

Thurston County Voluntary Stewardship Program Work Plan

Appendix N – Outreach and Implementation Plan

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1 Outreach for the Voluntary Stewardship Program

The Voluntary Stewardship Program has several phases of outreach that are required, including 1) initial outreach to tribes, agencies and stakeholders to convene a Workgroup and develop the Program, 2) ongoing outreach to stakeholders as a part of developing the work plan, and 3) outreach to agricultural operators after plan approval and adoption to gain interest in the program which includes outreach by the technical assistance provider for creating an Individual Stewardship Plan with agricultural operators.

The statute ([RCW 36.70A.720](#)) sets out the general considerations for outreach during the development of the VSP work plan. Section 1 (b) requires the Workgroup to “seek input from tribes, agencies, and stakeholders.” Section 1 (d) requires the Workgroup to “ensure outreach and technical assistance is provided to agricultural operators in the watershed.”

Outreach can be divided into three phases:

1. First phase (early outreach): Establish the Workgroup, and ensure stakeholders are aware of the VSP Workgroup and its efforts to prepare a plan;
2. Second phase: Outreach to stakeholders as a draft plan is being developed to give them an opportunity to provide feedback to the Workgroup before submittal to Conservation Commission
3. Third phase - Implementation: Outreach to agricultural operators along with technical assistance, once a work plan is approved.

As part of the second phase, the Workgroup has also initiated outreach to agricultural operators through two “Ag Roundtable” meetings, which gather farmers and other agricultural related businesses to discuss and define the agricultural economy of Thurston County. The two meetings were held on February 25, 2015 and February 16, 2017. More on these meetings can be found in Appendix M - Agricultural Viability in Thurston County.

Outreach for the Thurston County Voluntary Stewardship Plan has several objectives:

- Seek early participation by growers/producers in developing a work plan
- Seek participation in, and understanding of, work plan development by other stakeholders
- Gain responsibility and ownership of the Voluntary Stewardship Plan by the agricultural community
- Ensure that growers/producers know about the VSP work plan as we near adoption
- Bridge the long-standing gap between agricultural producers and resource agencies

1.1 Phase 1: Establishment of the Workgroup

The first phase of outreach for the Thurston County Voluntary Stewardship Program is the establishment of Workgroup and early notice to stakeholders. This phase occurred after funding was received, in spring of 2014.

The county began the process by identifying stakeholders to contact regarding participating in the VSP effort (see list of stakeholders and governmental entities contacted below). Facilitation for the Workgroup was provided by facilitators separate from county staff. An e-mail distribution list for both Workgroup members and those persons wanting to track the VSP work plan development effort was

developed. The county also established a website containing information about the VSP process: <http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/planning/vsp/voluntary-stewardship-home.html>

The initial facilitation for the Workgroup was provided by Washington State University's Division of Governmental Studies and Services. Facilitation was scheduled to start January 1st in order to confer with Tribes and stakeholders before establishing a VSP planning group. In an e-mail on November 7, 2013 (prior to initial receipt of funding), Scott Clark (Thurston County) identified that staff in the County had been working with WSU for two months prior to develop a contract, had met twice with the state and local farm bureau and once with the Squaxin Island Tribe. Additionally, the Board of County Commissioners scheduled dinner with the Squaxin Tribe Council on November 17, 2013 as a precursor to outreach for the Voluntary Stewardship Program.

An invitation letter was sent to stakeholders, resource agencies and tribes on March 14, 2014. This invitation letter identified the need to establish a Workgroup over the coming weeks, briefly described the background of the Voluntary Stewardship Program, and identified that the Workgroup and the Voluntary Stewardship Program was anticipated to be a multi-year project. Other stakeholders and stakeholder groups were also verbally invited through meetings with Thurston County Commissioners and/or Thurston County staff. To broaden participation, the County established the Workgroup as an entity and table where diverse interests and stakeholders could collaborate (as opposed to a fixed list of named individuals). The Workgroup's ground rules have reflected that approach from the outset, employing active stakeholder participation (determined by consistent attendance as opposed to invitation) as the primary factor for eligibility as a "voting member".

The Workgroup is a volunteer planning committee established by the County that has invited the public to participate throughout the process during development of a draft work plan.

