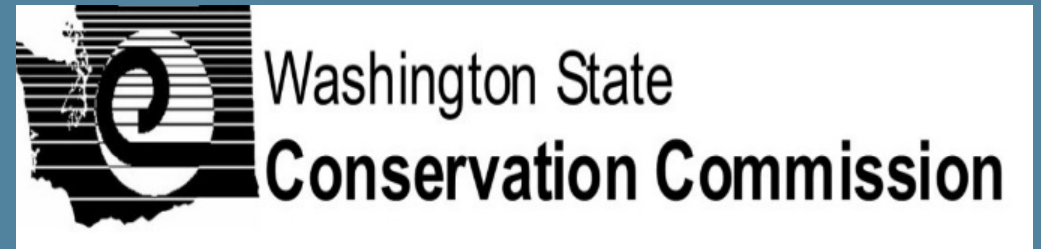


# A Brief History of Monitoring in the Voluntary Stewardship Program

Bill Eller, VSP Coordinator

Washington State Conservation  
Commission

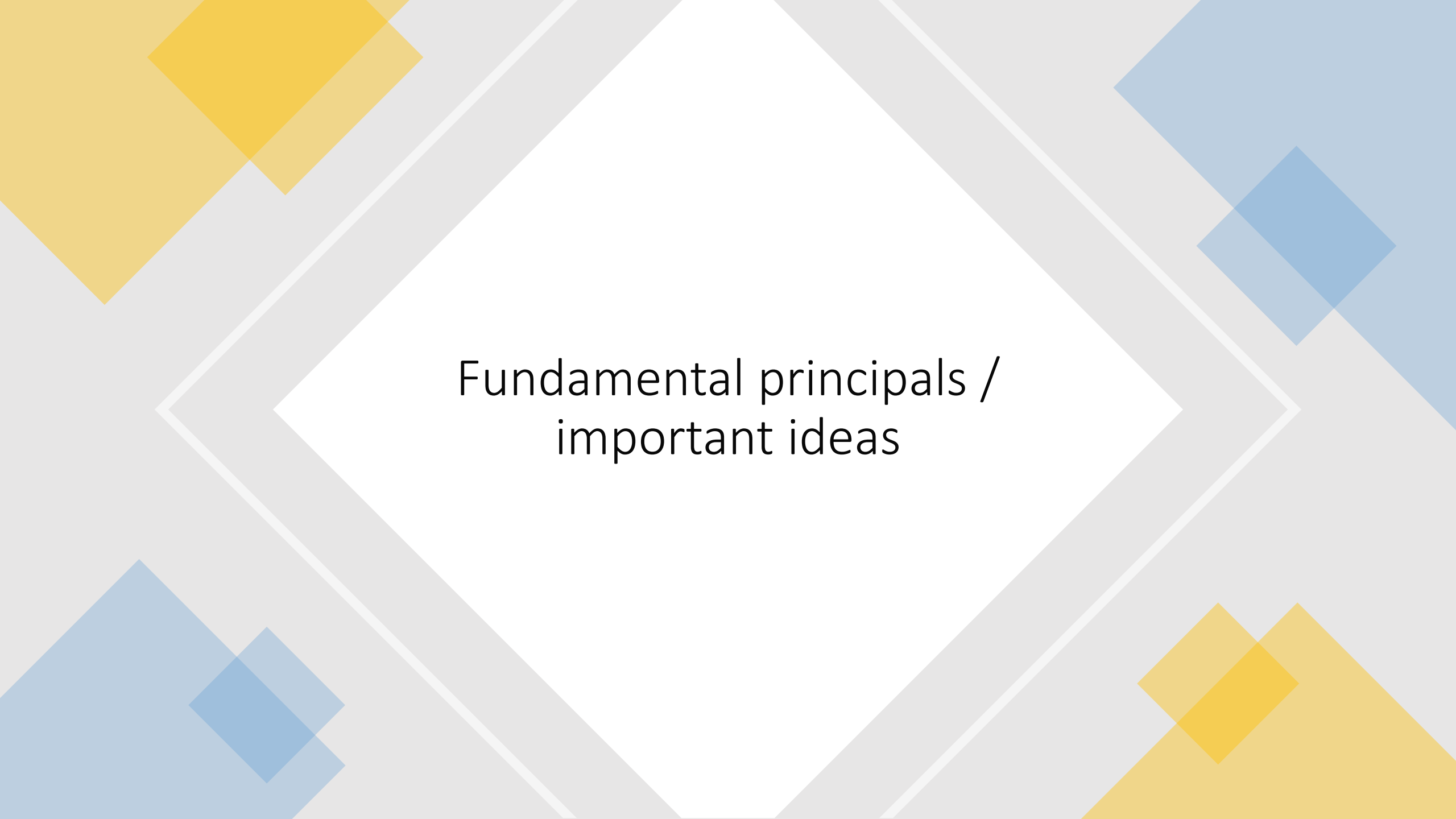
2023



# Agenda

Objective: Provide background as to how the Conservation Commission's (SCC) biennial contract with each VSP county is developed, and how the SCC added a clause to that contract requiring a monitoring plan (MP) as part of its Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)

