



# Voluntary Stewardship Program Franklin County Work Group



Presented by  
Ben Floyd and Josh Jensen  
December 8, 2016

# Agenda

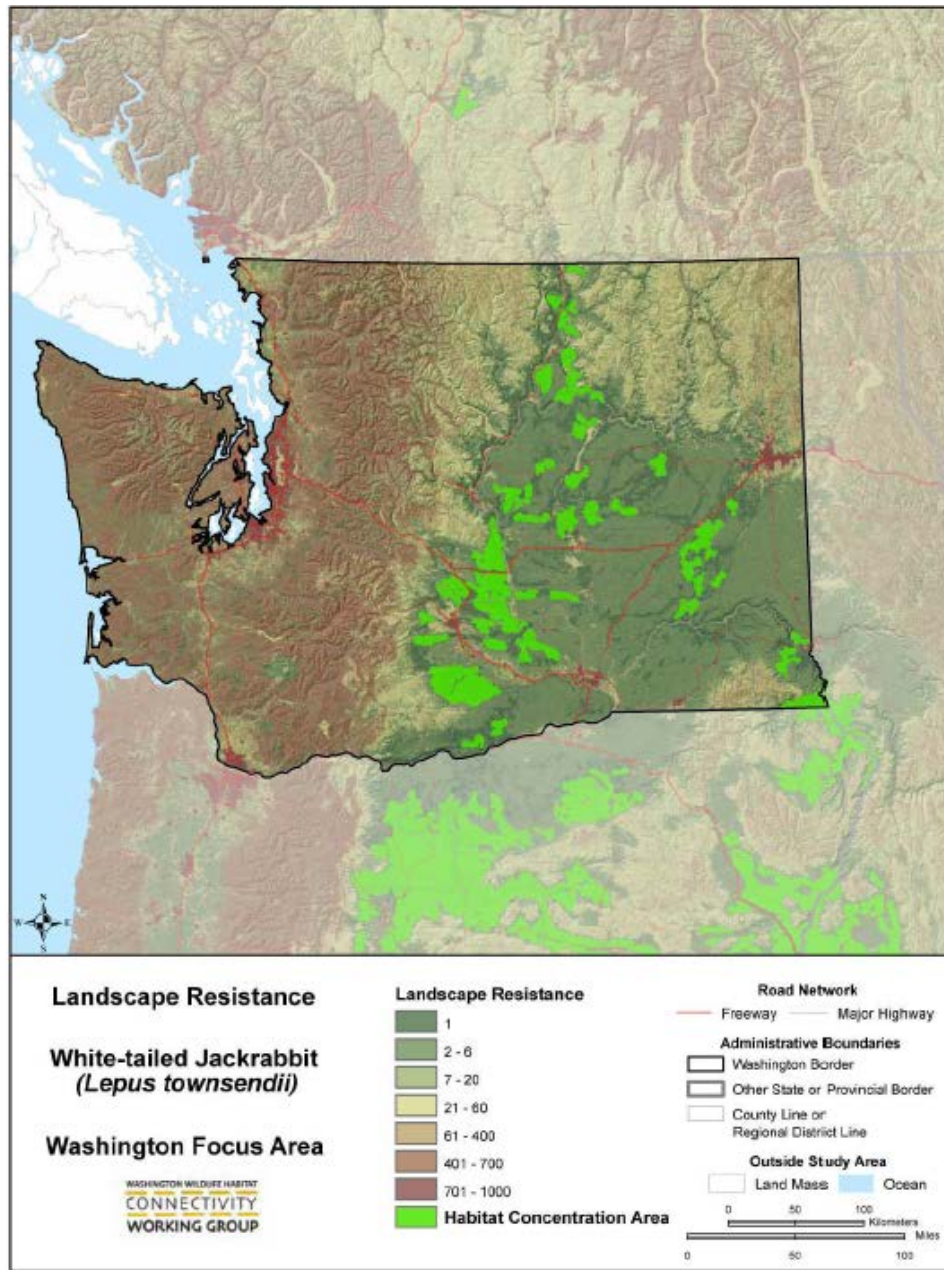
- Follow up on action items from October meeting
  - Draft conservation practices table on website
  - Habitat corridor data from Mike Ritter
  - Critical areas maps to be revised per feedback
- Introduction to Goals and Measurable Benchmarks
  - RCW Guidance
  - Types of goals: protection versus enhancement
  - Measurable benchmarks
- Outreach Strategy (Plan Development/ Implementation)
- Next steps

