

FRANKLIN COUNTY VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM



Announcement – Franklin County VSP Work Group Forming

Franklin County is forming a Work Group to develop the County's Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP). The VSP is a new approach approved and funded by the state legislature to protect critical areas on agricultural lands within the state of Washington. Franklin County is one of the 28 counties across the state that opted to participate in the VSP process.

Instead of enacting further critical areas regulations on agricultural lands, the VSP provides an alternative approach to protecting critical areas in Franklin County. The VSP allows the County to work closely with landowners and stakeholders to develop voluntary, site-specific stewardship plans to protect critical areas on agricultural lands while maintaining and enhancing the viability of agriculture.

The five types of critical areas that must be addressed by all counties in Washington are:

1. Wetlands
2. Frequently flooded areas
3. Critical aquifer recharge areas
4. Geologically hazardous areas
5. Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas (emphasis on any anadromous fish)

Franklin Conservation District is establishing the VSP Work Group in coordination with the County, and will support the VSP Work Group during development and implementation of the VSP Work Plan for the County.

This VSP Work Group will help develop and oversee implementation of a VSP Work Plan to promote both the viability of agriculture and voluntary stewardship actions as an alternative to a regulatory approach to protect critical areas. If you are interested in being part of the Franklin County VSP Work Group please contact: **Mark Nielson, District Manager, Franklin County Conservation District**, mark-nielson@conserveva.net, 509-416-0440. Applications are **due Friday, July 29, 2016**.

Web Resources

Washington State Conservation Commission VSP Website

<http://scc.wa.gov/vsp/>

Growth Management RCW 36.70A

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=36.70A>

Voluntary Stewardship Program RCW 36.70A.705

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=36.70A.705>