- Fundamental principals / important ideas
- VSP and its relationship to Growth Management Act
- Monitoring generally – why important, why required
  - Please review the [Monitoring 101 webinar](#) and other foundational VSP materials on our web site
  - <https://www.scc.wa.gov/vsp/overview>
- *Watershed Monitoring Project Development Guide for the Voluntary Stewardship Program in Washington, Version 2*



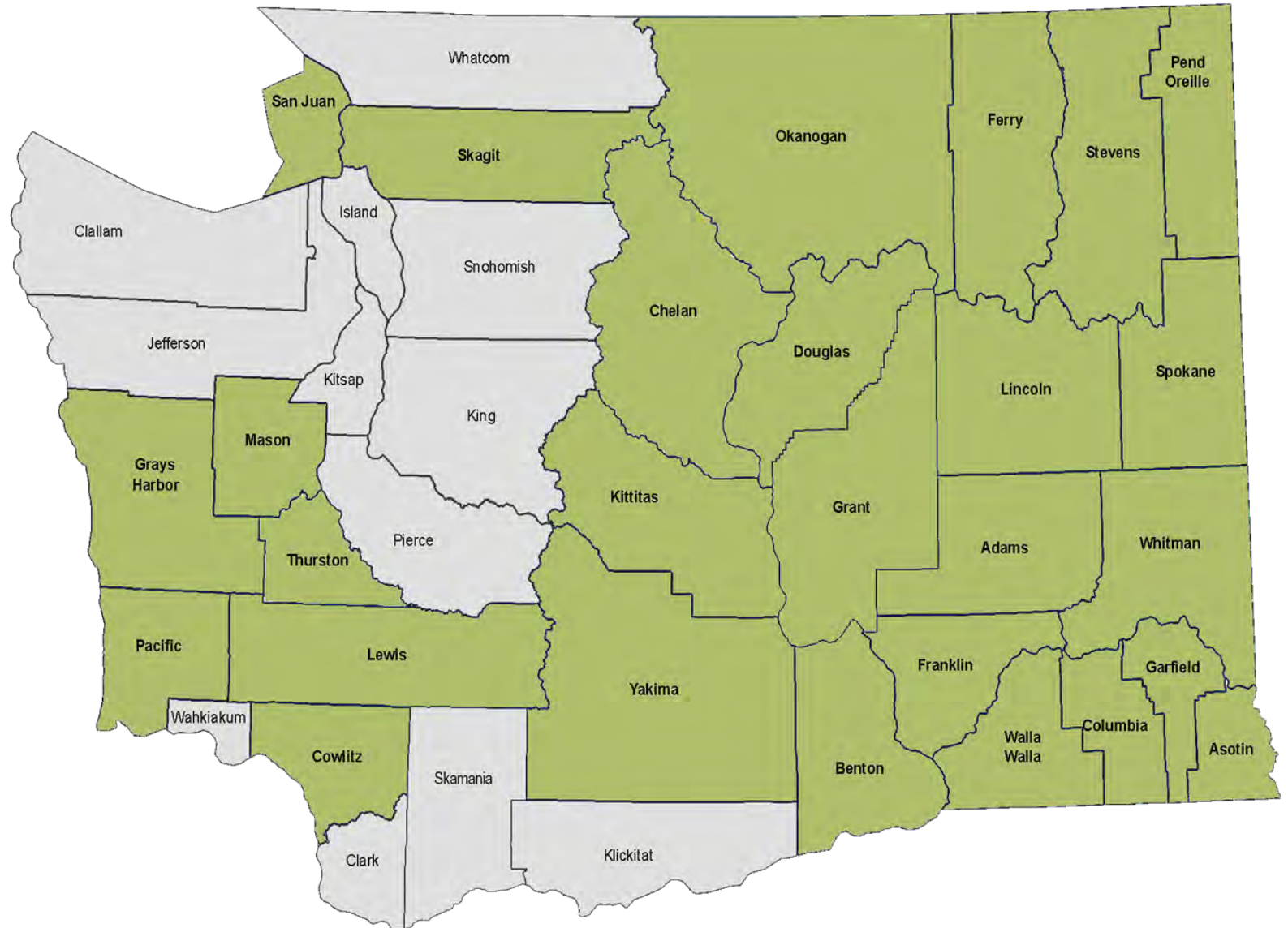
Fundamental principals /  
important ideas

# Fundamental principals

- VSP is an alternative to GMA regulation for counties to meet Growth Management Act (GMA) requirement to
  - Protect critical areas and
  - Maintain agricultural viability
- Local control: local program implementation is the responsibility of the county
  - County watershed work group (WG) → Technical Service Provider (TSP)
  - 3 years of planning, then implementation with reports at 2-year and 5-year intervals
  - Monitoring of the county-wide work plan (WP)
    - Informs the WG and their adaptive management of the work plan (WP)
    - Demonstrates effectiveness of protection of the critical area functions and values

# 27 VSP Counties

---



# Fundamental principals

- WPs were designed to identify
  - Critical areas and agricultural activities
  - Economic viability of agriculture
  - An outreach plan for landowner participation
  - Who will provide landowner assistance through the VSP
  - **Measurable programmatic and implementation goals and benchmarks**

# Work Plan Elements: RCW 36.70A.720 (1) (a-l)

- c) Develop goals for participation by agricultural operators necessary to meet the protection and enhancement benchmarks of the work plan;
- e) **Create measurable benchmarks that, within 10 years after receipt of funding, are designed to result in the protection and enhancement of critical areas functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures;**
- i) **Establish baseline monitoring for:**
  - i. **Participation 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;**

# Work Plan Elements: RCW 36.70A.720(1)(a-l)

- j) Conduct periodic evaluations, institute adaptive management, and provide a written report of the status of plans and accomplishments to the county and the Commission within 60 days after the end of each biennium;
- k) Assist state agencies in their monitoring programs...



