



STATE OF WASHINGTON
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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June 8, 2023

Lee Napier
Community Development Director
Lewis County
2025 NE Kresky Avenue
Chehalis WA 98532

Re: Continued Implementation of the Voluntary Stewardship Program

During the recent legislative session, the state legislature continued funding for the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) into the next biennium (2023-25).

As a county who opted-in to the VSP, I'm writing to formally notify you funding will be available for the next fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, for implementation of the VSP.

The Commission deems this level of funding adequate funding to meet the implementation needs of the counties who have opted into VSP. This funding is the only funding available from the Commission for VSP implementation.

Attached for your review is a contract for the VSP funding for the 2023-25 biennium. Once the county has signed the agreement and returned to the Commission, the Executive Director of the Commission will sign the contract. A fully executed contract will be returned to the county.

The effective date of this contract will be July 1, 2023. However, delays without reasonable explanation on the part of the county in signing this contract past August 31, 2023, may result in the Commission denying any reimbursement during that time. If you find you cannot comply with signing this contract by August 31, 2023, you must contact Nicole Boyes at 564-669-3149 or by email at nboyes@scc.wa.gov immediately.

Also, I wanted to highlight some important provisions that continue from last biennia's contract into this new 2023-25 biennium contract. Those include, but are not limited to:

1. Funding available for reimbursement under this contract will not exceed \$240,000 for the entire 2023-2025 biennium.
2. If the county assigns a VSP lead entity, the Commission will require a copy of any subcontract between the county and a VSP lead entity.
3. If the County updates its work plan while this contract is in effect, the County is required to provide to the Commission the most recent version of the county's VSP work plan, which includes all attachments and/or appendices. This can be accomplished by sending to Alicia McClendon, VSP Administrative Assistant, an electronic link which the Commission can use to download the plan. The link should be sent to amccclendon@scc.wa.gov.
4. The Commission will require the county to create an implementation budget to ensure all requirements related to VSP implementation are accounted for during this contract period, and to ensure the two-year status and five-year review and evaluation reporting requirements will be met. The county must
 - Provide the budget to the Commission no later than 120 days from the date of signature of the contract by the County.
 - The budget must be designed to meet all contract & statutory deliverables for VSP implementation. In addition,
 - If the county uses operating funds for cost share, it must be included in a budget line item.
 - If the county allows a CD operating as its VSP technical service provider to use operating funds for District Implemented Projects (DIPs), it must be included in a budget line item.
 - A line item of \$47,000 must included in the budget for monitoring and reporting efforts.
5. The Commission will require the completion of a monitoring plan, as set out in our VSP Monitoring Guide. The monitoring plan will be required to be provided to the Commission not later than July 1, 2024. The SCC encourages the county to use the Watershed Monitoring Project Development Guide for the Voluntary Stewardship Program in Washington, Volume III in creating the plan, but will not require its use. The monitoring plan shall be designed to facilitate the collection, analysis, and reporting of

information for VSP. The monitoring plan needs to be emailed to Levi Keesecker at lkeesecker@scc.wa.gov.

6. The Commission requires any VSP funds used by the county for cost-share projects abide by the [Commission's Grant and Contract Procedures Manual](#). And any other relevant Commission financial or cost-share policies.
7. The county's 2YR status report is due to the Commission no later than August 30, 2023. New this year, the 2YR report should be submitted using [this form](#). The form can also be found on the [Commission's VSP Implementation](#) page, under the Reporting tab.
8. The failure of the county to provide any of the following are explicit grounds for termination of the contract:
 - a. To complete the scope of work in a reasonable time frame;
 - b. To provide timely quarterly status reports;
 - c. To submit monthly invoices for reimbursement to the Commission's VSP Contract Manager; and
 - d. To identify and keep current the responsible individual as identified in Appendix D – Responsible Individuals.

Thank you for your continued engagement in and support of VSP. I look forward to working with you and your staff on program implementation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Ron D. Shultz
Policy Director

Enclosure: VSP 2023-25 Biennium Contract between the Commission and the County
Commission Electronic Signature policy: [#22-01 Electronic Signatures Policy](#)