Re-cap

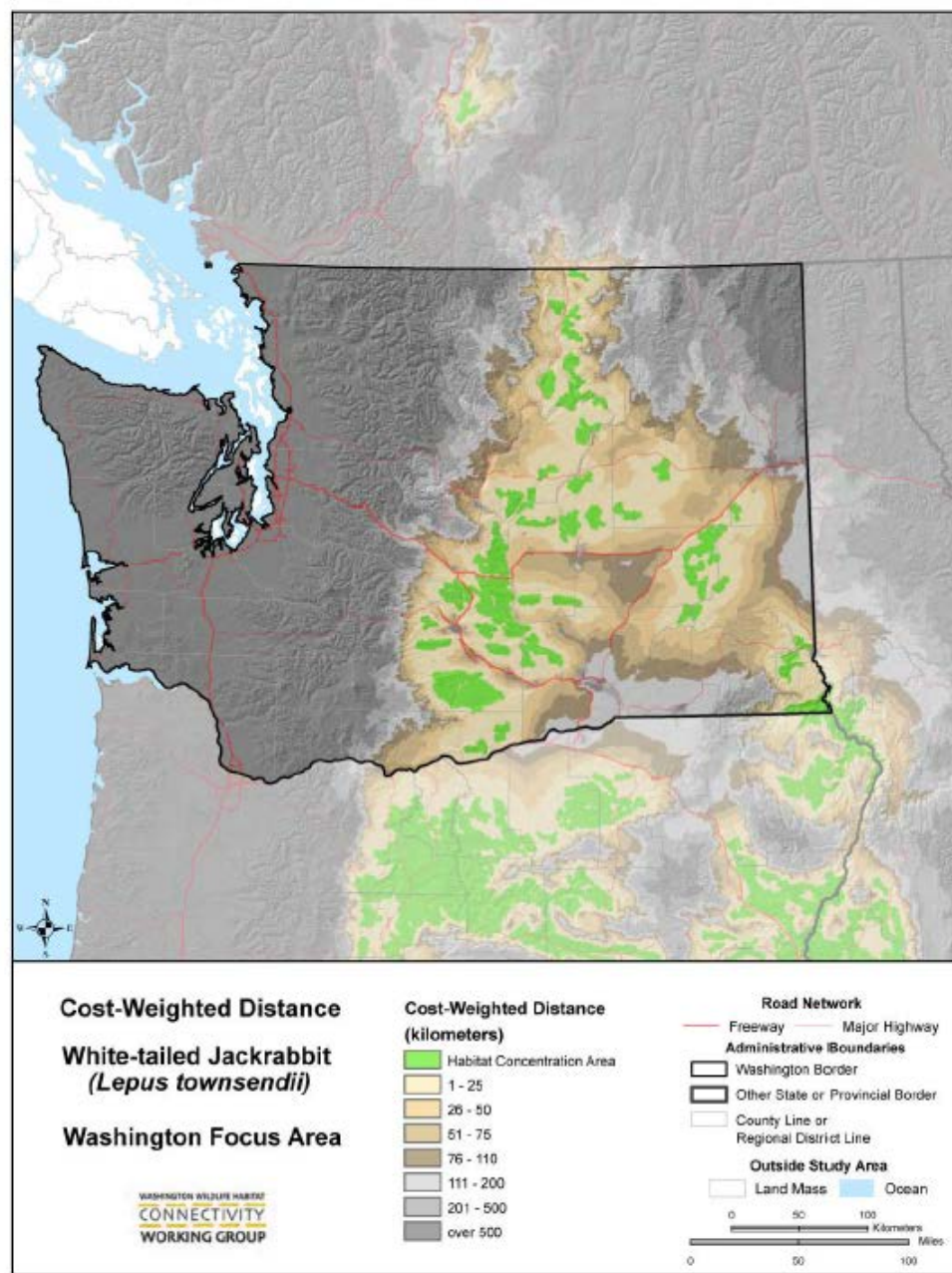
# October Work Group Meeting

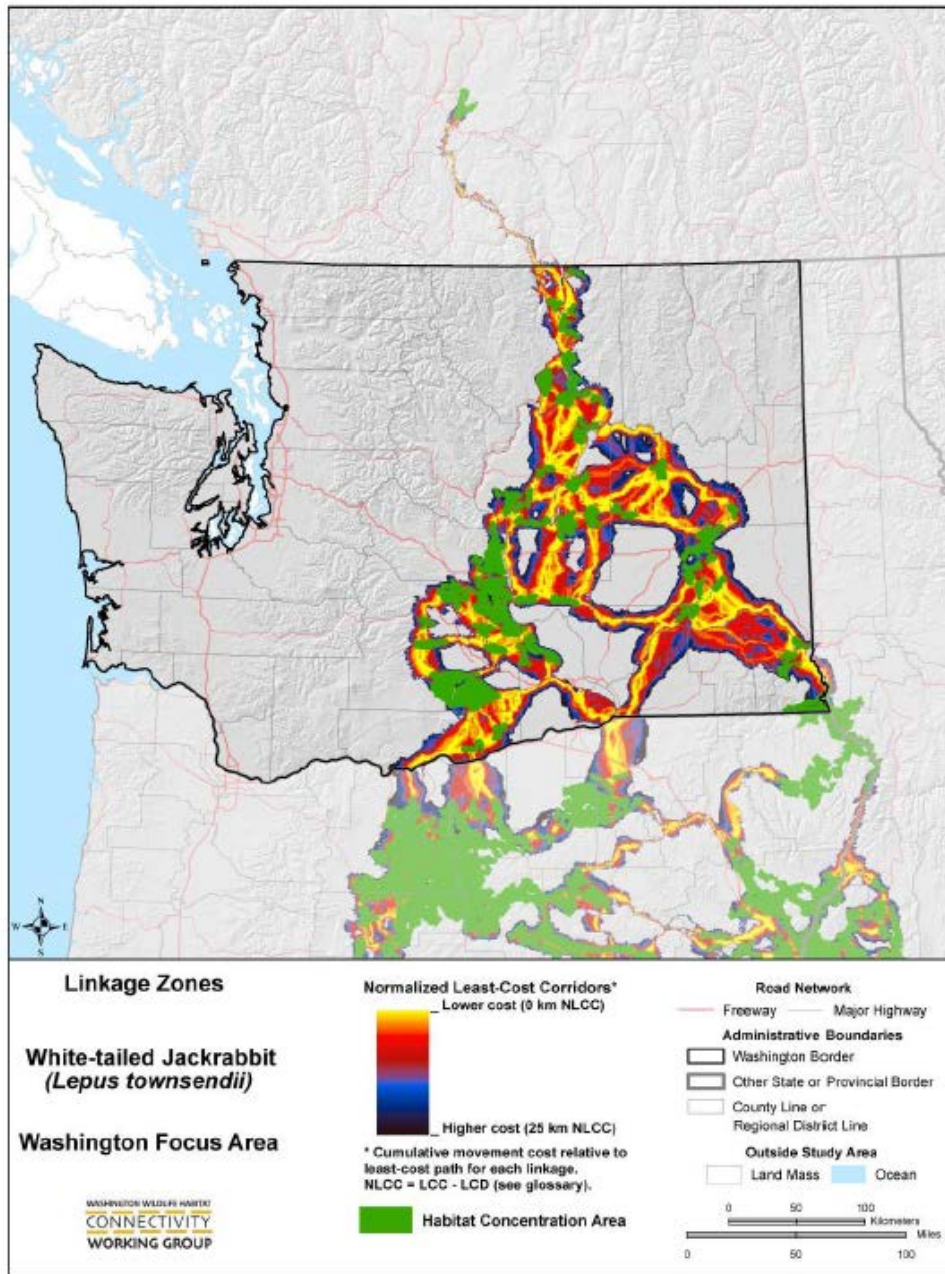
# 10/27 Work Group Meeting Re-cap

- Work Group reviewed and approved changes to the ground rules re: use of alternates
- Conservation practices matrix was further discussed, available for comment on the webpage
- Mike Ritter provided habitat corridor and connectivity analysis documentation to incorporate into the Work Plan
- We are also revising the critical areas maps using the suggestions provided at the meeting



