

"It is the intent of chapter 360, Laws of 2011 to: (a) Promote plans to protect and enhance critical areas within the area 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 uses¹..."

AGENDA
Benton County Voluntary Stewardship Program
MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2016
1:30PM – 3:30PM

Benton PUD - Prosser Business Office
250 N. Gap Road, Prosser, WA 99350

1. Open the meeting – Facilitator, All
2. Public Comment
3. Strategy for completion (20 minutes)
The work group has now discussed all the major sections of the workplan, and drafts of these sections have been prepared. How do workgroup members want to proceed to get to a June workplan completion?
4. Agricultural Viability and Economy (40 minutes)
Discuss agricultural viability definition, agricultural economic chapter, and address agricultural viability aims for plan.
5. Outreach: Participation Objectives (30 minutes)
Discussion at the last meeting indicated a desire to have metrics for outreach. The updated outreach chapter includes some proposed metrics, as well as general updates.
6. Stewardship Checklist (30 minutes)
At the last meeting, we reviewed the two versions of the stewardship plan checklist – a short and long-form. The group discussed checklists and how to simplify outreach and encourage interest.
7. Next steps – Facilitator
8. Adjourn

Attachments: See download site to read and download materials

¹ RCW 36.70A.700(2)(a)

Contents of a VSP Work Plan
RCW 36.70A.720 (1)

(1) A watershed group designated by a county under RCW 36.70A.715 must develop a work plan to protect critical areas while maintaining the viability of agriculture in the watershed. The work plan must include goals and benchmarks for the protection and enhancement of critical areas. In developing and implementing the work plan, the watershed group must:

(a) Review and incorporate applicable water quality, watershed management, farmland protection, and species recovery data and plans;

(b) Seek input from tribes, agencies, and stakeholders;

(c) Develop goals for participation by agricultural operators conducting commercial and noncommercial agricultural activities in the watershed necessary to meet the protection and enhancement benchmarks of the work plan;

(d) Ensure outreach and technical assistance is provided to agricultural operators in the watershed;

(e) Create measurable benchmarks that, within ten years after the receipt of funding, are designed to result in (i) the protection of critical area functions and values and (ii) the enhancement of critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures;

(f) Designate the entity or entities that will provide technical assistance;

(g) Work with the entity providing technical assistance to ensure that individual stewardship plans contribute to the goals and benchmarks of the work plan;

(h) Incorporate into the work plan any existing development regulations relied upon to achieve the goals and benchmarks for protection;

(i) Establish baseline monitoring 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;

(j) Conduct periodic evaluations, institute adaptive management, and provide a written report of the status of plans and accomplishments to the county and to the commission within sixty days after the end of each biennium;

(k) Assist state agencies in their monitoring programs; and

(l) Satisfy any other reporting requirements of the program.