



Voluntary Stewardship Program

What is VSP?



The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is an incentive – based approach to protecting critical areas on agricultural land. It was developed as an alternative to strict rules and regulations. VSP is led by a local Work Group farmers, ranchers and residents. The Work Group identifies stewardship strategies for agricultural viability and protecting and/or restoring five critical areas.

Land stewardship activities and agricultural viability are characterized and reported to the state.



Critical Areas

Wetlands—inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater and support vegetation adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

Frequently Flooded Areas—lands within the 100-year floodplain or which flood from high groundwater levels.

Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas— aquifers used for drinking water, or designated aquifers with protected water quantity.

Geologically Hazardous Areas—Geologically hazardous areas are susceptible to erosion, sliding, earthquakes, and other geological events. Wind and water erosion, and channel migration zones are the most common hazards.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas—lands and waters managed to maintain populations of high priority fish and wildlife species in suitable habitats within their natural geographic distributions.



Okanogan Conservation District works collaboratively with land managers to care for natural resources in Okanogan County. Our services are provided **free** of charge to properties within District boundaries (most of Okanogan County).

Contact us at (509) 422-0855 or ocd@okanogancd.org

For more information about our technical and financial assistance, visit our website:

www.okanogancd.org



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VSP has 3 main goals:

1. Protect critical areas through voluntary measures.
2. Enhance critical areas through voluntary measures.
3. Maintain and enhance the viability of agriculture in Okanogan County.

For decades, farmers and ranchers in Okanogan County have implemented stewardship practices that protect critical areas and improve their bottom line. The Voluntary Stewardship Program increases the planning and grant funds available for stewardship projects, and helps tell the story of agriculture and successful land management in Okanogan County.

What are examples of stewardship practices?

Livestock water developments, direct seed/no-till, cover crops, wildlife structures and forest management are a few examples of practices that protect critical areas.

How can you participate?



Planning: Our staff have expertise in a wide range of topics to help you develop the right plan for your property. All natural resources are considered to develop a project which reflects **your** goals and vision. Set up an initial site visit by contacting one of our planners.

Grant Funding: We offer financial assistance to cover a portion of the costs to install eligible practices. Grant programs vary depending on available funding. Often, we will work with a land manager to develop a project, then seek funds to help pay for the project.

Voluntary Reporting: If you implement practices on your own, share your positive contribution to the District. Help us share your success with others.



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