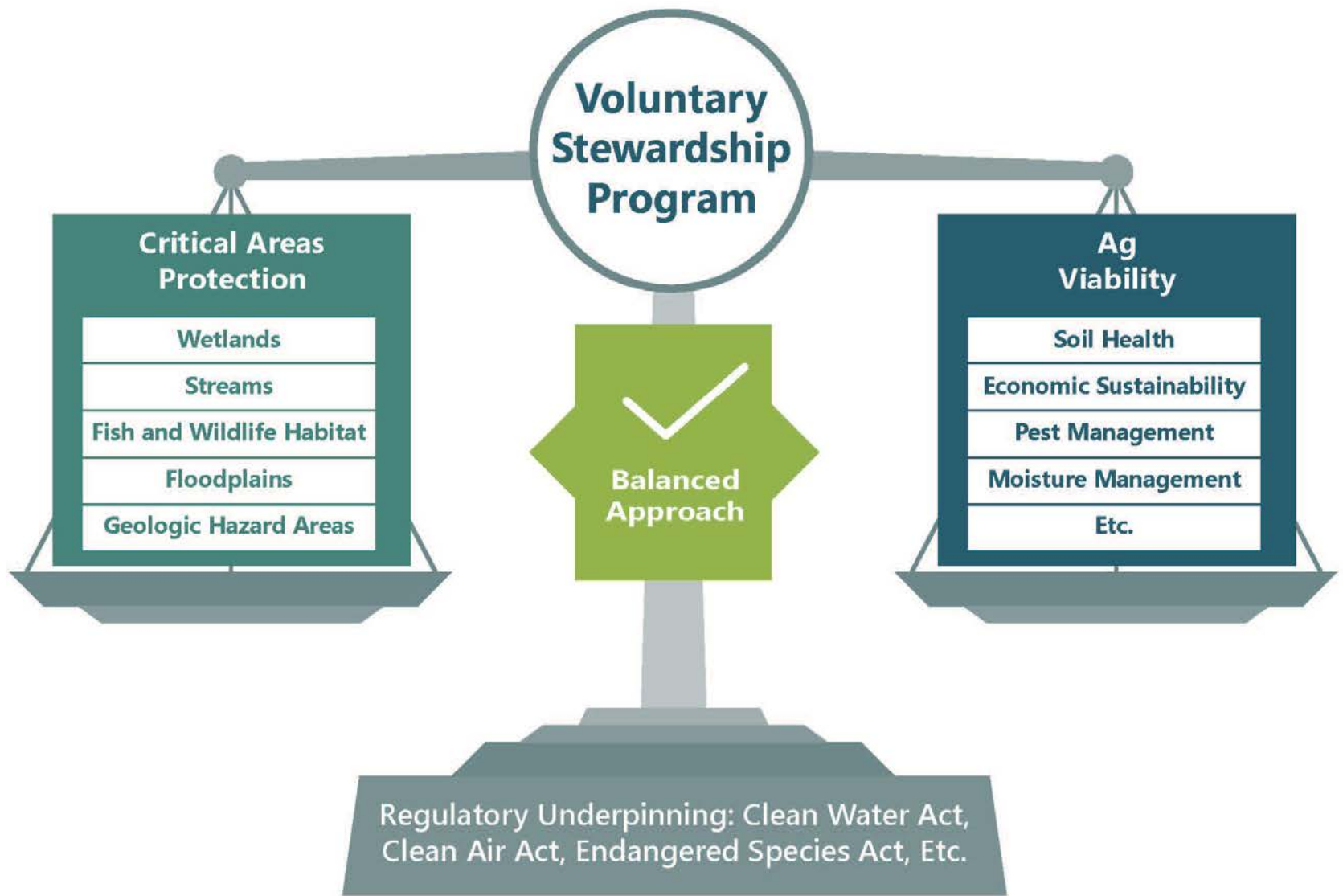






# VSP Framework Overview





# Critical Area Functions and Values

	Water Quality	Hydrology	Soil Health	Habitat
Wetlands	Blue	Tan	White	Green
Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas	Blue	Tan	Orange	Green
Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas	Blue	Tan	White	White
Geologically Hazardous Areas (Erosion)	White	White	Orange	White
Frequently Flooded Areas	Blue	Tan	Orange	Green

# VSP Work Plan Context and Conservation Practices

# Top 10 NRCS Practices Applied by projects and acres (2011 – 2016)

- These practices are indicators to main concerns in County
  - Water quality, soil conservation, and soil health
- These practices will be highlighted in the VSP Checklist

Conservation Practice	Count	Acres	Land use		
			Dryland	Irrigated	Range
Programs - EQIP - WHIP - AWEPP					
Mulch Till	29	21,844	X		
Pest Management	44	18,583		X	
Nutrient Management	42	17,748		X	
Irrigation Water Management	78	12,427		X	
Pumping Plant	32	10,711		X	
Fence	8	9,594	X	X	
Pipeline	5	6,511	X		X
Irrigation Pipeline	35	5,181		X	
Watering Facility	8	4,933	X		X
Water Well	5	4,457			X
Prescribed Grazing	2	3,525			X



# Mulch Till Example

Description: Managing the amount, orientation and distribution of crop residue on the soil while limiting soil-disturbing activities where the field surface is tilled prior to planting.

- 29 practices/projects in place (2011-2016)
- 21,844 acres

<b>Applicability</b>	<b>Ag Viability Protection</b>	<b>Critical Area Functions Protection</b>
Irrigated, Dryland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Soil Health</li><li>• Prevention of soil loss</li><li>• Moisture management</li><li>• Yield and fertility</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hydrology</li><li>• Habitat</li><li>• Water quality</li><li>• Soil conservation</li></ul>

# Nutrient Management Example

Description: Managing the amount, source, and application of nutrients to minimize risk to surface and groundwater.

