Nominated Watersheds (WRIA)

Nisqually (11)
Deschutes (13)
Chehalis (22/23)
Kennedy-Goldsborough (14)
Part 1. Process Overview
Timeline

- Funding Received: January 2014

- Stakeholder Outreach: Spring 2014
- First workgroup meeting: May 28, 2014

- VSP Work Plan Development
  - Workgroup monthly meetings
  - May 2014 to March 2017

- Draft work plan: June 30, 2015
- Funding gap until January 2016
- 2 year 9 month Deadline (+6 month gap)
- March 2017
Workgroup Organization

Workgroup Membership

- Agricultural producers and citizens
- WA State Farm Bureau
- Thurston County Farm Bureau
- Olympia Beekeepers Association
- Taylor Shellfish
- Center for Natural Lands Management
- South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group
- WA State Dept. of Ecology
- WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
- WA State University Extension
- WA State Department of Agriculture NRCS
- Thurston Conservation District
- Thurston Regional Planning Council
- Chehalis Tribe
- Nisqually Tribe

VSP Workgroup

Workgroup Subcommittees

- Ag Viability
- Technical Team

Washington Conservation Commission & Technical Panel
Products in Progress

**Statutory**
- Work Plan Draft
- Watershed Current Conditions Reports
- Stewardship Plan Checklist
  - Includes Tech Assistance tracking tools
- Monitoring & Adaptive Management
  - Benchmarks and Metrics
  - Adaptive Management Matrix

**Informational**
- Mapping
  - Critical Areas
  - Agricultural Activities – Intersection
- Appendices
- FAQs
Part 2. What’s in the Draft Work Plan?
## Work Plan Contents

### WORK PLAN CHAPTERS

1. Introduction
2. Agriculture & Critical Areas Context
3. Overarching Goals, Benchmarks & Measurable Objectives
4. Monitoring, Reporting, and Adaptive Management
5. VSP Implementation
6. VSP Work Plan Approval Process
7. Request for Work Plan Approval

### APPENDICES

| A. | VSP Work Plan Bibliography |
| B. | VSP Individual Stewardship Plan Checklist |
| C. | Critical Areas Maps |
| D. | Estimated Agricultural Activities Map |
| E. | Agriculture and Critical Areas Intersection Maps |
| F. | Thurston County Overview—Background on Farmland and Critical Areas Protection |
| G. | Watershed Plans and Baseline Conditions |
| H. | Voluntary Incentive Programs and Regulatory Backstops Incorporated |
| I. | Critical Area Functions and Agricultural Activities Background |
| J. | Conservation Practices |
| K. | NRCS Process and Standards |
| L. | Confidentiality and Disclosure of Individual Stewardship Plans |
| M. | Agricultural viability |
Chapter 1. Introduction

- Purpose and Goals
- Overview and History
- Definitions
- Plan Development Details
- Workgroup Structure and Duties
- Work Plan Approval Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Section</th>
<th>Work Plan Requirements (RCW 36.70A.720(1) a through l unless stated)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect Critical Areas Test</td>
<td>RCW 36.70A.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain and Enhance Ag Viability Test</td>
<td>RCW 36.70A.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Protection and Enhancement Goals and Benchmarks</td>
<td>RCW 36.70A.720 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background Information, Other Plans, and Regulations</td>
<td>a, h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baselines and Measurable Benchmarks</td>
<td>c, e, i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
<td>d, f, g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring, Reporting, and Adaptive Management</td>
<td>j, k, l</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 2. Agriculture and Critical Areas Context

2.1: Agriculture Context in Thurston County

2.2: Critical Areas Context in Thurston County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76,638 acres</td>
<td>54,326 acres</td>
<td>117,135 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Total Economic Value: $122,423,000
  - Cropland (40%) $48,843,000
  - Livestock (60%) $73,581,000

See Also:
Appendix F. Thurston County Overview
Appendix G. Watershed Plans and Baseline Conditions
## Chapter 2. Agriculture and Critical Areas Context

### 2.3: Intersection: Agricultural Activities and Critical Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Area</th>
<th>Agricultural Activities Total Intersection Acreage</th>
<th>Percentage of Critical Area that Intersects with Ag Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>117,135</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak &amp; Grasslands</td>
<td>6,415</td>
<td>5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WNHP</td>
<td>14,061</td>
<td>12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie Soils</td>
<td>48,068</td>
<td>41 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gopher Soils</td>
<td>63,129</td>
<td>54 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Habitat Species Areas</td>
<td>30,173</td>
<td>26 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geologic Hazard Areas</strong></td>
<td>12,197</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas</strong></td>
<td>106,916</td>
<td>91 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 1 – Extreme Sensitivity</td>
<td>78,313</td>
<td>67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 2 – High Sensitivity</td>
<td>13,003</td>
<td>11 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 3 – Moderate Sensitivity</td>
<td>15,599</td>
<td>13 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequently Flooded Areas (FEMA Flood Zones)</strong></td>
<td>17,990</td>
<td>15 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.2% Annual Flood Chance</td>
<td>2,390</td>
<td>2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1% Annual Flood Chance</td>
<td>15,600</td>
<td>13 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wetlands</strong></td>
<td>15,511</td>
<td>13 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Greatest Areas of Intersect: Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas, Fish & Wildlife Habitat
Chapter 3. Overarching Goals, Benchmarks & Measurable Objectives