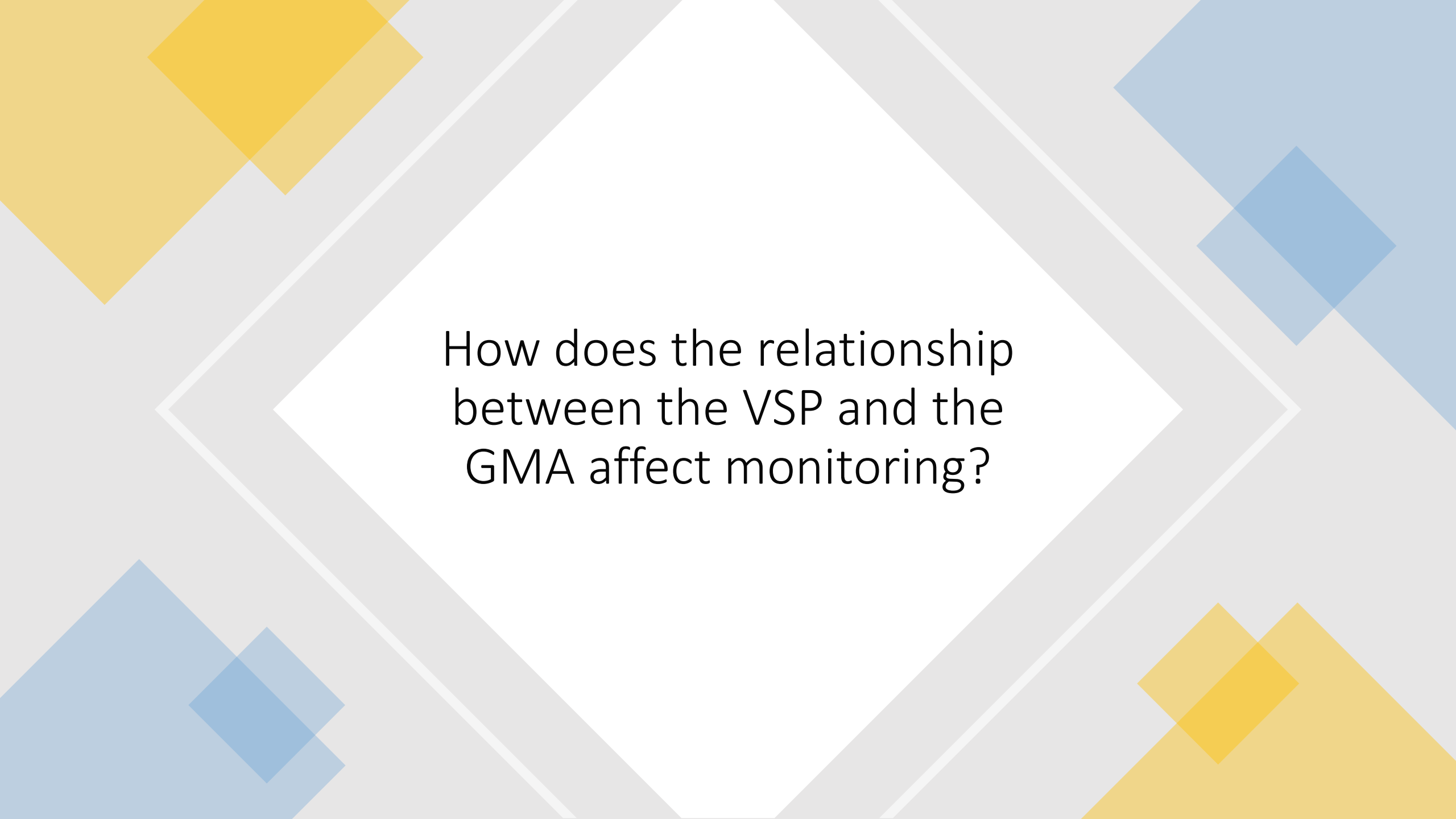
# VSP Work Plan Goals

- **Programmatic** Goals – Those measuring progress on implementation of the work plan (include landowner participation and stewardship plan implementation)
- **Natural Resource** Goals – Are the identified critical areas being protected; is enhancement occurring on available funds
- **Economic Resource** Goals – Is the viability of agriculture being protected and enhanced

*Each county work group must ensure the work plan goals and the statutory goals are being met*

# Fundamental principals – VSP is Voluntary

- VSP is voluntary – for the county to opt-in, and for the landowner to participate
- For an opt-in county, protection of critical areas from agricultural activities is done through the VSP work plan not the county's critical area ordinance (CAO)
  - **The WG must account for any loss of protection resulting from withdrawals when establishing goals and benchmarks for protection in the WP**



How does the relationship  
between the VSP and the  
GMA affect monitoring?

