

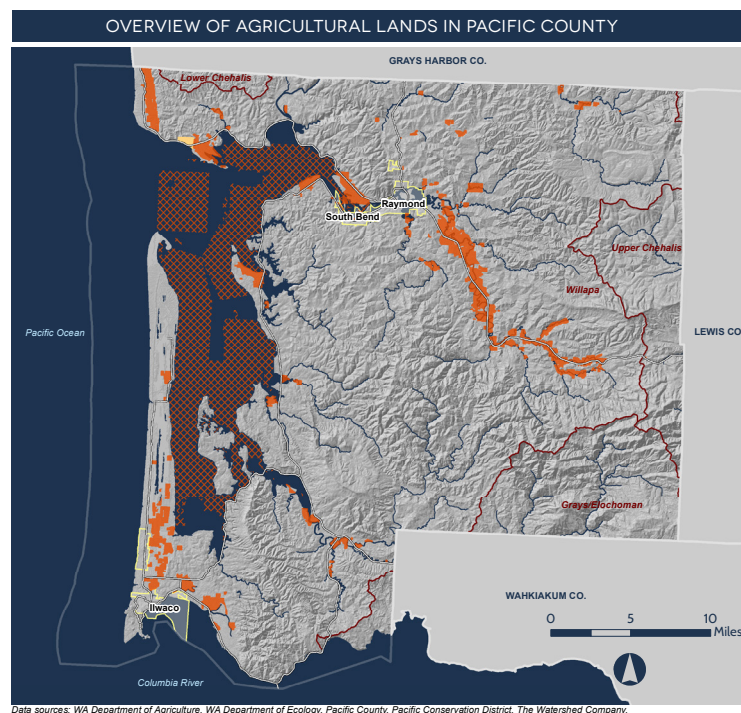
# VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

A collaborative approach to promoting environmental stewardship and agriculture

## ABOUT THE VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM









The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is an alternative to traditional top-down regulations for the protection of critical areas on agricultural lands. Enabled under the State Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.705), the VSP uses a collaborative, stakeholder-driven process to identify, coordinate, and build on existing programs and practices that address agricultural effects on critical areas. These practices are then implemented by individual farmers through voluntary, site-specific stewardship plans.

Pacific County is one of 28 counties in the State that has opted into the VSP, and has received funding from the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) to develop a VSP Work Plan.



The long-term goal of the VSP is to protect critical areas on agricultural lands while maintaining and enhancing the viability of agriculture in the watershed.

### LEGEND

	Upland Agriculture		City Boundary
	Aquaculture		Major Roads
	Major Rivers and Streams		Shoalwater Reservation
	Watershed Boundary		County Boundary

## AGRICULTURE IN PACIFIC COUNTY

County farmers produce a variety of goods from a diversity of farm types ranging from larger-scale commercial farms, to historic family farms, to part-time farming operations. Major types of upland agricultural operations include cranberry, dairy, and cattle farming. Aquaculture operations produce oysters, clams, and mussels.



## CRITICAL AREAS IN PACIFIC COUNTY

Critical areas in Pacific County include:

- Wetlands
- Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas
- Critical aquifer recharge areas
- Geologically hazardous areas
- Frequently flooded areas



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## KEY PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Instead of enacting critical areas regulations on agricultural lands, the VSP provides an opportunity for the agricultural community to work together to promote effective, locally-tailored environmental stewardship that also supports agricultural viability.

### 1. WORKING GROUP FORMATION

Interested stakeholders, including farmers and farm associations, tribes, local environmental groups, agencies, and other involved parties are encouraged to join the VSP Working Group. The Working Group will meet regularly to discuss and develop elements of the VSP Work Plan.

### 2. WORK PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- Identify where agricultural lands intersect with critical areas in the county
- Identify stewardship measures that address agricultural impacts to critical areas, including voluntary, incentive-based measures to enhance critical areas
- Create a targeted outreach plan to help farmers implement these measures
- Establish monitoring protocols and measurable benchmarks of success

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION

Technical assistance providers, identified in the Work Plan, will work with individual farmers to develop voluntary, site-specific stewardship plans. The Working Group will oversee monitoring of the VSP and modify the approach as necessary to ensure success of the program over time.

The success of the VSP relies on participation from the agricultural community.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

- First Working Group meeting:  
**June 16th, 2016, 5-7 PM**, at Pacific County DCD's South Bend Office, 1216 W. Robert Bush Drive.  
Working Group meetings are open to the public, and will be scheduled monthly.
- Public workshops will be held in early August
- A final VSP Work Plan is expected by June 2017



*Naselle River, Ecology 2006*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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## OR VISIT ONLINE:

Pacific County VSP  
[www.co.pacific.wa.us/dcd/VSP.htm](http://www.co.pacific.wa.us/dcd/VSP.htm)  
Washington Conservation Commission  
[scc.wa.gov/voluntary-stewardship-program](http://scc.wa.gov/voluntary-stewardship-program)