

VSP WORK PLAN PRACTICE POINTERS UPDATED FEBRUARY 2018

The following practice pointers were identified by the Voluntary Stewardship Program's Technical Panel and Statewide Advisory Committee after reflection on the VSP work plan approval process during March 2017-July 2017, and updated in early 2018. The pointers can be used by VSP county work groups to help in the creation and successful submittal of their work plans to the Technical Panel. They are provided in no particular order of importance.

- Provide a cover sheet or a cross-walk table with the work plan that lists each element of RCW 36.70A.720 (1) (a)-(l) and where to find it in the work plan.
- The work plan should explain how the July 22, 2011 baseline was established.
- The work plan should explain monitoring, adaptive management, and reporting requirements.
- Identify and explain adaptive management thresholds.
- Identify how active and inactive VPS participants (or direct and indirect - those participating in VSP and those not) will be measured, expected numbers of each, how those participants will interact with the work plan, and how monitoring for those participants will inform the goals and benchmarks of the work plan.
- Datasets used for monitoring purposes should be repeatable for subsequent analysis.
- Set out how agricultural practices will protect critical area functions and how that compares to practices used at the 2011 baseline.
- For ease of reference, please provide sequential page numbers and / or line numbering for the work plan and all appendices.
- Relate monitoring goals and benchmarks to data collected during monitoring.
- Identify the data and other plans and include why (or why not) that data or plans were incorporated into the work plan when attempting to comply with the directive in RCW 36.70A.720 (1) (a) to *“review and incorporate applicable*

water quality, watershed management, farmland protection, and species recovery data and plans.”

- Include actual numbers for “(i) participation activities and implementation of the voluntary stewardship plans and projects; (ii) stewardship activities; and (iii) the effects on critical areas and agriculture relevant to the protection and enhancement benchmarks developed for the watershed” when attempting to comply with the directive in RCW 36.70A.720 (1) (i).
- If actual numbers cannot be provided, then a detailed narrative describing the baseline monitoring for each should be provided in the work plan.
- Identify the audience the work plan is written for and be sure to write the work plan to meet the needs of that audience.
- When attempting to comply with the directive in RCW 36.70A.720 (1) (l), to “satisfy any other reporting requirements of the program,” include a section or statement in the work plan that states that this will be done.
- Be sure to review any policy advisories that the Commission created with the VSP Statewide Advisory Committee. Make sure the policies and procedures set out in those policy advisories are addressed in your work plan. The Advisories can be found on the Commission’s [SAC VSP web page](#). So far, they include:
 - [01-17](#) - Confidentiality of Individual Stewardship Plans
 - [02-17](#) - Submittal Deadlines for Work Plans
 - [03-18](#) - Roles and Responsibilities during VSP implementation.
- When attempting to describe how the work plan can assist state agencies in their monitoring programs, ask yourself, “What would be helpful for state agencies to do? How can state agencies help?”
- Protection benchmarks should be as narrow and defined as possible. Remember that every goal doesn’t have to be met, but you should be hitting benchmarks.
- Clearly describe the work group creation process and how clarify that required stakeholders diverse stakeholders were contacted and representative of the stakeholders in the county. The work 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 and RCW 36.70A.720 (1) (b).

- The Technical Panel provides the following uniform definitions for reference throughout their review process. These terms are not defined in statute, but the Technical Panel wants to provide guidance on the following concepts:
 - Goal: the end toward which effort is directed; aim.
 - Objective: something toward which effort is directed; an aim, goal, or end of action. Please note the similarity to goal above. Generally, this is the description of “how” the goal will be achieved.
 - Benchmark: something that serves as a standard by which others may be measured or judged; a point of reference from which measurements may be made. Benchmarks typically contain numbers for measurement, not action verbs, unless the action is in reference to a number.
 - Indicator: a thing, especially a trend or fact that indicates the state or level of something. Note the difference between indicator and benchmark. An indicator is a thing; a benchmark is a number.