# VSP compared to the Growth Management Act (GMA)

- “Traditional GMA” uses a regulatory approach – required buffers on each parcel with critical areas
- VSP uses a voluntary approach – landowners use stewardship plans and voluntary programs
- VSP primarily uses other voluntary programs (i.e., Farm Bill programs, state programs, etc.) to install best management practices to meet WP goals and benchmarks. Those voluntary programs have their own provisions for standards and review of best management practices they fund that landowners must comply with.
  - VSP operating funds – possible use of these funds for on-the-ground BMP projects
  - VSP capital funds - \$3M – available since 2022 for on-the-ground BMP projects

# VSP works at the Watershed Scale

Key distinction between “traditional GMA” approach to protection of critical areas, and VSP approach:

- “Traditional GMA” approach – must be able to demonstrate protection of critical areas at the parcel scale. Demonstration typically done through regulatory buffers combined with enforcement program. Efforts to use landowner plans have been questioned because of challenges related to being able to demonstrate protections are met.
- VSP approach – relies on evaluation at a **watershed scale**. Demonstrate progress on work plan goals every 5 years. *Focus is on critical area function rather than per parcel.*

# VSP Requires Reporting

Reporting: another key distinction between “traditional GMA” approach to protection of critical areas, and the VSP approach:

- VSP approach – requires reporting to the SCC on progress for achieving the goals of protection of critical areas, with protection and enhancement of viability of agriculture.
- State agency (SCC) evaluation of progress and may disagree with watershed group.
- WG, and thus the county, may be kicked out of VSP if not achieving or adaptively management to get to goals.

# Summary

Vs.



Parcel	Protection scale	Watershed
One-size fits all	Actions	Site specific
Presumptive	Effectiveness model	Demonstrative
Regulatory	Participation model	Voluntary
Not required	Monitoring	Required



# VSP Monitoring & Reporting



# Monitoring in VSP

- Monitoring is a statutory requirement in VSP
  - To demonstrate that the counties are meeting their goals and benchmarks
  - Each county is free under VSP to choose the monitoring type, plan, processes and procedures that best fit their local county VSP work plan, provided the monitoring is scientifically sound
    - SCC guidance – *Watershed Monitoring Project Development Guide for the Voluntary Stewardship Program in Washington, Version 2*
- Broadly, VSP monitoring consists of four types:
  - Stakeholder participation
  - Implementation
  - **Effectiveness**
  - Agricultural viability

# Monitoring in VSP

- While each of the four types of monitoring (Stakeholder participation, Implementation, Effectiveness and Agricultural viability) are important for VSP success, ultimately the deciding factor for whether a county can continue participating in VSP is whether critical area functions and values are protected at the watershed scale, as measured against the baseline date of July 22, 2011.

# Stakeholder Participation in VSP

- Assesses the level of engagement of agricultural producers with respect to the goals and benchmarks of the county's VSP WP.
  - Example: tracking the proportion of producers participating in VSP within a county and/or watershed using producer surveys or Individual Stewardship Plans (ISPs).

# Implementation Monitoring

- Tracks implementation of conservation practices (i.e., BMPs) across the landscape within a county and/or watershed, with an emphasis on whether BMPs were installed to proper specifications, when and where BMPs have been implemented, and whether BMPs are being maintained over time.
  - Example: field-verification of cover cropping or animal exclusion fencing to ensure practices are to appropriate specifications and accurately reported.
  - At the parcel/project scale.
  - A requirement of most Farm Bill cost-share funding programs.
  - A requirement of the SCC, if any SCC funds are used for cost-share for a project (all or part)
    - VSP funds are SCC funds, so any VSP funds (operating or capital) has this requirement.
    - SCC conducts implementation monitoring as part of all its cost-share programs (not just VSP)

# Effectiveness Monitoring

- Effectiveness Monitoring – determines the effect of the implemented practices on critical area functions and values.
  - Example: tracking stream turbidity over time in relation to erosion-related conservation practices in a watershed (e.g., no-till or conservation-tillage BMPs vs. conventional tillage); is the sum of BMPs in an area affecting critical areas in the way we expected?
  - Essential to prove WP goals and benchmarks are being met in the 5YR reports
  - At the watershed scale
  - For a discussion of critical areas functions and values, see *Critical Areas Handbook, A Handbook for Reviewing Critical Areas Regulations*, Washington State Department of Commerce, June 2018, page 12 “The term “**functions and values**” refers to the core ecological processes performed by a particular critical area. Critical area functions contribute to the overall health of the ecosystem. Ecological functions of critical areas include flood attenuation, wildlife habitat, water quality, and groundwater recharge.”

# Watershed Monitoring Project Development Guide for the Voluntary Stewardship Program in Washington

## Version 2

### *Effectiveness Monitoring Goals*

Effectiveness monitoring is used by watershed work groups to evaluate agriculture's impact on critical area functions and values.

**Each county shares a common need to know whether critical area *functions and values* are: (i) increasing, (ii), decreasing, or (iii) remaining unchanged, relative to baseline levels on July 22, 2011.**

Baseline levels of critical areas functions and values are captured in the county's county-wide VSP work plan. If a watershed group can demonstrate, using valid data analysis, that functions and values are responding in one of the three ways above, then it should be possible to demonstrate whether VSP is resulting in the protection and/or enhancement of functions and values.