3.1: Measurable Objectives for Each Critical Area and Agriculture Intersection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>1. Baseline critical area conditions (functions and values) are protected (no net loss) or enhanced (net gain) in each watershed through voluntary measures in areas of intersection with agricultural activities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Areas Measurement and Monitoring</th>
<th>a. Repeat baseline critical area assessment for each reporting period to identify significant changes in the extent, amount, or quality of critical areas intersecting agriculture.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Measures of agricultural activities that have implemented conservation practices in an Individual Stewardship Plan for the protection and/or enhancement of critical areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Geologic Hazards

**Purpose—Agriculture and Geologic Hazard Areas**

1. Avoid and minimize impacts of erosion and landslide hazards on stream quality, important fish and wildlife habitats, and protect areas designated or with high potential for marine aquaculture activities from degradation by upland agriculture uses.
2. Avoid and minimize damage to agricultural activities due to erosion, landslides or other naturally occurring geologic event.

**Geologic Hazard Areas Benchmark**

CA B-2. At each five year benchmark reporting period, baseline conditions of geologically hazardous areas are protected or enhanced in areas with agricultural activities.

**Geologic Hazard Area Measurable Objectives**

Promote and monitor practices that:

- **CA Obj-1.** Maintain or reduce erosion and sediment loads. Focus efforts in watersheds with water quality impairments and TMDL allocations for sediment.
- **CA Obj-2.** Stabilize steep slopes.
- **CA Obj-3.** Manage risk of landslides.
- **CA Obj-4.** Avoid compaction of soil.
- **CA Obj-5.** Avoid disturbing top and toe of steep slopes.
- **CA Obj-6.** Avoid irrigating unstable slopes.
Fish and Wildlife Habitat Areas

Purpose—Agriculture and Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas
1. Preserve habitat adequate to support viable populations of native fish and wildlife, protect the functions and values of priority and locally important habitat, and provide for connectivity among habitats.
2. Encourage non-regulatory methods of habitat retention through education, incentives, and other programs.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Benchmark
CA B-3. At each five year benchmark reporting period, baseline conditions of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas are protected or enhanced in areas with agricultural activities.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Measurable Objectives
Promote and monitor practices that:
CA Obj-7. Maintain or increase percent cover and/or acreage of suitable native plant communities in areas with agricultural activities. This includes recognizing individual or unique habitats or populations and tailoring appropriate conservation practices and stewardship activities to protect and/or enhance those functions and values.
CA Obj-8. Maintain or increase stream miles or total area of riparian areas. Focus efforts in watersheds with water quality impairments (most current list of EPA approved water quality assessments of category 4 and 5 waters).
CA Obj-9. Replace culverts and other salmon passage barriers on private agricultural lands and expand salmonid access to high priority habitat.
CA Obj-10. Maintain or increase acreage of functional habitat for locally important, priority, and rare species. Focus on preserving the functions and values of priority habitats, including but not limited to: Oregon white oak, prairie, and riparian areas.
Wetlands

Purpose—Agriculture and Wetlands
1. Achieve no net loss of wetlands (maintain baseline conditions), avoid and minimize adverse impacts, and increase the quality and functions of wetlands through voluntary measures. Establish wetland protection areas based on the wetland’s functions and values, sensitivity to impacts, rarity, and site conditions, and maintain wetland riparian area functions.
2. Encourage agricultural uses and activities in wetlands and riparian areas in a way that will avoid or minimize potential impacts.

Wetlands Benchmark
CA B-4. At each five year benchmark reporting period, baseline conditions of wetlands are protected or enhanced in areas with agricultural activities.

Wetland Measurable Objectives
Promote and monitor practices that:
CA Obj-11. Maintain (no net loss) wetland functions and values as rated in the 2014 Washington State Wetland Rating System (as revised).
CA Obj-12. Avoid unmitigated alterations to wetlands.
CA Obj-13. Maintain or increase suitable native plant communities in wetlands and associated riparian protection areas.
CA Obj-14. Implement conservation practices for wetland management, creation, or enhancement.
Frequently Flooded Areas

**Purpose—Agriculture and Frequently Flooded Areas**

1. Preserve natural flood control, stormwater storage and drainage, and maintain the linkages of the stream to its floodplain, including flood channels or high-flow channels.
2. Minimize flood damage to agricultural properties and operations.