- 42 practices/projects in place (2011-2016)
- 17,748 acres

<b>Applicability</b>	<b>Ag Viability Protection</b>	<b>Critical Area Functions Protection</b>
Irrigated, Dryland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Soil Health</li><li>• Yield and fertility</li></ul>	Water quality

# Prescribed Grazing Example

Description: This practice includes using grazing or browsing animals to manage vegetation for weed or pest control and drought management.

- 2 practices/projects in place (2011-2016)
- 3,525 acres

<b>Applicability</b>	<b>Ag Viability Protection</b>	<b>Critical Area Functions Protection</b>
Rangelands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prevention of soil loss</li><li>• Weed management</li><li>• Yield and fertility</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Habitat</li><li>• Water quality</li><li>• Soil conservation</li></ul>

# Practices Implemented under CSP (2011 – 2016)

- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) provides support for maintaining and enhancing practices that have been implemented
- Crop Land Management
  - 28 practices, 8,026 acres
- Pasture Management
  - 2 practices, 3,149 acres
- Range Management
  - 20 practices, 5,943 acres



# Agricultural Viability – Regional Perspective

The ability of a region to sustain agricultural economy and production over time

Concept	Detail
<b>Stable and secure agricultural land base</b>	Land conversion
	Stable water rights
<b>Infrastructure and services</b>	Utilities/irrigation
	Market access/transportation
<b>Support for best farm management practices</b>	Economically viable solutions
	Balanced approach
<b>Education, training, and succession planning</b>	Apprenticeships/training
	Interconnectivity with end users
<b>Welcoming business environment</b>	Stable regulatory environment
	Partnership based environmental protection

# Agricultural Viability – Farm Perspective

The ability of a farm to meet financial obligations and make profit

Concept	Detail
<b>Reduce Input Costs</b>	Energy (power, fuels)
	Chemicals
	Labor
<b>Maintain/Enhance Land Production Capacity</b>	Soil health
	Water systems and moisture management
	Nutrient management
	Promoting/adopting new technology
<b>Flexibility to Respond to Market Conditions</b>	Changing land in production
	Individual schedule for implementing conservation practices
	Cropping choices
<b>Incentives</b>	Payment for measures
	Tax breaks
<b>Managed Farmland Conversion</b>	Urban development (Pasco)
	Maintain resource lands
<b>“No Surprises” Regulatory Environment</b>	CWA, CAA, ESA, etc.
<b>Protect Private Property Rights</b>	Recognize and respect rights

# Goals and Measurable Benchmarks

# Goals and Benchmarks

*RCW 36.70A.720 (1) – Work plan must include goals and benchmarks for the protection and enhancement of critical areas.*

*(e) create measurable benchmarks that, within 10 years are designed to result in*

*(1) the protection for critical areas functions and values*

*(2) the enhancement of critical areas functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures*

- **Protect** = *Prevent the degradation of functions and values existing July 22, 2011*
- **Enhance** = *Improve the critical areas processes, structure, and functions of ecosystems and habitats existing July 22, 2011*

