Meeting Minutes

July 8, 2026

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

*In-person & Online (via Zoom) – Recording available here: **July 8, 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 July 8, 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	Alicia McClendon, Administrative Assistant
John Stuhlmiller	Dani Gelardi, WSDA	Mike Poteet, VSP Coordinator
Ron Wesen	Leslie Michel, WSDA	Jodi Prout, Education & Outreach Manager
	Teresa Opolka, ECY	James Thompson, Director & SAC Chair
	Sean Williams, WDFW	

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE	ORGANIZATION
Garret LaCivita	WDFW
Annie Byerley	Walla Walla County Conservation District
Nells Hannah	Walla Walla County Conservation District
Adam Cares	AC Geo (consultant to Pend Oreille County)
Dominic Casolari	Pend Oreille Conservation District
Mary Malone	Pend Oreille Conservation District
Kelsi Potterf	Franklin Conservation District
Fiona Carey	Franklin Conservation District
Kara Kaelber	Franklin Conservation District
Deanna Elliott	Columbia Basin Conservation District
Keaton Martin	Asotin County Conservation District

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE	ORGANIZATION
Nate Jackson	Grays Harbor Conservation District

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
- VSP staff working on Adaptive Management support plans for winter 2026-27
- VSP Program Guidelines are set for expansion (including revisions) and adoption
    - Capital Funding criteria and allocation approach being developed with feedback from county VSP teams and in concert with internal SCC efforts to bring more standardization into the capital funding process across programs
- VSP SAC appointment of Greg Green, Director of Conservation Programs – Northwest Region for Ducks Unlimited, is pending approval during July 16, 2026, Commission meeting

Action Items

1. Minutes from SAC Meeting on June 5, 2026, were approved as presented by 4-0 vote.

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   Motion (Stuhlmiller → Linde): Recommends that Franklin County continue in the program and update any out-of-date goals, benchmarks, or targets in its existing work plan.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

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   Motion (Stuhlmiller → Linde): Recommends that Pend Oreille County continue in the program and update any out-of-date goals, benchmarks, or targets in its existing work plan.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

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

Other Information

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

- Overall 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
- The statue definitions of “protection” and enhancement”
- The statutory responsibilities that guide how counties develop watershed work plans from existing plans and with watershed partners, including agencies, NGOs, Tribes, etc.