**Frequently Flooded Areas Benchmark**

CA B-5. At each five year benchmark reporting period, baseline conditions of frequently flooded areas are protected or enhanced in areas with agricultural activities.

**Frequently Flooded Areas Measurable Objectives**

Promote and monitor practices that:

- **CA Obj-15.** Maintain or reduce impervious surfaces.
- **CA Obj-16.** Avoid permanent unmitigated alterations to floodplain areas that increase net floodwater displacement in the watershed.
- **CA Obj-17.** Where changes are necessary, follow Ch. 14.38 (as per Ch. 17.15.925 (D)).
- **CA Obj-18.** Maintain and/or enhance floodplain area functions and connectivity of streams to their floodplains.
Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas

Purpose—Agriculture and Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas
1. Maintain groundwater recharge and prevent the degradation of groundwater resources. Maintain the delicate balance between surface water and groundwater in order to preserve essential biological, physical, and geochemical functions.
2. Protect vital groundwater resources that serve as the primary water source for agricultural activities and balance competing needs for water while preserving natural functions and processes.

Critical Aquifer Recharge Benchmark
CA B-6. At each five year benchmark reporting period, baseline conditions of critical aquifer recharge areas are protected or enhanced in areas with agricultural activities.

Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas Measurable Objectives
Promote and monitor practices that:
CA Obj-19. Avoid or minimize the risks of ground water contamination from agricultural activities, consistent with state water quality standards.
CA Obj-20. Maintain or improve groundwater recharge and ensure sufficient infiltration of water at the land’s surface to sustain aquifers, maintain base flows in fish-bearing streams, and maintain wetland water levels.
### Chapter 3

#### 3.2: Participation and Stewardship Activities (RCW 36.70A.720(1)(c))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Promote participation and stewardship activities by agricultural operators conducting commercial and noncommercial agricultural activities in order to meet the protection and enhancement benchmarks.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Participation Objectives** | 1. Promote producer participation and progress toward meeting the protection and enhancement benchmarks of this work plan with a proactive conservation program delivery process.  
2. Provide adequate technical assistance and information to agricultural producers and operators, encouraging the protection and enhancement of critical areas through voluntary measures.  
3. Increase direct participation over 10 years by commercial and noncommercial agricultural operators.  
4. Maintain or increase indirect participation over 10 years by commercial and noncommercial agricultural operators in conservation practices on agricultural land (including but not limited to those listed in Appendix J and tracked in Table 1: Restoration and Conservation Actions since 2011 in Appendix F). |
### Chapter 3

3.3: Suggested Activities to Maintain and Enhance Agricultural Viability

- Definition, Objectives and Measurements/Indicators
- Incentives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag Viability Activity 1</td>
<td>Priority funding made available by federal, state, and local sources to support VSP participation by agricultural operators. VSP participants could score higher on applications for conservation practice incentives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag Viability Activity 2</td>
<td>Provide information to agricultural operators about available tax incentives, financial assistance programs, farm bill programs, and other information related to agricultural viability (i.e. through technical assistance and an online clearinghouse for resources and info). Seek new tax incentives by the state legislature that recognize VSP participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag Viability Activity 3</td>
<td>Increased marketing opportunities for VSP participation through recognition, branding/certification, and individual farm signs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag Viability Activity 4</td>
<td>Ensure the County Comprehensive Plan, zoning, and other codes provide strong support for agricultural infrastructure and operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag Viability Activity 5</td>
<td>Regulatory reform: Promote reforms that align Thurston County policies and regulations with VSP objectives to maintain and improve the long-term viability of agriculture. Remove identified threats and barriers that inhibit the viability of agricultural operations. Evaluate fees applied to agricultural activities and identify fees that should be eliminated or modified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag Viability Activity 6</td>
<td>Establish a Committee (or include in existing Agricultural Advisory Committee) to advise Thurston County Commissioners and other agencies on measures to promote agricultural viability and develop a process to consider needed regulatory reforms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag Viability Activity 7</td>
<td>Fund and implement an Agricultural Liaison position with a clear mission to promote and protect agricultural viability and provide resources and information on federal, state, and local laws that affect agricultural activities and critical areas in relation to farming.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4. Monitoring and Adaptive Management

