

BENTON COUNTY VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Technical Provider Stewardship Checklist

Promoting Agriculture Viability and Protecting Critical Areas

The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is an optional, incentive-based approach to protecting critical areas while promoting agriculture. This checklist serves as an individual stewardship plan referenced in the VSP law to help each producer contribute to the goals and benchmarks of the Benton County VSP work plan. See www.co.benton.wa.us/pview.aspx?id=10933&catid=0 for more information.

Step 1: General Information

Provide Location Information

1. What basin is your agricultural property located within?
 - a. Lower Yakima
 - b. Rock Glade
 - c. Alkali-Squilchuck

2. Identify potential critical areas intersecting with agriculture on, or near, property:
 - a. fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas
 - b. wetlands
 - c. frequently flooded areas
 - d. geologically hazardous areas
 - e. critical aquifer recharge areas

Instructions: Review critical area and agriculture maps at: www.co.benton.wa.us/pview.aspx?id=10933&catid=0 for potential critical areas on or near your property, such as ponds, streams, wetlands, steep slopes, etc.

Note: Checking one or more critical areas that may *potentially* be located on or adjacent to the property does not constitute an official determination of such a feature. It is helpful in filling out the rest of the checklist.



Do you participate in any of the following conservation plans?

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| a. Global Gap: www.scsglobalservices.com/globalgap-certification | <input type="checkbox"/> | e. Safe Quality Food Institute: www.sqfi.com | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. WSDA Organic System Plan: http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/ | <input type="checkbox"/> | f. Vinewise: http://www.vinewise.org/eval/ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. NRCS Conservation Plan: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/ | <input type="checkbox"/> | g. Other: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. LIVE Certification: https://livecertified.org/standards | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Note: Federal and state laws regarding the use and storage of pesticides and standards for water quality continue to apply.

Consult Technical Providers

Contact Technical Advisors for general advice, or to apply for funding to establish conservation practices.

Lead Technical Assistance Provider: Benton Conservation District, <http://www.bentoncd.org/>

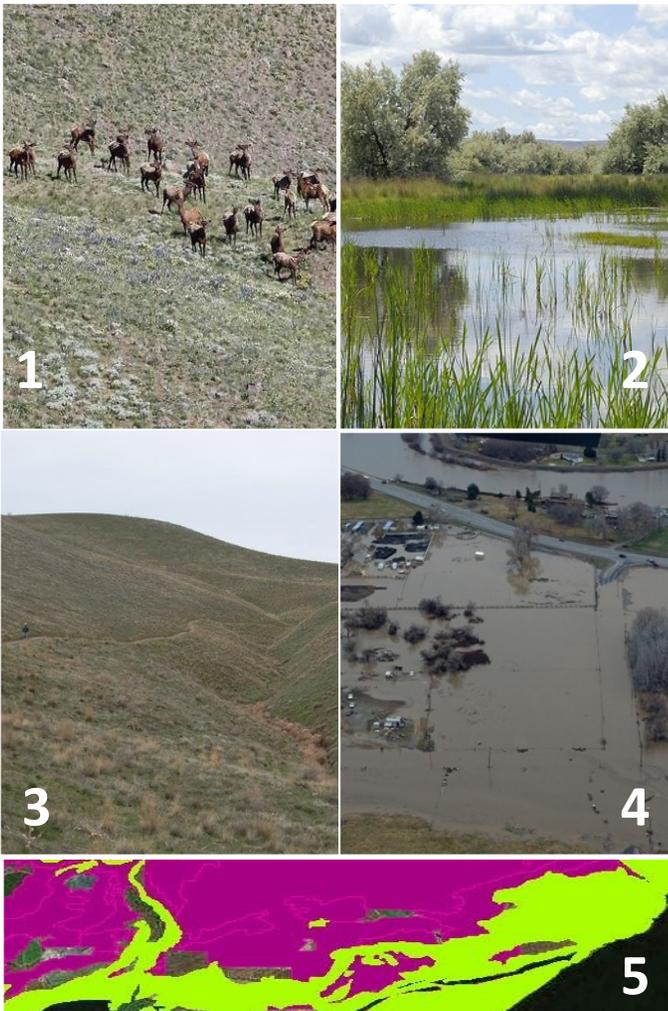
Supporting Technical Assistance Providers:

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome>
- Washington State University Extension <http://extension.wsu.edu/benton-franklin/agriculture/>
- Washington Department of Ecology: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov>

Benton County: <http://www.co.benton.wa.us/> (VSP Program Administration)

