Meeting Minutes

May 6, 2026

Joint Meeting of the VSP Statewide Advisory Committee and VSP Technical Panel

*In-person & Online (via Zoom) – Recording available here: **May 6, 2026, SAC Meeting***

The Washington State Conservation Commission's (Commission/SCC) Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) convened a meeting of the Statewide Advisory Committee (SAC) for a regular meeting on May 6, 2026, at the WA State Farm Bureau Building in Lacey, WA, and via Zoom. On behalf of Chair James Thompson, SCC VSP Coordinator Mike Poteet called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

SAC MEMBERS PRESENT	TP REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT	COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT
Ben Buchholz	Victoria Fischella, SCC	Paige DeChambeau, Communications Director
LaDon Linde	Levi Keesecker, SCC	Kate Delavan, Deputy Director
Brian Muegge	Leslie Michel, WSDA	Alicia McClendon, Administrative Assistant
John Stuhlmiller	Tom O'Brien, WDFW	Mike Poteet, VSP Coordinator
Ron Wesen	Teresa Opolka, ECY	Jodi Prout, Education & Outreach Manager
Lisa Olsen (non-voting)	Sean Williams, WDFW	James Thompson, Director & SAC Chair

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE	ORGANIZATION
Pauline Chiquet	San Juan Islands Conservation District
Maggie Long	San Juan Islands Conservation District
Paul Andersson	San Juan Islands Conservation District
Darin Houpt	Cowlitz Conservation District
Michelle Graham	Cowlitz Conservation District
Taylor George	Okanogan Conservation District
Brant Smith	Okanogan Conservation District
Keaton Martin	Asotin County Conservation District
Lisa Grueter	Berk Consulting (Yakima & Chelan VSP)

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE	ORGANIZATION
Scott Downes	WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
Mallory Hirschler	WA Department of Fish and Wildlife

Updates

A series of updates related to program functions was provided by the VSP Coordinator. Updates addressed the following:

- Status of county submissions of 5-year reports and reviews by Tech Panel and SCC Director
- Round 4 of VSP Capital funding awarded at end of April 2026
- SCC has initiated its 27-29 biennium budget development process
- VSP staff working on Adaptive Management support plans for late 2026
- VSP Program Guidelines are set for expansion (including revisions) and adoption
- Following the conclusion of the 5-year reporting cycle, SAC will be supporting VSP staff in development of two mandatory reports to the legislature due in 2027

Action Items

1. Minutes from SAC Meeting on April 1, 2026, were approved as presented by 5-0 vote.

2. SAC Recommendation for San Juan County
   Motion (Stuhlmiller → Linde): Recommends that San Juan County continue in the program and update any out-of-date goals, benchmarks, or targets in its existing work plan. (Motion passed 5-0.)

3. SAC Recommendation for Cowlitz County
   Motion (Stuhlmiller → Linde): Recommends that Cowlitz County continue in the program under their current work plan and fulfil their current Protection goals and benchmarks within six months of today, per RCW 36.70A.730(2). The SAC recommends the SCC Director require the county provide documentation that it has met its work plan's Protection goals and benchmarks to VSP staff, the Technical Panel, and the Statewide Advisory Committee when the work has been completed. (Motion passed 5-0.)

4. SAC Recommendation for Pacific County
   Motion (Muegge → Linde): Recommends that Pacific County continue in the program and update any out-of-date goals, benchmarks, or targets in its existing work plan. (Motion passed 5-0.)

5. SAC Recommendation for Okanogan County
   Motion (Stuhlmiller → Muegge): Recommends that Okanogan County continue in the program and update any out-of-date goals, benchmarks, or targets in its existing work plan. (Motion passed 5-0.)

6. SAC Recommendation for Benton County
   Motion (Stuhlmiller → Muegge): Recommends that Benton County continue in the program and update any out-of-date goals, benchmarks, or targets in its existing work plan. (Motion passed 5-0.)

Other Information

SCC VSP staff provided an overview of the following topics for the benefit of the SAC and meeting attendees:

- Overview of submission and Technical Panel review process for 5-year reports
- Roles and responsibilities of county VSP teams, SCC staff, Technical Panel, SAC, and SCC Director in the submission, review, and determination processes for 5-year reports
- An explanation concerning monitoring with respect to programmatic requirements and timing associated with the creation of Monitoring Plans was provided to the SAC → Given the circumstances, monitoring data was treated as an optional component of the five-year report. Counties were still expected to provide detailed information on BMP implementation efforts even if critical area monitoring information was not included in the report submission.
- An explanation of statute language related to the concept of adaptive management
- A brief description of agricultural viability and how local programs may integrate this into their work plans, but that it is **not** a factor when considering ongoing participation in the program