4.1: Monitoring VSP Baselines
4.2: Monitoring Baselines for Participation
4.3: Monitoring VSP Effects on Critical Area Baselines
4.4: Monitoring VSP Effects on Agricultural Viability Baselines
4.5: Reporting and Adaptive Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Performance Metric</th>
<th>Monitoring Method</th>
<th>Adaptive Management Action Threshold</th>
<th>Adaptive Management Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental conditions desired from project</td>
<td>What will be measured to show progress toward objective or if adaptive management is needed</td>
<td>How the performance metric will be measured</td>
<td>Project result that, if achieved, must be addressed with an action</td>
<td>Action that will be taken if threshold is reached</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA B-1. Baseline critical area conditions (functions and values) are protected (no net loss) or enhanced (net gain) in each watershed through voluntary measures in areas of intersection with agricultural activities</td>
<td>CA M-a. Repeat baseline critical area assessment for each reporting period to identify significant changes in the extent, amount, or quality of critical areas intersecting agriculture.</td>
<td>Measured on the watershed level (i.e. by the agricultural liaison).</td>
<td>Decline below the 2011 baseline OR trend of decline in critical area assessments (extent, amount and quality) for 3 out of 5 years</td>
<td>Assess issue based on metric and determine appropriate action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA M-b. Measure of agricultural activities that have implemented conservation practices for the protection and/or enhancement of critical areas.</td>
<td>Measured on the parcel level by the technical assistance provider and reported in the aggregate for each watershed.</td>
<td>Decline below the 2011 baseline OR trend of decline for 3 out of 5 years</td>
<td>Assess issue based on metric and determine appropriate action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VSP Implementation – Stewardship Plan

**WATERING FACILITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I DO THIS</th>
<th>I’M INTERESTED IN THIS</th>
<th>NOT APPLICABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definition.** A watering facility is a means of providing drinking water to livestock or wildlife.

**Purpose.** To store or provide designated access to drinking water for livestock or wildlife to:

- Supply daily water requirements
- Improve animal distribution
- Provide a water source that is an alternative to a sensitive resource

- Technical Providers work with producers to identify, document, and implement conservation practices
- Becomes individual VSP Stewardship Plan in RCW 36.70A.750 (1)
- Confidentiality important
Stewardship Plan – Process & Tracking

1. **Administrative** – Checklist, signature sheets, table of contents.

2. **Narrative Inventory** – A plan summary and consideration for the five critical areas with definition of each area, current inventory, and management plan.

3. **Maps** – A selection of critical areas maps and final plan map.


5. **Worksheets** – Includes resource concerns checklist and supporting risk assessments.

6. **Additional Information** – All additional information both for landowner reference and supporting documentation.

**STEP 2: IDENTIFY CONSERVATION PRACTICES TO MEET OBJECTIVES**

Please briefly describe your operation and any goals and objectives you may have for management:


Identify conservation practices that you already implement or that you are interested in discussing with your technical assistance provider. The examples in the tables below are only a few of the commonly used conservation practices that might be implemented in a Stewardship Plan. Use the examples below to determine which conservation practices you are already doing or would like to implement to meet the VSF objectives.

**COMMON CONSERVATION PRACTICES**

Several common conservation practices are listed below. For more information, criteria, and other practices please use the link in the footnote below to view the conservation practice standard in the Field Office Technical Guides.

**ACCESS CONTROL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I DO THIS</th>
<th>I'M INTERESTED IN THIS</th>
<th>NOT APPLICABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definition:** The temporary or permanent exclusion of animals, people, vehicles, and/or equipment from an area.

**Purpose:** Achieve and maintain desired resource conditions by monitoring and managing the intensity of use by animals, people, vehicles, and/or equipment in coordination with the application schedule of practices, measures, and activities specified in the conservation plan.
Chapter 5. Plan Approval Process and Timeline

- Submit the full work plan for technical panel review by March 1, 2017
  - Approval Deadline July 2017

- Begin Outreach to farmers
  - If work plan approved (as early as April 26, 2017).
  - Outreach and participation methods, as identified in the Work Plan

- Begin Implementation – TCD using Stewardship Plans
  - Farmers can use the Stewardship Plan to begin VSP process
  - TCD will verify critical areas and conservation practices

- July 2019 – first 5 year reporting period (5 years after receipt of funding)
  - Every 2 years: The work group will report on benchmarks at the end of each biennium
  - Every five years: work group will report – determine next steps to adaptively management

- July 2024 – ten year reporting
  - The work group reports on whether or not the benchmarks have been met at the ten year reporting period
Appendices

A. VSP Work Plan Bibliography
B. VSP Individual Stewardship Plan Checklist
C. Critical Areas Maps
D. Estimated Agricultural Activities Map
E. Agriculture and Critical Areas Intersection Maps
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Questions?

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