Determining whether critical area functions and values are being protected and/or enhanced is a key element of the 5-year reporting process, which reviews and evaluates the success of the county-wide VSP work plan and may cause a county to fail out if goals and benchmarks are not being met. The type of monitoring data needed to evaluate changes to the baseline conditions is dependent on the watershed work group's goals and benchmarks.

# Agricultural Viability Monitoring

- Explores bridges and barriers to agricultural producers' livelihoods.
  - Example: analyzing patterns of land-use conversion from agricultural to non-agricultural activities.
  - Important for telling the VSP success story, and for identifying trends that affect WP goals and benchmarks (i.e., loss of farmland typically is an indicator of decreasing agricultural viability (for the agriculture that remains) in the county).

# Monitoring and the 5YR Review & Evaluation Report

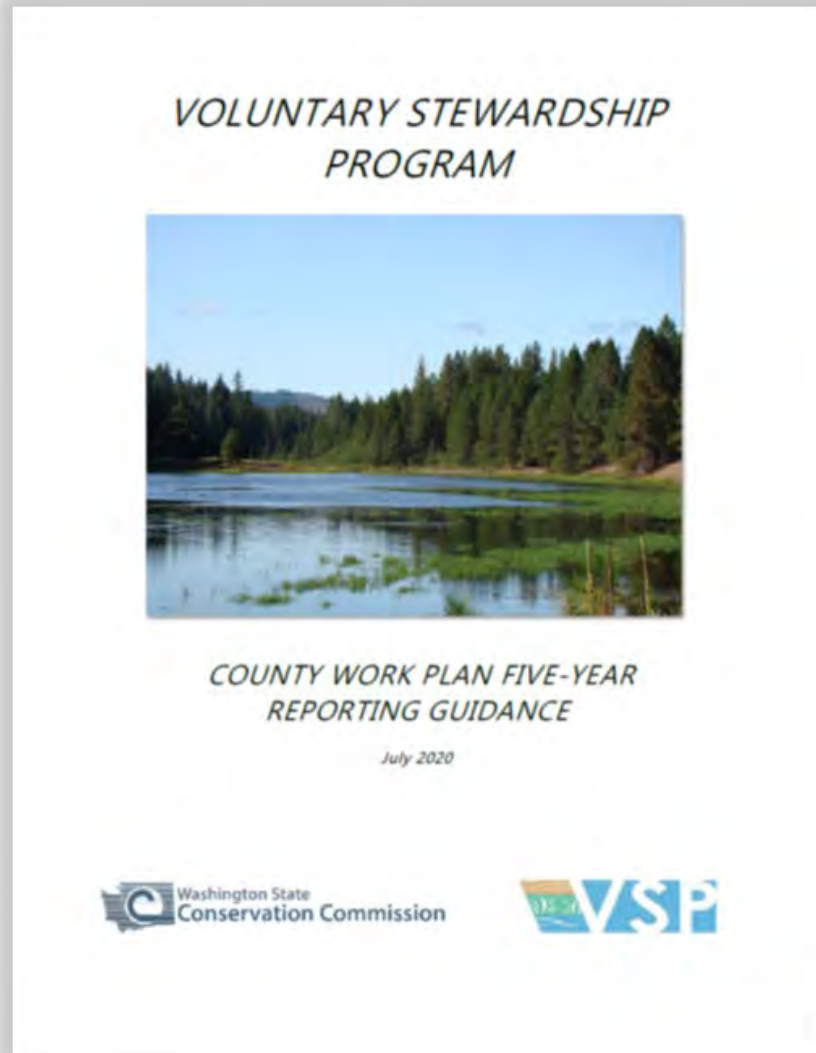
- Every five years (5YR report) each county must assert in a report that it is meeting its county-wide WP goals and benchmarks in order to continue to participate in VSP.
- Information from the suite of monitoring approaches outlined above will need to be integrated into the decisions and activities of each county's WG.
- In this way, data collected via the various monitoring approaches inform each county's WG and adaptive management efforts.



# Purpose of the 5YR Review & Evaluation Report

- The 5-year report is not a summary of what's been done. It is a self-evaluation of how well implementation actions are working towards meeting the goals and benchmarks of the plan, and if the plan is adequately showing protection or enhancement of critical area functions and values as indicated by monitoring.
- The 5-year report should answer the questions:
  - *"Is our plan doing what we said it would do?"* (meeting goals and benchmarks);
  - *"Is our plan protecting and enhancing critical area functions and values?"* and
  - *"How do we know?"* (What evidence do we have to support our answers to the first two questions?).