The initial Workgroup was composed of the following stakeholders and governmental entities:

- Thurston County Farm Bureau (3)
- Washington State Farm Bureau (3)
- Washington State University Extension (2)
- Thurston Regional Planning Council (1)
- Thurston Agricultural Advisory Committee (2)
- Nisqually Tribe (1)
- Thurston Conservation District (1)
- Chehalis Tribe (2)
- Local Farmer (4)
- Center for Natural Lands (1)
- Washington State Department of Ecology (2)
- Washington State Fish and Wildlife (1)

The Squaxin Island Tribe was invited to the initial Workgroup, but declined invitation. Subsequent invitations were extended to the Squaxin Island Tribe periodically throughout the process and declined. The Workgroup stopped convening on a monthly basis after June, 2015 due to a lack of funding. Further funds and a renewed contract from the State Conservation Commission were received in January of

2016. Facilitation of the Workgroup meetings picked up after the 6.5-month break with Aaland Planning Services, Inc.

1.2 Phase 2: Ongoing Outreach

The second phase of outreach continues as a draft plan is being developed for submittal on March 1, 2017. This occurred in two different forms: outreach to increase awareness of and gain participation in the development of the VSP work plan and; outreach to maintain balanced representation of the agricultural community, environmental groups, and resource agencies on the Workgroup.

Periodically, e-mail blasts for more stakeholders on the Workgroup were sent out. Representatives from the Chehalis Tribe and the Nisqually Tribe dropped from participating in the Workgroup meetings in 2014 due to staffing and time constraints, but were updated on the Voluntary Stewardship Program work plan development process by being maintained on the e-mail distribution list. An invitation for stakeholders was sent by Charissa Waters (Thurston County) in March, 2016 when the Workgroup was reconvening after a 6-month break and also in October 2016 to solicit participation from more environmental groups and tribes. The fall e-mail blast generated interest from tribes but did not result in a tribal representative on the Workgroup; the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group did begin attending meetings again after the e-mail blast. Participants, Workgroup members, supporting agencies and technical experts donated a considerable amount of time, data, and effort to the process. The following people participated in various capacities:

VSP Workgroup Participants

Addie Candib	SSCFLT	Greg Schundler	WSU Extension (Mason)
Alex Callender	ECY	Heidi Eisenhour	
		Howard Glastetter	
Brad Murphy	Thurston Co	Jerilyn Walley	SS Salmon Enhancement
Brian Merryman	TCFB	Jim Goche	Farmer
Bruce Morgan	Violet Prairie Plantation	Jim Myers	Farmer
Bud Blake	Thurston Co	Jon McAninch	WA Waterfowl Assn
	Commissioner	John Stuhlmiller	WSFB
Charissa Waters	Thurston Co	Karen Parkhurst	TRPC
Christina Sanders	WSU Division Gvt Studies	Kathleen Whalen	TCD
Christy Carr	Planner, City of	Ken Miller	Miller Tree Farm
	Bainbridge	Kevin O'Sullivan	Former Thurston Co
Cindy Wilson	Thurston Co		Comm
Dean and Jan Pigman	Pigman's Produce	Laurence Reeves	Capitol Land Trust
Derek Rockett	ECY	Laurie Pyne	Olympia Beekeepers Assc
Ed Lewis		Lisa Turner	
Elizabeth Myers		Lucas Patzek	WSU Extension
Eric Johnson	Johnson Farms	Mikko McFeely	WSU Extension
Erin Ewald	Taylor Shellfish	Nick Cockrell	Washington Livestock
Evan Sheffels	WSFB		Coalition
Glen Connelly	Chehalis Indian Tribe		

Patrick Dunn	Center for Natural Lands Management	Cathy Wolfe	Thurston Co Commissioner
Maya Buhler	Thurston Co	David Troutt	Nisqually Indian Tribe
Mike Gaffney	WSU Division Gvt Studies	Don Secena	Chehalis Indian Tribe
Mike LaPlant		Donovan Gray	ECY
Neil Aaland	Workgroup Facilitator	Doug Rushton	TCD
Nick Cockrell		Dustin Bilhimer	ECY
Raul DeLeon	TCFB	James Weatherford	TCD
Rick Nelson	Grange, TCFB	Jane Mountjoy-Venning	Thurston County
Sandra Romero	Thurston Co Commissioner	Jeff Swotek	USDA NRCS
Sierra Smith	Center for Natural Lands Management	Karen Valenzuela	Thurston Co Commissioner
Stephen Bramwell	WSU	Keith Folkerts	WDFW
Theresa Nation	WDFW	Kelly McClain	WSDA
Treacy Kreger		Lisa Grueter	BERK Consulting
		Miles Micheletti	GIS Intern
		Dr. Riley Moore	St. Martins University
		Ron Schultz	SCC
		Scott Clark	Thurston County
		Scott Kuhta	Commerce
		Sherre Copeland	USDA
		Stephan Kalinowski	WDFW
		Stephanie Zurenko	ECY
		Tim Gates	ECY
		Tom Clingman	ECY
		Zach Meyer	ECY

Supporting Agencies

Allyson Beall King	WSU
Amanda Murphy	WSU
Amy Hendershot	USDA
Aslan Meade	EDC
Andrew Kolosseus	ECY
Ben Rau	ECY

The Workgroup would like to recognize non-voting members that participated consistently in the initial two-year process of meetings and subcommittees throughout the process, including: Alex Callender (ECY), Derek Rockett (ECY), John Stuhlmiller (WSFB), Kathleen Whalen (TCD), Stephen Bramwell (WSU), Theresa Nation (WDFW), and Zach Meyer (ECY).

