

VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

COWLITZ COUNTY

3/7/2017



What is the Voluntary Stewardship Program?

An alternative approach to protect critical areas and promote agriculture.

The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is an optional, incentive-based approach to protecting critical areas while promoting agriculture. The VSP is allowed State Law as an alternative to traditional approaches to critical areas protection, such as buffers. Cowlitz County has “opted in” to VSP and is in the process of developing a work plan. The VSP will represent local direction developed by agricultural and environmental stakeholders. Implementation by individual agricultural producers will be voluntary. By developing and meeting benchmarks for critical area protection and improving viability of agriculture, unnecessary regulations are eliminated.



*Images from Cowlitz County Historical Museum

Agriculture in Cowlitz County

Why this is important!

492 Farms, 39,000+ acres, \$28 Million Total Sales

Top Cowlitz County Crops?

Broiler Chickens (#3 in State), Sweet Corn (#5 in State)

Green Peas (#5 in State), Field & Grass Seed (#6 in State)

*Data from 2012 Census of Agriculture

Work Group Tentative Schedule



March 14, 2017

Goals & Strategies

Roles & Responsibilities

April 11, 2017

Review Workplan Draft

May 9, 2017

Review Workplan Draft

June 13, 2017

Finalize Workplan Draft

June 2017

Send Draft to Technical Panel

August 2017

Technical Panel Review
Complete

Fall 2017

Revise Plan if Needed

September 22, 2018

Deadline for Final Technical
Panel Approval

What are Critical Areas?

See RCW 36.70A and WAC 365-190

Critical Areas include (1) wetlands, (2) fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, (3) frequently flooded areas, (4) geologically hazardous areas, and (5) critical aquifer recharge areas.



(1) Toutle Wetlands



(2) Horseshoe Lake



(3) Cowlitz River



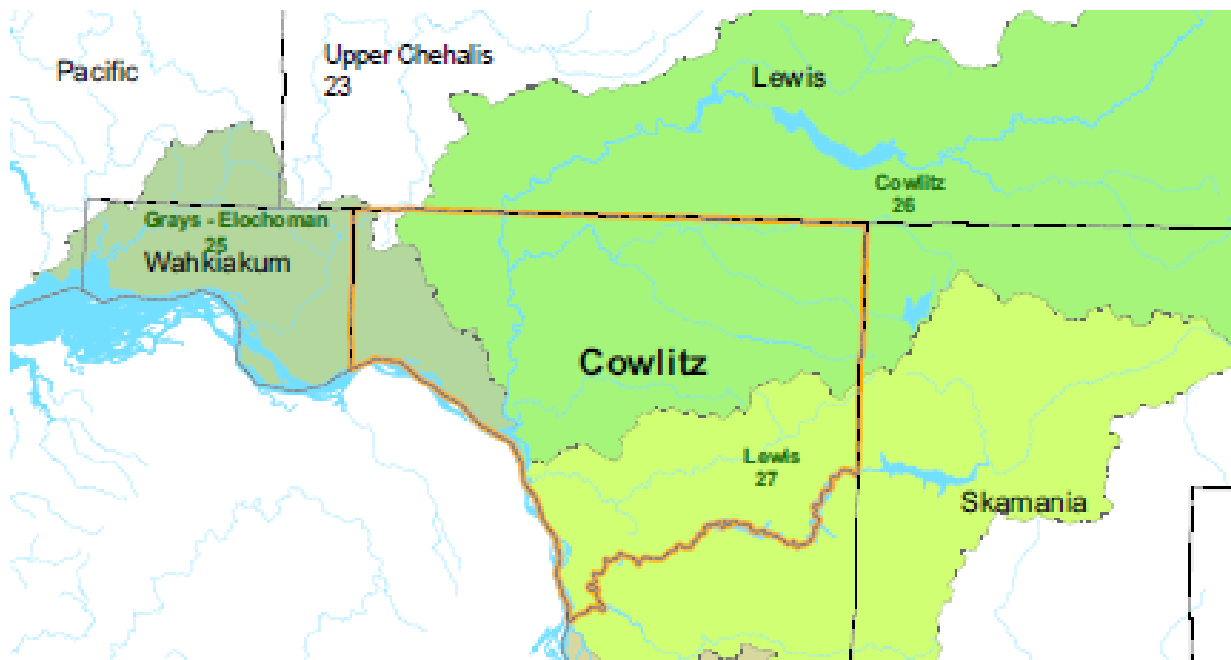
(4) Carrolls Road Landslide



(5) Wellhead Protection Areas

VSP Applies to all Watersheds in Cowlitz County

Four Watersheds – The Upper Chehalis, Grays-Elochoman, Cowlitz, and Lewis



For more information:

Washington State Conservation Commission website: <http://scc.wa.gov/vsp>

Cowlitz County website: <http://co.cowlitz.wa.us/longrange>

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