Background: Critical Areas

Definitions



"Critical areas" include the following areas and ecosystems: (a) Wetlands; (b) areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water; (c) fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas; (d) frequently flooded areas; and (e) geologically hazardous areas. "Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas" does not include such artificial features or constructs as irrigation delivery systems, irrigation infrastructure, irrigation canals, or drainage ditches that lie within the boundaries of and are maintained by a port district or an irrigation district or company. RCW 36.70A.030(5)

1 Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

Land management for maintaining populations of species in suitable habitats within their natural geographic distribution so that the habitat available is sufficient to support viable populations over the long term and isolated subpopulations are not created. This does not mean maintaining all individuals of all species at all times, but it does mean not degrading or reducing populations or habitats so that they are no longer viable over the long term. (WAC 365-190-130(1))

Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas that must be considered for classification and designation include: Areas where endangered, threatened, and sensitive species have a primary association; Habitats and species of local importance, as determined locally; Naturally occurring ponds under twenty acres and their submerged aquatic beds that provide fish or wildlife habitat; Waters of the state; Lakes, ponds, streams, and rivers planted with game fish by a governmental or tribal entity; and State natural area preserves, natural resource conservation areas, and state wildlife areas. (WAC 365-190-130 (2))

2 Wetlands

Areas inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands do not include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from non-wetland sites, including, but not limited to, irrigation and drainage ditches, grass-lined swales, canals, detention facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, farm ponds, and landscape amenities, or those wetlands created after July 1, 1990, that were unintentionally created as a result of the construction of a road, street, or highway. However, wetlands may include those artificial wetlands specifically intentionally created from non-wetland areas to mitigate conversion of wetlands. (RCW 36.70A.030(21))

3 Geologically Hazardous Areas

Areas susceptible to erosion, sliding, earthquake, or other geological events, where development is not suitable due to public health or safety concerns. (RCW 36.70A.030 (9)) According to BCC 15.55.030, geologically hazardous areas are characterized by steep slopes over 15 percent.

4 Frequently Flooded Areas

Lands in the flood plain subject to at least a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year, or within areas subject to flooding due to high groundwater. These areas include, but are not limited to, streams, rivers, lakes, coastal areas, wetlands, and areas where high groundwater forms ponds on the ground surface. (WAC 365-190-030 (8))

5 Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas

Areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water, including areas where an aquifer that is a source of drinking water is vulnerable to contamination that would affect the potability of the water, or is susceptible to reduced recharge. (WAC 365-190-030(3))

Background: Critical Area & Agricultural Viability

Goals & Example Conservation Practices

Critical Area Goals	Agricultural Viability Aims associated with critical area protection and enhancement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent with the Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan, ensure flows necessary to protect salmonids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and increase reliability and availability of irrigation water
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect surface water quality in streams, wetlands, and agricultural drains in hydro- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support actions that benefit both stream functions and agricultural viability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect shrub-steppe habitat and connectivity without restricting ongoing agricultural activities Protect native plant community diversity Protect the functions and values of wetlands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support measures that provide incentives for conservation of key habitats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage shrub-steppe habitat to improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect agriculture from unmanaged fire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect groundwater recharge in areas of declining water tables or where recharge can help maintain base flows for rivers and streams Protect groundwater quality in areas of agricultural intersect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and increase reliability and availability of irrigation water
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect natural floodplain functions Maintain or reduce hazards to physical safety associated with flooding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize agricultural activities and techniques that are compatible with flooding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect the integrity of steep slopes associ- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve soil health and reduce erosion

1. CREP: protect highly erodible soils along salmon-bearing streams
2. Fish screen
3. Irrigation efficiencies
4. Grazing management
5. Field borders
6. Nutrient Management

Photos: BCD.org

Step 2: Voluntary Practices to Enhance Agriculture Viability and Protect Critical Areas

In this section, examine the conservation practice examples. For each practice, check off if you already do it, are interested in the practice, or it doesn't apply. Practices are listed in three categories: A) Water Efficiencies/Management, B) Habitat, and C) Soil Health and Erosion Control.