Voting Members:

Not all Workgroup participants are considered voting members. Voting members exclude agency representatives and occasional drop-ins from the public. Additionally, they must maintain active membership and can only have one unexcused absence in the previous 3 meetings. The Workgroup concluded that a formal invitation is not required to be considered a voting member (VSP Workgroup Meeting, Feb. 22, 2017). This is consistent with Workgroup ground rules that employ active stakeholder participation (determined by consistent attendance) as the primary factor for eligibility as a “voting member.” At the time of submittal (March 9, 2017), members that have actively participated and can vote include: Bruce Morgan (Violet Prairie Plantation), Jim Myers (Farmer), Jim Goche (Farmer), Pat Dunn (CNLM), Evan Sheffels (WFB), Jon McAninch (WWA), Eric Johnson (Johnson Farms), Brian Merryman (TCFB), Erin Ewald (Taylor Shellfish), Karen Parkhurst (TRPC), and Rick Nelson (Grange and TCFB). These members have participated in the Thurston Voluntary Stewardship Program development since its beginning in 2014.

The Workgroup had several discussions about specific stakeholders and outreach required to reach them. The following table lists outreach activities that occurred during plan development and as adoption approached, as discussed by Workgroup members.

Outreach Tasks	When	Who
Informal outreach to Thurston County Board of County Commissioners	On-going, Intermittent	Workgroup and Board of County Commissioners
Presentations and CLE classes on VSP and pilot project to groups including Rotary, Thurston County Bar Association, TCBA Land Use Section, and State Economic Club, UW Law School and Northwest Dispute Resolution Conference	On-going, Intermittent	Workgroup members to interested parties
Informal Outreach to the Public	On-going, Intermittent	Workgroup members to public
Informal Outreach with Tribes	Prior to 2014	Thurston County staff
Workgroup Initiation Letter	March 14, 2014	Sent to potential interested parties
Interagency Discussion around South Sound Agricultural Business Center	Spring, 2015	EDC (lead), TCD, TRPC, Thurston Staff
Recommendations from Scatter Creek Aquifer Citizen's Committee on Septic System Management, water quality, monitoring and the VSP	October 1, 2014	Scatter Creek provided recommendations which were then presented to the Workgroup
VSP Report Regional Workshop	January 7, 2015	Thurston County staff, Washington State Conservation Commission
VSP Report to Thurston County Planning Commission	February 18, 2015	Thurston County staff, Thurston County Planning Commission
VSP Report to Nisqually River Council	August 21, 2015	Thurston County staff, Nisqually River Council
VSP Report Statewide Advisory Committee	November 6, 2015	Statewide Advisory Committee and Technical Panel
VSP Report at GMA Conference	November 20, 2015	LSI: Growth Management Act participants
Meetings with the EDC to discuss Port contract and efforts to determine the agricultural economy	January, 2016	VSP stakeholders, South Sound Friends of Food & Farming, EDC
VSP Report to Chehalis Basin Partnership	April 22, 2016	Thurston County staff, Chehalis Basin Partnership
Interagency Discussion around South Sound Agricultural Business Center	Spring, 2016	EDC (lead), TCD, TRPC, Thurston Staff
Reconvene Workgroup and invitation to VSP email list and interested parties	March 3, 2016	Thurston County staff
Native Seed & Nursery Open House	May 13, 2016	Local Farmer Open House
Handouts providing general information on the Voluntary Stewardship Program distributed at Prairie Appreciation Day	May 14, 2016 May 13, 2017	Thurston County staff
Stewardship Plan Test Run	June, 2016; December, 2016	Thurston County staff, Workgroup stakeholders, NRCS, TCD, local farmer (not involved in VSP)
Agricultural Community Roundtable	Feb 25, 2015 Feb 16, 2017	VSP Workgroup members and stakeholders, Ag Community

Discussions with the Agricultural Advisory Committee regarding the Voluntary Stewardship Program (updates, informational)	Jan 29, 2015 June 25, 2015 Jan 28, 2016 Feb 25, 2016, May 26, 2016 June 28, 2016 Feb 23, 2017	Thurston County staff, Workgroup stakeholders
Meetings of conducting an economic impact study of agriculture in Thurston County	Summer and Fall, 2016 (on-going)	VSP stakeholders, WSU, St. Martin's University
Invitation to Workgroup (tribes, environmental groups) to solicit more participation	Spring-Fall, 2016 (on-going)	Thurston County staff
VSP Informal Presentation with the Technical Panel and Statewide Advisory Committee	January 4, 2017	Thurston County staff, WSCC, Workgroup members
VSP Report Workshop (Regional)	January 27, 2017	Thurston County staff, Interested Counties, WSCC
Board of County Commissioners Work Session	February 22, 2017	Thurston County staff, Workgroup, Board of County Commissioners
Informal Communication with Agricultural Community	On-going	Thurston Conservation District, Washington State University Extension, Workgroup members

