment [form](#) to capture any comments made. The Technical Panel will be provided with any comments received at the end of that period. The form is available on the Commission's VSP web page [here](#).

VSP AT THE SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE: Commission staff will present an update on the VSP during a work session of the Washington Legislature's Senate Agriculture, Water, Trade & Economic Development Committee on Thursday, March 9, 2017 at 8:00 am. The meeting will be at Senate Hearing Rm 1, J.A. Cherberg Building, Olympia, WA.

VSP WEB PAGE - REVISED: The [Commission's VSP web page](#) has been substantially revised in order to be more user-friendly and to ease the access of information. Please take a look at it [here](#). Feedback is welcome - please direct it to [Bill Eller](#).

JOINT MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL PANEL AND STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE: The VSP Technical Panel (TP) and Statewide Advisory Committee (SAC) met on February 1, 2017 in Lacey. Please check the TP and SAC web pages for more details. For those who missed that meeting, a recording has been posted [here](#).

The next joint meeting of the TP and SAC will be Friday, March 10, 2017, from 9am-3pm, though likely it will end in the early afternoon. The in-person meeting locations will be in Lacey and Colville, and the meeting will also be available by webinar. Full details will be available on the [TP web page](#) or [SAC web page](#). The agenda is [here](#).

This meeting will be available by webinar. Remember, you'll need to register for the webinar and then add the log in information to your calendar after registering. If you will not be attending in person, please register for VSP Technical Panel & Statewide Advisory Committee meeting on Mar 10, 2017 9:00 AM PST at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6708985037769330946>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

VSP STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP: Please welcome a new member to the VSP Statewide Advisory Committee (SAC) - Commissioner Ron Wesen from Skagit County. Commissioner Wesen brings his experience from Skagit County to the SAC to fill one of the county government seats on the SAC, and we welcome him to his two-year term! We also welcome back Commissioner Wes McCart from Stevens County to the other county government seat - thanks for your continued service Commissioner McCart!

VSP TECHNICAL PANEL AND STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: Meeting minutes for both the VSP Technical Panel (TP) and VSP Statewide Advisory Committee (SAC) can be found on their web pages - [here](#) for the TP and [here](#) for the SAC. For meeting attendees, please contact us with any corrections, changes, or clarifications.

VSP MONTHLY CONSULTANT Q&A: The next Q&A webinar for all those interested in VSP at a statewide level is coming up on **Thursday, March 16 from 9am-9:30am**. Please register for Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Monthly Q&A on Mar 16, 2017 9:00 AM PDT at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7634968442042653697>

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.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Links to past webinar recordings are available on the [VSP Workgroups web page](#).

VSP NEWSLETTER: The Commission is discontinuing VSP email lists outside of this Newsletter subscription service. The email lists are being retired so that we can focus all Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) notices, information, and news through the GovDelivery system and VSP Newsletter. This includes the web meeting notices for the VSP monthly Q&A calls (which have routinely been appearing in the VSP Newsletter anyway).

If you have already signed up for GovDelivery and the Newsletter (which most of you have or you would not be reading this Newsletter), there is nothing more you need to do other than manage your subscription, which you can do [here](#). We suggest that you change the settings on your subscription so that you receive emails on VSP immediately. To change the settings on your subscription, please login [here](#) and use the “Preferences” tab to choose the option “*Send updates immediately by email*” in the “Email Delivery Preference” section.

If you have not signed up for GovDelivery and the VSP Newsletter (which some of you have not and are reading this Newsletter at our VSP web page), please do so at this [link](#). You will be able to manage your subscription through the Commission’s GovDelivery system. We recommend setting your subscription to receive emails about VSP immediately, so that you receive the email as soon as it is produced by the Commission. You can do that initially when you create your GovDelivery subscription or by logging into the GovDelivery system [here](#) and use the “Preferences” tab to choose the option “*Send updates immediately by email*” in the “Email Delivery Preference” section.

VSP AND THE BUDGET: We have become aware of a number of questions and concerns about the VSP budget. Here are some important points to remember:

For the current fiscal year (July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017) which ends on June 30, 2017, counties have been allocated up \$150,000 to support their VSP work plan efforts. One question counties have is, how much, if any of the current fiscal years’ funding can be pushed forward into the next biennium? The answer is none.

Another question is, what happens if, after June 30, 2017 there’s no additional funding for VSP? The answer is that the Commission will need to make a determination at that time whether the counties have adequate funding for VSP and if not they need to implement one of the four options specified in statute. See [RCW 36.70A.735\(2\)\(c\)](#).

The failure by the Legislature to adequately fund VSP would affect all 27 counties that have opted in-to VSP as per the provisions of RCW 36.70A.735(2)(c). Therefore, it is important for counties to inform their local legislators (some of whom may not be aware of the effect of inadequate funding of VSP on their own local county) of the operation of the statute in this instance.

VSP VOUCHERING: Remember, the Commission’s agency policy requires monthly reimbursement requests for all VSP contracts (as well as any other contracts). However, we have noticed that some counties are sending in reimbursement requests quarterly. Monthly reimbursement requests allow entities to stay on top of expenses and contract end dates. So, please **remember to voucher monthly** for VSP expenses.

VSP BILLING FOR LIGHT REFRESHMENTS AT MEETINGS: Light Refreshments include coffee and/or any non-alcoholic beverages (e.g. tea, soft drinks, juice or milk) and **between meal snacks** (e.g. doughnuts, sweet rolls, nuts, or fruit and cheese) at meetings, conferences, or project tours. Reimbursements for light refreshments **MUST** include a receipt for goods, a list of attendees, and a copy of the meeting/event agenda. Without this documentation, reimbursement **will not** be provided. **Pizza, sandwiches, etc., are not considered light refreshments.** 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 \$0.535). 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](#). Remember - travel costs will count directly against the amount of funds you have available for VSP planning and implementation. For more information, please see the [Billing FAQ](#) or contact [Karla Heinitz](#).

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