Conservation Practice Examples	NRCS #	Global Gap	SQF	LIVE Cert.	Vine-Wise	Farm Type*	Priority	I do this	Amount implemented since 2011	I'm interested in this	Does not apply
A) Water Efficiencies and Management	Code #	Section	Module	Ch.	Topic						
Irrigation Canal or Lateral	320	CB 5	7, 8	7	Water	Irr		<input type="radio"/>	(ft)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Irrigation Pipeline	430	CB 5	7, 8	7	Water	Irr		<input type="radio"/>	(ft)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Irrigation System, Microirrigation	441	CB 5	7, 8	7	Water	Irr		<input type="radio"/>	(ac)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Irrigation System, Sprinkler	442	CB 5	7, 8	7	Water	Irr		<input type="radio"/>	(ac)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Irrigation Water Management	449	CB 5	7, 8	7	Water	Irr		<input type="radio"/>	(ac)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pond Lining - Irrigation	521	CB 5	7, 8	7	Water	Irr		<input type="radio"/>	(no)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pumping Plant—Variable Frequency Drive	533	CB 5	7, 8	7	Water	Irr		<input type="radio"/>	(no)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Water Quantity Enhancements: Center Pivot low energy precise application (LEPA)	WQT 11	CB 5	7, 8	7	Water	Irr		<input type="radio"/>	(no)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Water Well for livestock, fire control, wildlife, and other agricultural uses	642	CB 5	7, 8	7	Water	All		<input type="radio"/>	(no)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Well Water Testing	355	CB 5	7, 8		Water	All		<input type="radio"/>	(no)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Water trust agreement or other water exchange or transfer	—	CB 5	7, 8		Water	All		<input type="radio"/>	amt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My idea to meet the goal								<input type="radio"/>	Amt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are there other Water Efficiencies and Management practices you are using? Please describe your practice(s) including whether you've implemented it since 2011 and the amount you've implemented.											

The VSP is intended to **promote agricultural viability while protecting critical areas**. Water Efficiencies and Management help maintain Agricultural Viability for producers through cost savings achieved by water reductions, lower energy use, potential increases in crop yield, as well as helping to improve stream functions.

*Farm Type: Irr=Irrigated; Dry = Dryland; Range=Rangeland; All=All Farm Types

Conservation Practice Examples	NRCS #	Global Gap	SQF	LIVE	Vine-Wise	Farm Type*	Priority	I do this	Amount implemented since 2011	I'm interested in this	Does not apply
B) Land Management & Habitat	Code #	Section	Module	Ch.	Topic						
Access Control to exclude animals, people, vehicles, and/or equipment from an area	472	AF 7.1	5, 7	11	Whole-farm	All		0		0	0
Access Road: position away from water bodies and water courses; locate and build to control or reduce erosion	560	AF 7.1, CB 3				All		0	(ft)	0	0
Brush Management to manage or remove woody plants that are invasive or noxious	314	AF 7.1	7	2	Soil	All		0	(ac)	0	0
Conservation Cover to provide vegetative cover, reduce soil erosion and sedimentation	327	AF 7.2, CB 3		2	Soil	All		0	(ac)	0	0
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program	BCD	AF 7.2		2	Soil	All		0	(ac)	0	0
Fence (management of browsing animals or management of wildlife movement)	382	AF 7.1	5, 6, 9	11	Whole-farm	All		0	(ft)	0	0
Field Border to provide wildlife food and cover, protect soil and water quality.	386	AF 7.2		11	Whole-farm	All		0	(ft)	0	0
Fish Screen to protect fish from injury	700	AF 7.1	6	2	Water	Irr		0	(no)	0	0
Integrated Pest Management to control noxious weeds and invasive plants	595	AF 7.1	3-14	8	Whole-farm	All		0	(ac)	0	0
Livestock Pipeline to convey water for livestock or wildlife	516	CB 5	5	11	Whole-farm	All		0	(ft)	0	0
Prescribed Grazing, including to reduce noxious weeds or invasive plants, manage fuel loads, and address erosion	528	AF 7.1	5, 7	11		All		0	(ac)	0	0
Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitats	643	AF 7.2		2	Whole-farm	All		0	(ac)	0	0
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	390	AF 7.2	6			Irr		0	(ac)	0	0

B) is continued on following page.