1.3 Phase 3: Post Approval Stage

The third phase and final phase of outreach occurs after adoption of work plan. Although this is considered the final phase of outreach, it will be on-going. Additionally, outreach will be continued as needed to maintain a representative Workgroup.

1: Direct outreach to growers/producers to inform of the Voluntary Stewardship Program

This form of outreach has already been underway with participation of the farming community in the Workgroup. Many of the agricultural stakeholders have already been communicating to other agricultural producers about the Voluntary Stewardship Program during its' development. It is anticipated the Workgroup will serve largely as a starting point for discussions with the agricultural community for general information on the VSP.

Additionally, there is intent to continue "Agricultural Roundtables" (see the above chart for two previous dates listed) with the agricultural community after adoption of the work plan. These meetings serve mainly to discuss and define agricultural viability, the Thurston agricultural economy, and to identify needs (weaknesses and threats) and successes (strengths and opportunities).

Thurston County (Ag Liaison or other staff) and other agencies (i.e. Washington State University Extension, Thurston Conservation District) will continue to inform farmers about the Voluntary Stewardship Program after its adoption. This will be in the form of website updates, e-mail blasts, verbal communication, brochures or flyers.

In addition to any communication with agricultural growers and producers, outreach will also be continued to the Voluntary Stewardship Plan e-mailing list, which includes tribes, environmental groups, and many other participants that may not have actively participated in the Workgroup.

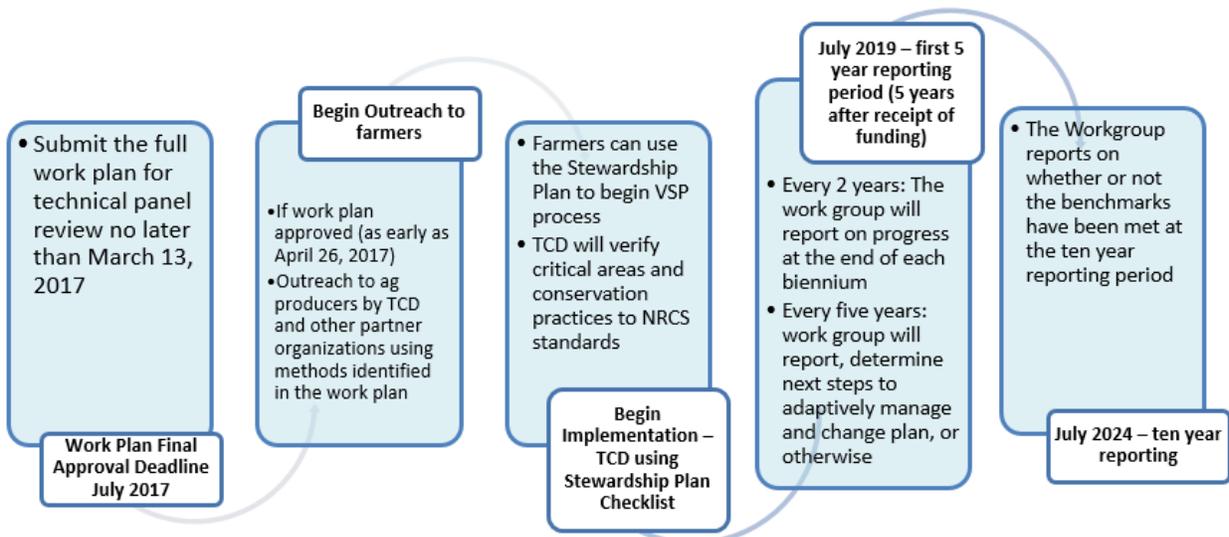
2: Direct outreach to technical assistance providers

The primary technical assistance provider (Thurston Conservation District) has been involved throughout the process of the development of the Voluntary Stewardship Program. Other approved technical assistance providers may need education on what the VSP is.

3: Outreach between technical assistance providers and growers to develop stewardship plans

The Thurston Conservation District will serve as the primary responsible party to develop stewardship plans with growers. The Thurston Conservation District has the capable expertise to develop stewardship plans and also the rapport with the agricultural community. Initially, the Stewardship Plan Checklist (Appendix D) will be sent to farmers for an initial survey to be completed by the farmer. Other agencies that have rapport with the agricultural community (i.e. Washington State University Extension, Thurston County Farm Bureau, and Washington State Farm Bureau) can also hand out the checklist to interested farmers, which then directs them to the Thurston Conservation District or another approved technical assistance provider.