# 5YR Report Guide & Access Database



The image is a screenshot of a web application titled "VSP 5 Year Report". The interface includes a Microsoft Word-style ribbon at the top with tabs for "File" and "Home", and various toolbars for editing and data management. The main content area is titled "Report Submitter and Goal Status" and contains the following fields and sections:

- County:** A dropdown menu with "Spokane" selected.
- for Report Period Ending:** A date field with "4/22/2021" entered.
- Buttons:** "Next -->" and "Save Location and Close Report".
- Submitter Information:**
  - Submitter Name:** "Bill Eller"
  - Submitter Phone:** "509-385-7512"
  - Submitter Email:** "beller@scc.wa.gov"
- Protection Goals:**
  - ☒ The watershed work group asserts that the work plan's PROTECTION goals and benchmarks have been met during the past five years.
  - ☐ The watershed work group asserts that the work plan's PROTECTION goals and benchmarks have NOT been met during the past five years.
- Enhancement Goals:**
  - ☒ The watershed work group asserts that the work plan's ENHANCEMENT goals and benchmarks have been met during the past five years.
  - ☐ The watershed work group asserts that the work plan's ENHANCEMENT goals and benchmarks have NOT been met during the past five years.

# 5YR Report Template

- The Template takes counties through a step-by-step process to document the data needed by the Commission in order to concur with the county work group's assertion that it is meeting its goals and benchmarks.
- The Template records data on each goal and benchmark, monitoring and adaptive management actions taken by the county.

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Word document titled "VSP 5 Year Report". The ribbon includes "File", "Home", and a search bar. The "Home" ribbon has tabs for "Clipboard", "Font", "Paragraph", "References", "Send to PDF", "Review", and "View". The "Font" tab is active, showing options for Font Face, Size, Bold, Italic, Underline, Color, and Text Formatting. The "Paragraph" tab is also visible, showing options for Paragraph Style, Indentation, Spacing, and Orientation. The "References" tab is active, showing options for Report Submitter/Goal Status, Table of Contents, Cross-References, and Citations. The "Table of Contents" section is expanded, showing "Table of Contents", "Table of Figures", "Table of Tables", and "Table of Figures". The "Table of Contents" section is further expanded, showing "Table of Contents", "Table of Figures", "Table of Tables", and "Table of Figures". The "Table of Contents" section is further expanded, showing "Table of Contents", "Table of Figures", "Table of Tables", and "Table of Figures".

**Report Submitter and Goal Status**

County:  for Report Period Ending:  [Next >>>](#) [Save Location and Close Report](#)

Submitter Name:  Submitter Phone:   
Submitter Email:

**Protection Goals**

☒ The watershed work group asserts that the work plan's PROTECTION goals and benchmarks have been met during the past five years.

☐ The watershed work group asserts that the work plan's PROTECTION goals and benchmarks have NOT been met during the past five years.

**Enhancement Goals**

☒ The watershed work group asserts that the work plan's ENHANCEMENT goals and benchmarks have been met during the past five years.

☐ The watershed work group asserts that the work plan's ENHANCEMENT goals and benchmarks have NOT been met during the past five years.

# 5YR Review & Evaluation Report – Monitoring Questions

Then, add details about the selected Monitoring Activity (details depend on selected monitoring type):

Timeframe/season for field sampling or data collection (e.g., summer only, annually, monthly)

summer only

Desired accuracy of the monitoring

80

Number of samples/sites

12

Observed mean

8.5

Observed standard deviation

1.2

What statistical test was performed? (Ex. t-test, ANOVA, time series, regression, etc.)

We compared mean levels of turbidity from 2006-2011 (baseline) and 2011-2016. We used a t-test to compare

Is the observation statistically significant?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Did the underlying data meet statistical test assumptions (e.g., normality)?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Briefly describe the outcome of the monitoring and why VSP implementation/lack of implementation contributed to the observations

We collected and analyzed turbidity levels for 12 water quality stations from 2006-2016. Samples were collected bi-weekly throughout the summer (June-August) when stream flows are generally low. Histograms were created to validate that the data

Critical Area	Included
Wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Critical Aquifer Recharge	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frequently Flooded	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geologic Hazard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Adaptive Management needed?

☐ Yes

☒ No

The 5-year report asks for enough information to allow reviewers to evaluate the monitoring

# 10YR Report Due Dates



Chelan & Thurston – July 20, 2024

Kittitas – November 17, 2025

Mason – November 24, 2025

Garfield – November 30, 2025

Asotin & Grant – December 14, 2025

San Juan – December 20, 2025

Cowlitz & Pacific – December 22, 2025

Okanogan – December 28, 2025

Benton – January 12, 2026

Skagit & Whitman – January 19, 2026

Columbia – January 20, 2026

Yakima – January 21, 2026

Douglas – January 22, 2026

Pend Oreille – February 2, 2026

Franklin – February 24, 2026

Walla Walla – March 7, 2026

Stevens – March 10, 2026

Ferry – March 14, 2026

Grays Harbor & Lincoln – March 21, 2026

Lewis – April 18, 2026

Spokane – April 22, 2026

Adams – May 23, 2026





5YR  
report  
done  
2021

VSP implementation - includes preparation of next report, meaning

- Conversations, collaboration, & assistance with & from state agencies (Technical Panel members & others) & federal & local agencies
- Monitoring & data gathering
- Adaptive management
- WG strategic direction after reports from TSPs
- Writing & preparing the next report

10YR  
report  
due  
2026





# SCC-County VSP Contract

# VSP Implementation

- Each biennia, as per the usual state budget and legislative cycle, the SCC staff crafts a contract for use with each VSP county
  - The contract must abide by state agency contractual requirements, meaning certain financial, administrative, and contractual provisions must be included in it.
  - SCC financial staff, SCC policy staff, SCC VSP staff, and the Office of Financial Management, are involved in reviewing and developing the contract.
  - An assistant Attorney General reviews the final draft of the contract

2023-25 Biennium Contract No. \_\_\_\_

BETWEEN

The Washington State Conservation Commission

AND

\_\_\_\_ County

FOR

Voluntary Stewardship Program Implementation

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into by and between the Washington State Conservation Commission, hereinafter referred to as "COMMISSION" and \_\_\_\_ County, hereinafter referred to as "COUNTY".

