

BENTON COUNTY VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Monitoring | June 27, 2016

This Chapter presents a preliminary draft monitoring approach. It should be reviewed together with the proposed Benchmarks in Chapter 7 and the preliminary Stewardship Checklist and Adaptive Management Matrix.

8.0 MONITORING, REPORTING, AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

The VSP Work Group is responsible for ongoing monitoring, reporting, and adaptive management of the Work Plan implementation. [RCW 36.70A.720](#) describes the schedule and actions the Work Group must follow during implementation of the plan.

(b)(i) Not later than five years after the receipt of funding for a participating watershed, the watershed group must report to the director and the county on whether it has met the work plan's protection and enhancement goals and benchmarks.

(ii) If the watershed group determines the protection goals and benchmarks have been met, and the director concurs under RCW [36.70A.730](#), the watershed group shall continue to implement the work plan.

(iii) If the watershed group determines the protection goals and benchmarks have not been met, it must propose and submit to the director an adaptive management plan to achieve the goals and benchmarks that were not met. If the director does not approve the adaptive management plan under RCW [36.70A.730](#), the watershed is subject to RCW [36.70A.735](#).

(iv) If the watershed group determines the enhancement goals and benchmarks have not been met, the watershed group must determine what additional voluntary actions are needed to meet the benchmarks, identify the funding necessary to implement these actions, and implement these actions when funding is provided. (RCW 36.70A.720)

The statute further requires reporting, evaluation and, if necessary, adaptive management at “ten years after the receipt of funding... and every five years thereafter.” Section 7 identifies specific benchmarks and monitoring and measuring efforts for each.

Monitoring Tools

Three components of monitoring, reporting, and adaptive management have been developed with this Work Plan, as illustrated with Figure 6, and described below:

- **Stewardship Checklist:** The Stewardship Checklist serves as an individual stewardship plan referenced in the VSP law to help each farmer contribute to the goals and benchmarks of the Benton County VSP Work Plan. The results of the checklist regarding conservation practices installed post July 2011, and new desired conservation practices are linked to each type of critical area. Technical assistance providers (e.g. BCD, NRCS, and WSU-Extension) would be available to go over the checklist with the producers to provide advice and potential funding resources. See Appendix X.

the results of each checklist will be input (with anonymity) into the Technical Assistance Provider Tracking Tool below.

- Technical Assistance Provider Tracking Tool:** A Technical Assistance Provider Tracking Tool will be developed in Survey Monkey based on the goals and benchmarks of this Work Plan and the Stewardship Checklist following Work Group review and input. It would allow the technical assistance providers to enter information about conservation practices or enhancement/restoration projects that are installed voluntarily by VSP participants. Technical assistance providers would enter information into the cloud-based survey in the field or any location. In this way, multiple technical assistance providers can enter information, ongoing tracking and regular reporting is possible. Annually, the results of the tracking tool can be output and provided in a report to the Watershed Work Group about the extent and type of conservation practices included, and general information on the basin where the practice is occurring.
- Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Adaptive Management Matrix:** This matrix is based on an example provided by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife representative to the Technical Panel as a form that would ensure tracking of benchmarks, thresholds at which a closer look would be taken if it appears a benchmark is not being met, responsibilities, and potential funding. Based on Chapter 7, the adaptive management matrix lists each critical area goal and benchmark, voluntary enhancement measure, and agricultural viability aim [pending], and identifies more specifically: what will be measured (performance metric), what results will produce an action (adaptive management action threshold), responsibilities for monitoring, and frequency of monitoring. Appendix X contains a draft matrix. The Work Group is encouraged to review the Adaptive Management Matrix to consider the number of benchmarks, the level of effort to implement them, and priorities given the likely constrained resources for implementation.

Figure 1. Monitoring Program Steps



Monitoring Roles, Responsibilities, and Timeline

As described in Chapter 6, the Benton Conservation District (BCD) is the lead Technical Service provider. Benton County Planning Department (BCPD) will serve as administrator of the work plan monitoring and implementation. Figure 7 illustrates ongoing, annual, and biennial and five-year activities by the BCD and other implementers. Details are included in the Adaptive Management Matrix in Appendix X.

- **Ongoing** activities by BCD include conservation practices and voluntary enhancement with willing landowners and VSP Participation events.
- **Annually**, XXX will evaluate the Tracking Tool statistical output to describe conservation practices and voluntary enhancement projects entered during the prior year and present it to the Work Group. Annually, XXX will prepare an annual report describing VSP implementation based on the technical assistance agreements with willing landowners and any other grants or programs that implement VSP efforts.
- **Biennially and every five years**, XXX would conduct mapping and aerial interpretation, surveys, and convene an expert panel on fish and wildlife conditions.

Figure 2. Adaptive Monitoring Matrix



Ongoing

- Conservation Practices and Voluntary Enhancement Projects with Willing Landowners
- VSP Participation Events / Activities



Annual Monitoring

Type 1

- Tracking Tool: Conservation Practices and Voluntary Enhancement Projects
- Annual Agency Reports



Biennial and 5-Year Monitoring

Type 2

- Mapping & Aerial Interpretation
- Producer Survey (Field Sample, Phone, Online)
- Convene Expert Panel (On a Critical Area System)

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