2 Implementation of VSP



Implementation of the Voluntary Stewardship Program begins after plan approval and includes: outreach to farmers, implementation of Individual Stewardship Plans, reporting, and monitoring and adaptive management. Key agencies expected to participate in the implementation of the Voluntary Stewardship Program and their roles are listed below.

The first 5-year reporting period will occur in July 2019, where the Workgroup will report on benchmarks and determine if adaptive management of the plan is needed. The ten-year reporting period in July 2024 will evaluate if benchmarks have been met and the success of the Voluntary Stewardship Plan. Every two years, the Workgroup will informally report on benchmarks.

Although there are hard deadlines for reporting throughout the Voluntary Stewardship Program, adaptive management of the plan is anticipated to be on-going and occur between reporting periods.

2.1 Agency Roles and Responsibilities

Several agencies are responsible for the implementation of the Voluntary Stewardship Program in Thurston County. At times, roles and responsibilities may be shifted in order to meet the needs of the program. It is important to recognize that the VSP is a group effort, and collaboration from all parties is necessary in order to successfully implement the Program.

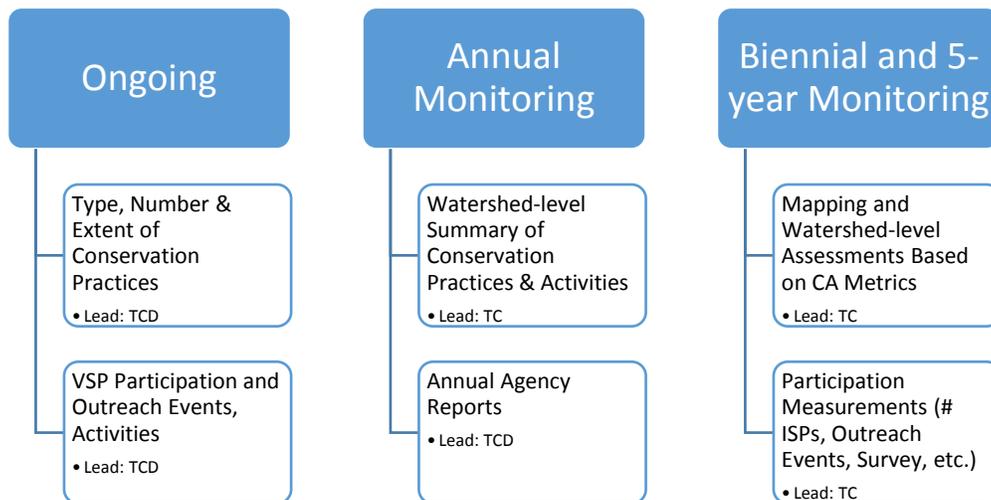
Overview and Timeline Summary

The Thurston Conservation District (TCD) is the lead technical assistance provider. Thurston County (TC) will serve as administrator of the Work Plan monitoring and implementation. The figure below illustrates ongoing, annual, and biennial and five-year activities by the TCD and TC.

Ongoing activities by the TCD primarily and other technical assistance providers secondarily include conservation practices and voluntary enhancement with willing landowners and VSP participation events. TC staff regularly meet with watershed planning units as well as other agencies and non-profit organizations to coordinate monitoring efforts related to agriculture and critical areas.

Annually, TC staff or an Ag Liaison will evaluate the reports from the TCD and technical assistance providers to describe conservation practices and voluntary enhancement projects during the prior year and present it to the Workgroup. Annually, TCD will prepare a report describing VSP implementation based on the ISPs and implementation agreements with willing landowners and any other grants or programs that implement VSP efforts.

Biennially and every five years, TC staff or an Ag Liaison will conduct watershed-level mapping and surveys, and compile the annual watershed-level monitoring reports described in Appendix C in collaboration with other partnering agencies, such as TCD and WSU extension, which collect data on an ongoing basis.



VSP Workgroup:

The Thurston County VSP Workgroup will have several roles in implementation of the Voluntary Stewardship Program. A Workgroup Chair and vice-Chair were designated at the February 22, 2017 meeting so in the event that a facilitator and county staff are unable to continue working on or have minimal time to commit to the Voluntary Stewardship Program, the Chair will ensure that the Workgroup continues to meet, takes over roles originally designated under the [County/Aq Liaison section](#) (to include maintaining a balanced and representative Workgroup and inviting environmental, tribal, or agricultural partners as necessary). The Workgroup Chair designated was Jim Myers, and the Workgroup vice-Chair designated was Jon McAninch. The Workgroup has determined that these roles are most necessary during the period between plan submittal and implementation, and that these roles may be re-designated at the discretion of the Workgroup.