IT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS AGREEMENT to provide funding to the COUNTY for the implementation of the work plan as required for the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP), consistent with RCW 36.70A.700-760 and related statutes.

THEREFORE, IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED THAT the COMMISSION will provide funding consistent with the terms of this contract, the policies of the COMMISSION, and the laws of the State of Washington; and the COUNTY will implement the terms of this contract with the funding provided consistent with the policies of the COMMISSION and the laws of the State of Washington.

## 1.0 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

Subject to its other provisions, the period of performance of this agreement shall be from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2025, unless either extended by agreement of the parties or terminated sooner, as provided herein.

## 2.0 SCOPE OF WORK

It is the intent of the parties that the COUNTY will perform its duties consistent with the timelines set forth in RCW 36.70A.720-735, subject to available funding, and subject to state contracting requirements. The COUNTY shall furnish the necessary personnel, equipment, material and/or service(s), or contract with third parties to accomplish the same, and



## VSP Implementation – SCC and Each VSP County

- The purpose of the contract is to set out the statutory requirements and SCC contract deliverables for VSP implementation
- There have been at least 5 iterations of the SCC-county contract, beginning before the FY 2015-17 biennia:
  1. Prior to FY 2015-2017, these contracts was already in place between the SCC-counties
  2. FY 2015-17: \$7,290,000 - \$270,000 per county - Planning
  3. FY 2017-19: \$5,940,000 - \$220,000 per county - Planning
  4. FY 2019-21: \$6,480,000 - \$240,000 per county – Implementation
  5. FY 2021-23: \$6,345,000 - \$235,000 per county – Implementation
- FY23-25 will begin July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2025

# VSP Implementation – SCC and Each VSP County

- Prior to my time as the VSP Coordinator, SCC policy staff was responsible for the contract, its development, writing, distribution and communication with the counties.
  - Do not know the origin of the contract, nor what it was based on.
  - My understanding is that it is based on the master contract the SCC has with the CDs.
- Since becoming VSP Coordinator:
  - Have only recently been more in control of the contract development and updating process (last biennia FY21-23), but still act only at the direction of SCC leadership
  - Have kept the development, writing, distribution and communications substantially the same
    - But, have tried to begin the revision and updating process sooner, to provide more time to accomplish those revisions, since a lot of SCC staff are involved, and for outreach.
    - Provide an information webinar toward the end of May, at the beginning of the new biennia, for counties, CDs, and VSP stakeholders about the contract revisions. Contract go out asap after the May webinar.
    - At no time has the SCC commissioners been involved in suggesting changes, ratifying or taking other action on the contract.
    - SCC staff, since before there was a VSP coordinator, have created, drafted, and amended the contract on behalf of the SCC.

# VSP Implementation – SCC and Each VSP County

- The SCC staff, including the SCC financial staff, SCC policy staff, SCC VSP staff, and in conjunction with the OFM, makes period changes or amendments to that contract, as old provisions are updated or changed (for example, new this biennia, the SCC can have the contract signed electronically by the counties, so that has added that provision to the contract).
- For VSP, the SCC has always included in the contract
  1. Statutory requirements (for example, that the county must have a WG, that they must have a WP, they must submit 2YR and 5YR reports, etc.), and
  2. SCC contract deliverables designed to ensure that VSP is being successfully implemented by each county (for example, each county must submit to the SCC a quarterly implementation report, hold regular WG meetings, and voucher the SCC for VSP expenses monthly).

# VSP Implementation – SCC County Contract Development

- While the SCC-county contract is being looked at for changes and updates, SCC VSP staff, in conjunction with SCC leadership, SCC financial and science staff, work on budget development packages for the program beginning in summer and fall, before the end of the biennia.
- At the same time, internal discussions with SCC VSP staff, SCC leadership, SCC policy staff, and SCC science team members on requiring a monitoring plan for each VSP county were ongoing, having started as soon as our prior Executive Director came on board in early 2022.
- Budget development packages were developed, included one anticipating that SCC leadership would require a monitoring plan (\$1.4M for counties for monitoring)
  - SCC VSP staff, SCC leadership, SCC policy staff, SCC financial staff, and SCC science team members all contribute to the development and review of the VSP budget packages.

# VSP Implementation – SCC County Contract Development

- By December 2022, SCC leadership had decided to require a monitoring plan
  - At this time, the VSP Monitoring Guide was already promulgated and available for county use but had not included a full discussion of a monitoring plan. SCC VSP staff and SCC science staff worked to provide the updates to the Guide related to a monitoring plan. The updated Guide was put out for VSP stakeholder comment from February 1, 2023, to March 17, 2023. Comments were received and integrated into the updated Guide.
  - SCC VSP staff began work on updating the SCC-county VSP contract, anticipating the monitoring requirement would be part of the contract. The contract is reviewed by SCC VSP, financial, and policy staff for revisions and updates, in preparation for the next biennia. A clause was added to the contract requiring a monitoring plan.
- March 2023 – SCC leadership changed
- The new SCC leadership provided direction that that a monitoring plan was still going to be required, but its form and substance left to the discretion of each county. The information in the Guide about crafting a MP was informational only.
- SCC-county contract, with the monitoring clause edited to reflect the above, and with other changes and edits, sent to the AAG for review.
- SCC-county contract must go out asap after it is final so that there is no interruption of VSP implementation while it is being signed by the counties.

