

**RCW 36.70A.705 Voluntary stewardship program established—**

**Administered by commission—Agency participation.** (1) The voluntary stewardship program is established to be administered by the commission. The program shall be designed to protect and enhance critical areas on lands used for agricultural activities through voluntary actions by agricultural operators.

(2) In administering the program, the commission must:

(a) Establish policies and procedures for implementing the program;

(b) Administer funding for counties to implement the program including, but not limited to, funding to develop strategies and incentive programs and to establish local guidelines for watershed stewardship programs;

(c) Administer the program's technical assistance funds and coordinate among state agencies and other entities for the implementation of the program;

(d) Establish a technical panel;

(e) In conjunction with the technical panel, review and evaluate:

(i) Work plans submitted for approval under RCW 36.70A.720(2)(a); and

(ii) reports submitted under RCW 36.70A.720(2)(b);

(f) Review and evaluate the program's success and effectiveness and make appropriate changes to policies and procedures for implementing the program, in consultation with the statewide advisory committee and other affected agencies;

(g) Designate priority watersheds based upon the recommendation of the statewide advisory committee. The commission and the statewide advisory committee may only consider watersheds nominated by counties under RCW 36.70A.710. When designating priority watersheds, the commission and the statewide advisory committee shall consider the statewide significance of the criteria listed in RCW 36.70A.710(3);

(h) Provide administrative support for the program's statewide advisory committee in its work. The administrative support must be in collaboration with the department of ecology and other agencies involved in the program;

(i) Maintain a website about the program that includes times, locations, and agenda information for meetings of the statewide advisory committee;

(j) Report to the legislature on the general status of program implementation by December 1, 2013, and December 1, 2015;

(k) In conjunction with the statewide advisory committee, conduct a review of the program beginning in 2017 and every five years thereafter, and report its findings to the legislature by December 1st; and

(l) Report to the appropriate committees of the legislature in the format provided in RCW 43.01.036.

(3) The department shall assist counties participating in the program to develop plans and development regulations under RCW 36.70A.735(1).

(4) The commission, department, department of agriculture, department of fish and wildlife, department of ecology, and other state agencies as directed by the governor shall:

(a) Cooperate and collaborate to implement the program; and

(b) Develop materials to assist local watershed groups in development of work plans.

(5) State agencies conducting new monitoring to implement the program in a watershed must focus on the goals and benchmarks of the work plan. [2011 c 360 § 3.]