The Workgroup's duties are as required in statute under [RCW 36.70A.720](#). These duties include: development of the work plan; seek input from tribes, agencies and stakeholder; ensure outreach and technical assistance is provided to agricultural operators in the watershed; work with the technical assistance provider to ensure Individual Stewardship Plan contributes to goals and benchmarks in the work plan; establish baseline monitoring; conduct period evaluations; institute adaptive management; report on benchmarks and goals to the Washington State Conservation Commission; assist state agencies in their monitoring programs; satisfy any other reporting requirements; request state or federal agency to focus existing enforcement authority in participating watersheds if the action facilitates progress towards achieving the work plan. Many of these tasks are shared among other agencies (i.e. Thurston Conservation District, Thurston County staff). If at any time an agency is unable to meet their designated tasks (reporting, Workgroup recruitment, adaptive management of the work plan), the Workgroup assumes responsibility. To maintain viability of the VSP the SCC must make a finding of adequate implementation funding every two years. RCW 36.70A.740

The Workgroup will continue to meet on an as-needed basis after plan approval in order to begin outreach and implementation. After implementation begins, meetings will move to a quarterly basis. The Workgroup may decide at any time that more or less meetings are necessary. The Workgroup will be responsible for reporting periods, as laid out in statute. Assuming an approved plan in July of 2017, the reporting schedule is as follows:

- July 2019 – 5-year report on benchmarks and whether protection and enhancement goals and benchmarks have been met [\[RCW 36.70A.720\(2\)\(b\)\(i\)\]](#)
 - If the Workgroup determines that the protection goals and benchmarks have been met and Washington State Conservation Commission concurs, the Workgroup will continue to implement the Voluntary Stewardship Plan [\[RCW 36.70A.720\(2\)\(b\)\(ii\)\]](#)
 - If the Workgroup determines that the protection goals and benchmarks have not been met, it must propose an adaptive management plan to achieve goals and benchmarks, submit to the director and implement. [\[RCW 36.70A.720\(2\)\(b\)\(iii\)\]](#)
 - In the event that the director does not approve the adaptive management plan, the watershed is subject to [RCW 36.70A.735](#)
- July 2021 – 2 year report on status of plans and accomplishments [\[RCW 36.70A.720\(1\)\(l\)\]](#)
- July 2023 – 2 year report on status of plans and accomplishments [\[RCW 36.70A.720\(1\)\(l\)\]](#)

- July 2024 – 10-year report (and every 5 years thereafter) on benchmarks and whether protection or enhancement goals have been met [\[RCW 36.70A.720\(2\)\(c\)\(i\)\]](#)
 - Report on the Workgroups conclusions to the State Advisory Committee and Conservation Commission on whether or not benchmarks are being met at the years outlined per statute.
 - Continue outreach through event participation, maintaining an updated webpage, flyer efforts, bulletins, workshops, or other methods. This may involve the participation of one or more agencies, e.g. Thurston Conservation District, Washington State University Extension, NRCS USDA.

Any reporting will be the discussion and conclusion of the Workgroup. The County/Ag Liaison will be responsible for formally writing and submitting a report of the Workgroup's conclusions to the Washington State Conservation Commission. In the event that the County/Ag Liaison is unable to fulfill this requirement (due to funding constraints, staff time, or other) the Workgroup will assume responsibility for the formal writing and submittal of reports to the WSCC.

Thurston County (or Ag Liaison if appointed):

An Ag Liaison (or other county staff) will be responsible for maintaining the Workgroup as needed after plan approval and throughout implementation. The Workgroup may still choose to use a facilitator, if determined necessary and if funds are available. A Workgroup Chair will largely serve in a facilitator role to maintain meeting structure. Because personnel from resource agencies alternate often, staff will be responsible for updating new members on the status of the VSP before attending the Workgroup. Staff will also be responsible for on-going outreach to environmental groups, tribes and agricultural producers, as needed, to maintain a representative Workgroup. The Ag Liaison and/or the Workgroup Chair will convene the Workgroup periodically after plan approval to discuss implementation and monitoring of the Voluntary Stewardship Program. Workgroup meetings will continue monthly after the Voluntary Stewardship Program work plan is submitted in March of 2017 to begin outreach efforts among the agricultural community. Once outreach efforts are under way, the Workgroup will meet quarterly. These meetings will also allow for adaptive management of the work plan.