# Changes to the FY 23-25 VSP SCC-County Contract

- Added a deliverable of requiring the completion of a monitoring plan

*Completion of a Monitoring Plan: The COUNTY agrees that by July 1, 2024, the COUNTY will provide to the SCC a monitoring plan. The SCC encourages the COUNTY to use the Watershed Monitoring Project Development Guide for the Voluntary Stewardship Program in Washington, Volume III to create the plan, but will not require its use in the creation of the plan. The monitoring plan shall be designed to facilitate the collection, analysis, and reporting of information for VSP.*

- Electronic signature of the contract is now available but must follow the SCC's new electronic signature policy.
- Increased overhead percentage from 20% to 25% for technical service providers.
- Updated the schedule for the quarterly reports to reflect the FY23-25 biennia.
- Added a conflict-of-interest clause – standard boilerplate contract language
- Up to three budget line items need to be included in the budget.
- District Implemented Projects (DIP) now a cost-share option for CDs only.

# More Background Behind Requiring a Monitoring Plan

- Arrived at by SCC leadership after about 12 months of internal debate and deliberation
- SCC staff presented various options to SCC leadership, including
  1. Take no action – stay with the monitoring questions already included in the 5YR report
  2. Add more to the monitoring questions in the 5YR report
  - 3. Add a monitoring requirement to the SCC contract**
    - Necessary / relevant to VSP –
      - Required by statute – RCW 36.70A.720(1)(e) and (i)
      - Required to meet county-wide work plan goals and benchmarks
      - Provides the means to obtain the evidence needed to support the assertions of the 5YR reports that the counties are meeting their county-wide goals and benchmarks to effectively protect the critical areas while maintaining agricultural viability.
        - Provides the means to tell the story of VSP success

# Requiring a Monitoring Plan – Considerations Discussed

Add a monitoring requirement to the SCC contract, make the elements of the MP attainable:

- Cost – affordable for the county / CD (i.e. Pinto v. Cadillac debate)
  - New funding (see below)
  - Additional sources of funding (next slide)
- Work-load – attainable given the current state of the work-load that the counties / CDs already have for VSP (statutory and contract deliverables)
  - SCC's recommendation that each VSP county hire an FTE dedicated to VSP (not just another duty of a new or current staffer)
- Skill-set – able to be completed using current skills-sets that county and CD staff have, or skill-sets that can be quickly and actually attainable by the county or CD staff
  - Monitoring symposiums – Oct 2021 – present – 5
  - In-the-field monitoring trainings conducted by Technical Panel support staff
  - SCC science team
- Additional funding – seek and obtain new funding for each county to carry out this new requirement - \$47,000 biennia in the FY23-25 SCC VSP budget development package (20% increase)
  - \$47,000 biennia was arrived at through discussions with the VSP Technical Panel agencies and consultation with the SCC science team as to the cost of putting together a MP
  - Budget yet to be set by the Legislature



# Outreach and Next Steps

- SCC sent the updated MG for comment for six weeks, from February 1 – March 17, 2023.
- Incorporated those comments into the final draft, made considerable grammatical and formatting changes to the MG based on those comments, and incorporated policy choices into the final draft.
- **After SCC leadership change, and as a result of the outreach done and communications with counties and CDs, the SCC removed any requirement that the MG be used to create the MP.** SCC encourages the use of the MG for the creation of the MP but leaves the final decision on how to create a MG to each VSP county.
- Communicated this at the March 28, 2023, monitoring background webinar, and through a May 2, 2023, letter from Kirk Robinson, Interim SCC Executive Director, and at a May 16, 2023, VSP SCC-County contract and budget webinar for FY 23-25.
- Help is available from SCC science staff in crafting MPs.

# May 2, 2023, Letter to Counties

- “At the beginning of each new biennium, SCC must sign a new contract with each of the 27 VSP counties for implementation. As required in statute, these contracts **will include the requirements for monitoring but will not require utilizing the Monitoring Guide.** It will be up to each county and district partner to develop and implement their own individual plans.”
- “Much work and effort have gone into developing and updating the Monitoring Guide, and we highly **encourage the utilization of the guidance in developing and implementing individual monitoring plans.** SCC is committed to working in collaboration with districts, stakeholders, and partners to ensure the success of VSP and providing a Monitoring Guide as a successful tool in monitoring plans. **Our goal is to provide a Monitoring Guide, a working document that evolves as the VSP program progresses.**”



# VSP Budget – FY 23-25 Legislature

Operating:

**\$1,420,000**   **Monitoring and reporting efforts**

Budget proviso:

***Funding of the public works assistance account is provided solely to support monitoring and reporting efforts necessary to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of voluntary stewardship program work plans.***



Questions?