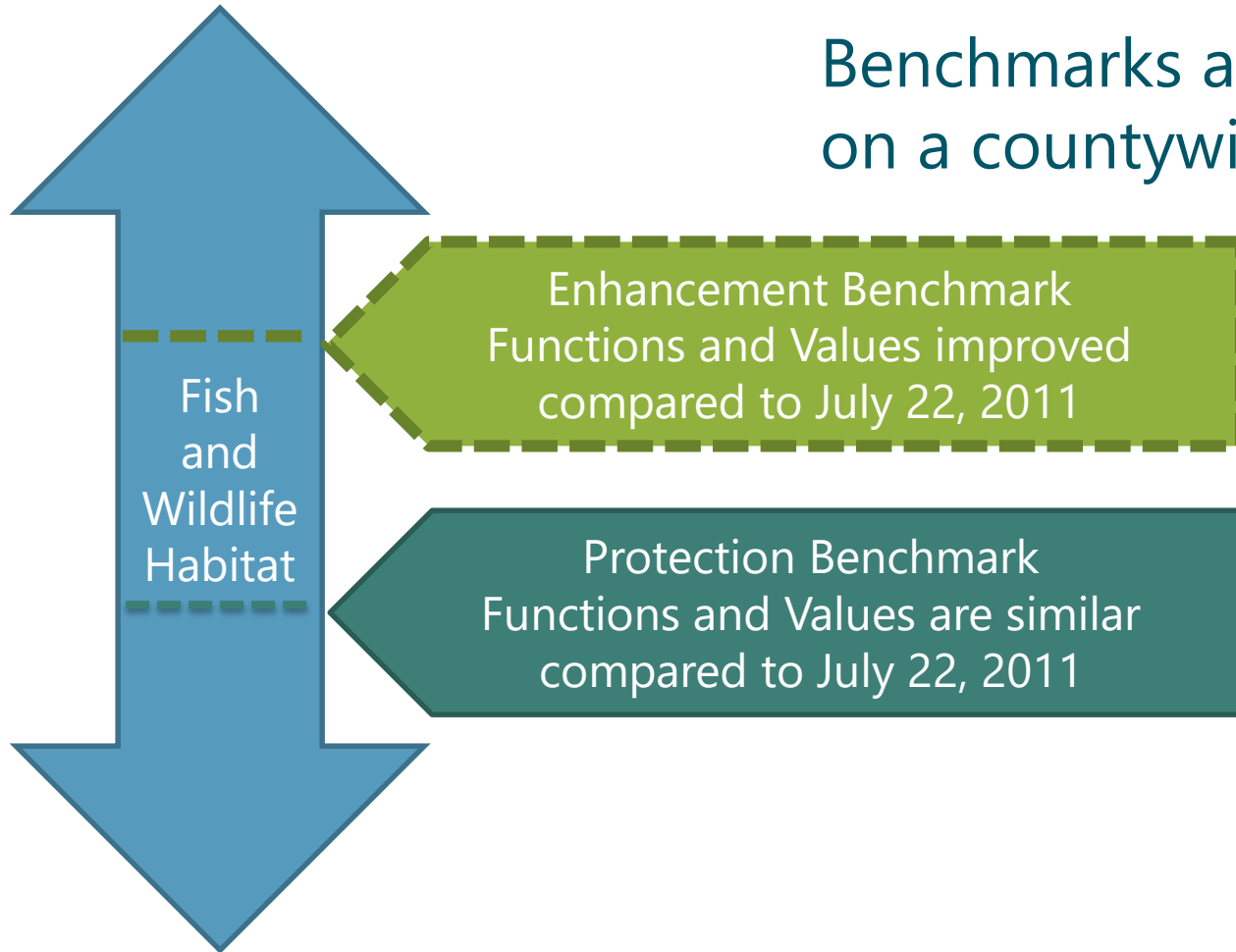


# Goals

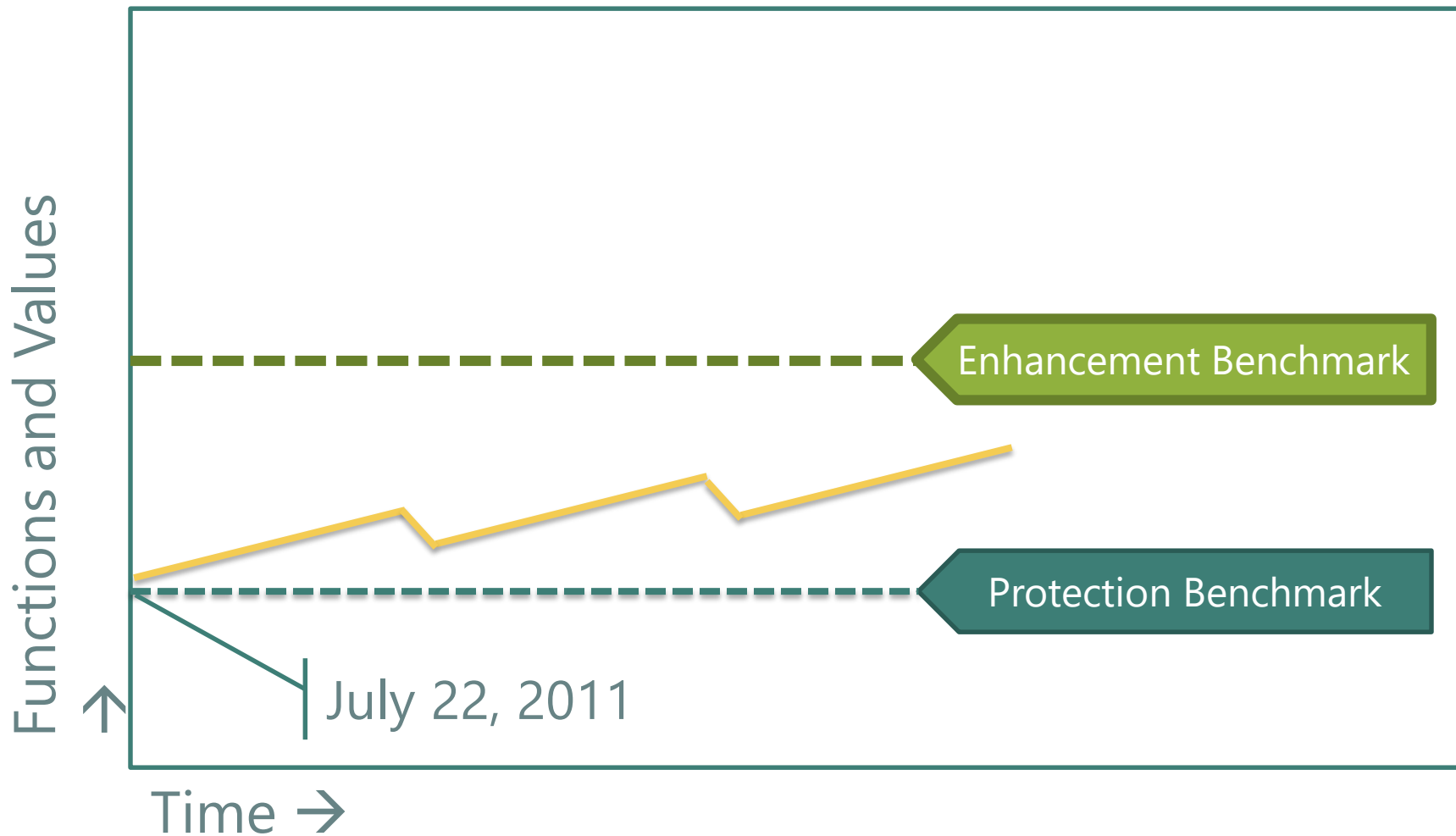
- The work plan includes both **protection and enhancement goals** and benchmarks
- Protection goals must be met through VSP
  - Current VSP funding provides for protection of critical areas
- Enhancement goals are not required to be met through VSP
  - Counties can enhance if additional funds become available for incentives