Data collection and monitoring will in part be a responsibility of the Ag Liaison or county staff. Any county-wide mapping or data that can be collected on the watershed scale will be collected by the Ag Liaison or staff. For more information on monitoring, metrics and data to be collected for critical areas see Appendix C and for agricultural viability see Appendix M. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Map agricultural activities in Thurston County for each reporting period, and determining acreages (this data will inform the overarching critical area (OCA) metric b and other metrics that track data based on percent of acres of agricultural activities);
- Map critical areas in Thurston County for each reporting period, and determining acreages (this data will inform OCA M-a);
- Map the intersection of agricultural activities with critical areas for each reporting period, and determining acreages (informs the overarching metrics as well as the majority of others);

- Determine change in acreage of Long Term Agriculture (TC), Nisqually Agriculture (TC), Tidal Shellfish Approved areas (DOH), and Open Space Enrollment for Current Use and Conservation Lands (TC) (this data will be used to inform agricultural viability indicators 1, 2, and 3);
- Determine the type, number, and extent of conservation practices using NRCS data (this data will be used to inform the indirect participation metric IP M-a);
- Determine number of agricultural operators meeting conservation compliance certification (AD-1026) (this data will be used to inform CA M-b and M-o);
- Determine acreage of impervious surfaces and change in acreage over time (using NOAA's Coastal Change Analysis Program and WDFW's High Resolution Change Detection dataset). This data will be used to inform CA M-s (see Appendix C and the monitoring matrix).

Additionally, some data will be collected by the technical assistance provider(s) (see [Thurston Conservation District](#)) during the implementation of Individual Stewardship Plans and through effectiveness monitoring. Because this data is collected at the parcel level, it will be reported to the Ag Liaison or county staff on a watershed scale to maintain anonymity of farmers. The Ag Liaison or county staff will report on data collected from monitoring and make a recommendation to the Workgroup as to how data informs the benchmarks. The Workgroup will discuss and determine if benchmarks are being met at five and ten years, determine the success of the Voluntary Stewardship Program at ten years, and continue adaptive management as needed.

The Ag Liaison or county staff will formally submit a report of the Workgroup's conclusions to the Washington State Conservation Commission for the reporting periods (every 2 years and every 5 years) based on the anticipated schedule shown above.

The Ag Liaison or county staff will be responsible for, in coordination with other agencies, outreach and education of the Voluntary Stewardship Program throughout implementation. This will involve holding VSP events, maintaining an updated webpage, flyer efforts, bulletins, workshops, or other methods. Outreach also includes any communication with the Board of County Commissioners, which the Workgroup may also participate in.

The above section discusses responsibility as if it belongs to one party (an Ag Liaison or county staff). If there is funding for multiple positions (an Ag Liaison and County staff) to implement the Voluntary Stewardship Program, the Ag Liaison position may be shifted to a more neutral agency, to be determined (e.g. Washington State University Extension, or other as decided by the Workgroup), as also recommended by the Thurston County Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Working Lands Strategic Plan (2010). These tasks above would then be divided among county staff and the Ag Liaison. The Ag Liaison will serve primarily as the intermediary, whereas the county will serve primarily as the administrator of the program.

Thurston Conservation District

The Thurston Conservation District is the primary technical assistance provider for Thurston County. Although other [approved technical assistance providers](#) (trained in NRCS conservation practices) may also develop Individual Stewardship Plans (ISPs) with farmers, the Thurston Conservation District serves as the primary and will be tasked with outreach and implementation steps after plan approval. In order

to meet the demands of the Voluntary Stewardship Program, the Thurston Conservation District will require additional staff and funding (see section 2.2).

Because the Thurston Conservation District has established trust with the agricultural community, they will conduct direct outreach with existing farmers that may be eligible for the Voluntary Stewardship Program beginning after plan approval. This will be one of many efforts to communicate and educate farmers about the Voluntary Stewardship Program.

The Thurston Conservation District will also be one of several agencies to distribute the Stewardship Plan Checklist (Appendix D). This will be through a variety of methods, including on their web page, by e-mail, by postal mail, or through verbal conversation and in-person meetings. For agricultural producers interested in producing an ISP, the Thurston Conservation District will instruct farmers to fill out the checklist on their own, and then plan a site visit to work with the farmer. Site visits will include several components:

- Use 2011 aerial photos of the property to compare baseline conditions to most recent.
 - Aerial photography interpretation and mapping will be used in development of ISPs and monitoring to flag areas of intersect in each watershed with any significant changes for on-the-ground follow-up to determine if there is a loss of critical area extent, amount, or quality due to agricultural activities, and to prioritize areas for AM actions, such as enhancement or stewardship actions to be implemented with willing landowners.
- Verify resources on-site. Using mapping and the returned checklist as a general indicator, the technical assistance provider will visit the property to determine critical areas that exist on site and to what extent they intersect with agriculture. For some resources, the technical assistance provider may consult with experts, if needed (e.g. determining priority habitat or evaluating atypical geologic hazard areas).
- Work with the landowner to determine conservation practices that are most suitable to the natural resource needs, property, farm, and finances of the landowner.
- Conduct an implementation site visit to determine that conservation practices, as identified in the Individual Stewardship Plan, are being implemented properly. Once this is verified, the property will be VSP-verified and can display a VSP “Good Steward” sign.
- Conduct annual monitoring (through surveys, phone calls, e-mail, site-visits if needed, or other methods) to verify that the ISP is being implemented and the effectiveness of implementation. Because this information is collected at the parcel-level, it will be aggregated and reported to the Ag Liaison or county staff on the watershed level. This data will include information that will be used to inform the monitoring metrics (Appendix C) such as:
 - Type, number, and extent of conservation practices relevant to each Critical Area.
 - Quality and Function (e.g. effective shade) of riparian areas using the [NRCS Riparian Assessment method](#).
 - Acreage of suitable native plant communities. Suitable communities are native plants that are appropriate for the relevant habitat.
 - Acreage of important, priority, and rare habitat types (may involve consultation with expert).
 - Number of culverts voluntarily replaced and stream miles opened.

provider. Outreach will include reference to the Voluntary Stewardship Program on the web page, flyer distribution, bulletins, workshops, or other methods. The WSU Ext. will also distribute a survey on agricultural viability (web, mail, or other) to assist the Workgroup in collecting data on the state of agriculture in Thurston County and farmer perspective of the Voluntary Stewardship Program.

Washington State University Extension will continue to coordinate with the Workgroup, and primarily the Agricultural Viability Subcommittee, as well as St. Martins and other interested parties to evaluate the agricultural economy of Thurston County.

2.2 Funding Estimations for Implementation – Staffing

Thurston Conservation District

- Plans take for 40-80 hours to develop, depending on the complexity of the farm operation.
- The cost range is between **\$1800 - \$2600**, depending on the staff person’s composite rate and hours needed to complete the plan.
- 1 Full Time Employee (FTE) at \$36/hour = approximately **\$75,000/year**
 - “Comp rate would be approximately 35.22 - 36.73/hour. Make sure they understand the comp rate is only an estimate at this point - many factors affect the rate that change from year to year (L&I premiums, unemployment rates, PERS employer contributions, prorated medical – this range can't be locked in if the position won't be filled until next year” (Amy Franks, TCD).

Thurston County

- Staff time: Average LRP staff hourly rate = \$47/hour (salary + benefits)
- 1 FTE = approximately **\$98,000/year**
- 1 Part Time Employee (PTE) = approximately **\$49,000/year**

Total Staff Cost Estimate Scenarios: 1) \$124,000 for 1 PTE (county) and 1 FTE (TCD), 2) \$173,000 for 2 FTE (1 county staff & 1 TCD staff), 3) \$199,000 for 1 PTE (county) and 2 FTE (TCD), or 4) \$248,000 for 1 FTE (county), 1 PTE (Ag Liaison), and 2 FTE. Scenario 4 is the preferred scenario. TCD will need at least 2 FTE for implementation as the primary technical assistance provider. A full-time program manager with the County as well as a part-time Ag Liaison will also be needed to meet the goals and monitoring requirements of VSP.

Staffing Scenarios	1	2	3	4
<i>County/Ag Liaison</i>	1 PTE	1 FTE	1 PTE	1 FTE and 1 PTE
<i>TCD</i>	1 FTE	1 FTE	2 FTE	2 FTE
<i>Total</i>	\$124,000	\$173,000	\$199,000	\$297,000

Workgroup

In addition to Thurston County and Thurston Conservation District staffing, the Workgroup will continue to meet through the implementation phase of the Voluntary Stewardship Program on a monthly basis, before moving to a quarterly meeting schedule. If the VSP Implementation phase requires 6 months to one year of monthly Workgroup meetings, this would be approximately 12-24 (volunteer) hours from

Workgroup members. An average of 18 persons attend each VSP meeting, resulting in between 216 and 432 volunteer hours for that 6 month to one year period.

It is expected that additional tasks will be assigned to members for completion outside of the Workgroup. Subcommittees (specifically, the Agricultural Viability subcommittee) will meet once or twice a month for 2 hours each meeting – another 12 to 24 volunteer hours additional per member, with an average of 5 members per meeting. This results in between 60 and 120 volunteer hours for that 6 month to one year period of beginning outreach and implementation.

Thus far, Workgroup members have included agricultural stakeholders, non-profits, tribes, environmental groups, and resource agencies. Agricultural stakeholders from the Thurston community have donated their time throughout the process. Approximately 276 to 552 hours for a 6 to 12 month period will continue to be donated from the agricultural community that is involved through the Workgroup and subcommittees into the implementation phase.