*Farm Type: Irr=Irrigated; Dry = Dryland; Range=Rangeland; All=All Farm Types

Conservation Practice Examples	NRCS #	Global Gap	SQF	LIVE Cert.	Vine-Wise	Farm Type*	Priority	I do this	Amount implemented since 2011	I'm interested in this	Does not apply
B) Land Management	Code #	Section	Module	Ch.	Topic						
Riparian Forest Buffer	391	AF7.2	6					0	(ac)	0	0
Seasonal high tunnel system for crops	798	CB 3			Water	Irr		0	(ft2)	0	0
Spring Development	574	CB 3			Water	All		0	(no)	0	0
Streambank and Shoreline Protection	580	AF 7.1		2	Whole-farm	Irr		0	(ft)	0	0
Structures for wildlife: Raptor and bat nesting box for predator patrol	649	AF 7.1		2	Whole-farm	All		0	(no)	0	0
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation	490	AF 7.1		2, 5	Whole-farm	All		0	(ac)	0	0
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	645	AF 7.1		2	Whole-farm	All		0	(ac)	0	0
Watering Facility for livestock or wild-life	614	AF 7.1		11	Whole-farm	All		0	(no)	0	0
Wetland Creation	658	AF 7.2		2	Whole-farm	Irr		0	(ac)	0	0
Wetland Enhancement	659	AF 7.1		2	Whole-farm	All		0	(ac)	0	0
Wetland Restoration	657	AF 7.2		2	Whole-farm	Irr		0	(ac)	0	0
Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management	644	AF 7.1		2	Whole-farm	All		0	(ac)	0	0
Wildlife and pollinator habitat planting	422	AF 7.2		2	Whole-farm	All		0	(ft)	0	0
Windbreak	380/ 650	AF 7.1			Whole-farm	All		0	(ft)	0	0
My idea to meet the goal								0	amt	0	0
Are there other Land Management and Habitat practices you are using? Please describe your practice(s) including whether you've implemented it since 2011 and the amount you've implemented.											

The VSP is intended to **promote agricultural viability while protecting critical areas**. Land Management and Habitat practices can promote crop pollination, breakdown of organic matter to provide nutrients for crops, provide contaminant degradation, allow for agricultural pest control, reduce invasive species, improve stream bank stability and wildlife habitats, and reduce erosion.

Conservation Practice Examples	NRCS	Global Gap	SQF	LIVE Cert.	Vince-Wise	Farm Type*	Prior-ity	I do this	Amount implemented since 2011	I'm interested in this	Does not apply
C) Soil Health and Erosion Control	Code #	Section	Module	Ch.	Topic						
Access Road: position away from water bodies and water courses; locate and build to control or reduce erosion	560	AF 7.1	3, 7	4	Soil	All		0	(ft)	0	0
Conservation Cover to provide permanent vegetative cover, reduce soil erosion and sedimentation	327	AF 7.2, CB 3	3, 7	2	Soil	All		0	(ac)	0	0
Cover Crop for seasonal cover and other purposes.	340	AF 7.1	7		Water	Irr, Dry		0	(ac)	0	0
Fire wise: wildfire protection to maintain cover/ reduce soil loss	BCD	AF 7.1	3, 5, 7		Soil	Dry, Range		0		0	0
Heavy use area protection to stabilize ground surface	561	CB 3	3, 5, 7		Soil	All		0	(ac)	0	0
Irrigation Water Management	449	CB 5	7	7	Water	Irr		0	(ac)	0	0
Nutrient Management to conserve nutrients, minimize pollution	590	CB 4		5, 6	Soil	All		0	(ac)	0	0
Mulching to control erosion and conserve soil moisture	484	CB 3		4	Soil	Irr, Dry		0	(ac)	0	0
Prescribed Grazing, including to reduce erosion and manage fuel loads	528	AF 7.1	5	4	Soil	All		0	(ac)	0	0
Residue and Tillage Management	329, 345	CB 3			Soil	Dry		0	(ac)	0	0
Seasonal High Tunnel System for crops and soil moisture	798	CB 3		7	Water	Irr		0	(ft)	0	0
Vegetative Barrier along contour of slopes or concentrated flow areas	601	AF 7.1, CB 3			Soil	All		0	(ft)	0	0
Windbreak to reduce soil erosion, protect plants	380/ 650	CB 3			Whole-farm	All		0	(ft)	0	0
My idea to meet the goal								0	amt	0	0
Are there other Soil Health and Erosion Control practices you are using? Please describe your practice(s) including whether you've implemented it since 2011 and the amount you've implemented.											

The VSP is intended to **promote agricultural viability while protecting critical areas**. Soil Health and Erosion Control help maintain agricultural viability for producers through improving soil health and water quality; avoiding soil loss, crusting, high summer temperatures, and moisture loss; and maintaining the land base for agricultural purposes.

*Farm Type: Irr=Irrigated; Dry = Dryland; Range=Rangeland; All=All Farm Types

Step 3: Monitoring

A technical assistance provider, coordinated by the Benton Conservation District, will contact you annually about the conservation practices installed. To assist with monitoring, you may be asked to provide additional information. You may request a field visit to obtain advice on improving the effectiveness of the conservation practices.

Ideas for Agriculture Viability Incentives and Outcomes

The VSP is designed to promote the viability of agriculture over the long term and to avoid unnecessary local critical area regulations due to the prevalence of conservation practices undertaken by willing producers. Producers may find cost-matching programs with technical providers (see contact information on page 1).

What incentives could help you achieve your goals for your farm?