# Measurable Benchmarks

Benchmarks are evaluated on a countywide basis



# Monitoring and Benchmarks





# Goals and Benchmarks

## Goal: Protect or enhance surface water quality

<b>Protection Benchmark</b>	No net increase in turbidity, agriculture-related toxins, agriculture-related nutrients, or dissolved oxygen
<b>Enhancement Benchmark</b>	Decrease in turbidity, agriculture-related toxins, agriculture-related nutrients, or dissolved oxygen
<b>Monitoring Measures</b>	Use of ongoing water quality monitoring from various agencies including the Washington State Department of Ecology
<b>Participation Measures</b>	Participation in conservation practices that protect or enhance surface water quality (cover crop, residue and tillage management etc.)



# Goals and Benchmarks

## Goal: Preserve and enhance existing native habitat areas

<b>Protection Benchmark</b>	No decrease of habitat areas or quality of habitat
<b>Enhancement Benchmark</b>	Restoration of existing habitat areas and/or creation of new habitat areas
<b>Monitoring Measures</b>	Use of habitat survey and monitoring data such as Priority Habitat and Species mapping.
<b>Participation Measures</b>	Participation in conservation practices that preserve and enhance existing native habitat areas (conservation cover, prescribed grazing, fish and wildlife structure etc.)

# Potential Monitoring Programs/Data

- Columbia Basin Groundwater Management Area/CD and public water systems data program
- South Columbia Basin Irrigation District water quality monitoring data
- Franklin County land conversion data
- Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society annual bird counts
- WDFW Priority Habitats and Species data updates
- NRCS soils data
- Others?? (Discuss)

# Example Participation Measures Tracking Form

Measure	2018 (acres)	2020 (acres)	2022 (acres)	2024 (acres)	2026 (acres)
Mulch Till	22,000	24,000	26,000	28,000	30,000
Pest Mgmt.	19,000	20,000	21,000	22,000	23,000
Fence	10,000	10,500	11,000	11,500	12,000
Etc.	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>51,000</b>	<b>54,500</b>	<b>58,000</b>	<b>61,500</b>	<b>65,000</b>
(less 20% recidivism)	-10,200	-10,900	-11,600	-12,300	-13,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,800</b>	<b>43,600</b>	<b>46,400</b>	<b>49,200</b>	<b>52,000</b>

# Outreach During Plan Development



# Discussion of Outreach

*RCW 36.70A.720(1)(d) Ensure outreach and technical assistance is provided to agricultural operators*

- Current outreach/technical support strategies - by industry, CD, NRCS, and others
- Outreach at local events and meetings
- Discussion
  - Ways to increase participation during VSP Work Plan development
  - Outreach strategies to include in VSP Work Plan

# Implementation Introduction

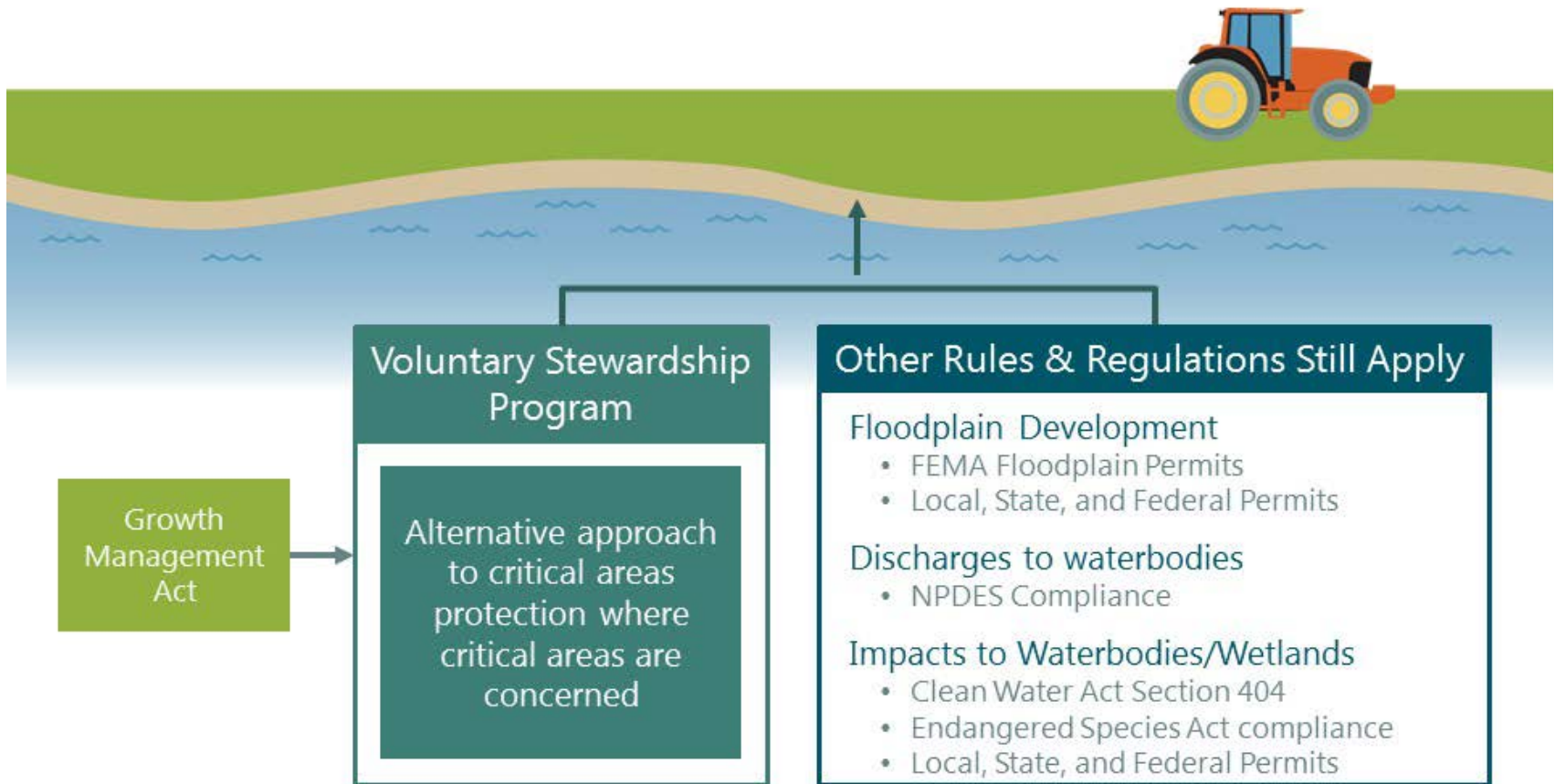
# Implementation Framework

- Expected to continue largely through established programs and organizations
- Work Plan implementation responsibilities include:
  - agricultural producer participation and outreach
  - technical assistance
  - program performance tracking and reporting
  - adaptive management
- Reporting timeline
  - 2 years: Report on progress
  - 5 years: Performance Review
- Proposed implementation lead: Conservation District
  - Conservation District would coordinate with private industry and local, state, and federal agencies

# Existing Programs and Plans

- Groundwater Management Plans
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Private Lands Conservation Program (WDFW-led)
- Private sector
- Others

# Regulatory Underpinning



*Note: The above list does not provide a comprehensive list of all rules and regulations that may apply to agricultural activities within or adjacent to critical areas*

# Questions, Comments, and Next Steps

# Next Steps

- January 26, 2017 (1pm to 3pm at the Franklin CD office)
  - Continue discussing goals and benchmarks
    - Protection and enhancement benchmarks
    - Participation goals
  - Continue discussing outreach strategies
  - Conceptual Overview of Work Plan
- February – AQ Prepare Work Plan (no meeting)
- March to April – Review and Revise Work Plan