

February 25, 2026

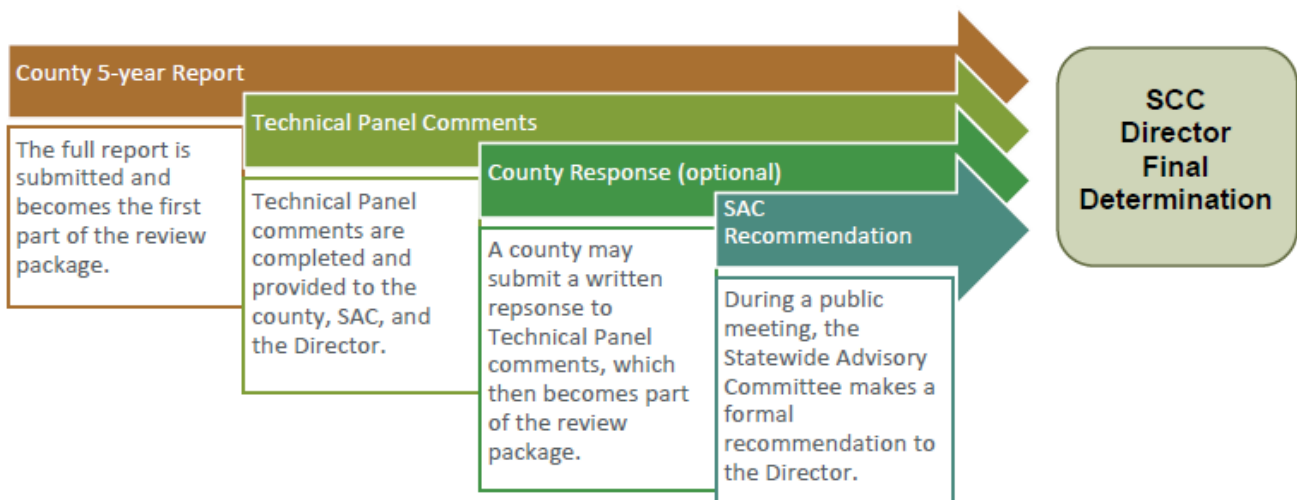
Summary of Technical Panel Reviews for the Second 5-Year Report of Mason County

Purpose & Background

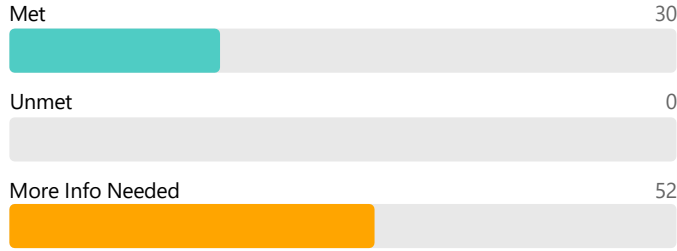
This document provides a summary of the evaluations made by the Technical Panel (TP) during its review of the county’s second 5-year report (commonly referred to as the “10-year report”). The TP agencies completed their evaluations in a new Reviewer Tool that was developed in conjunction with the new Reporting Template used by counties to submit their 10-year reports. The Reviewer Tool organizes TP comments into two sections: Final Review Summaries which summarizes the overall findings by each agency and a second, Individual Reviewer Comments, that lists all individual comments made by any agency on each line item of the report submitted. Summary bar charts of these two sections are also generated by the Reviewer Tool to provide visual aid summaries.

Mason County was required to submit its second 5-year report to the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) on November 24, 2025. The county fulfilled this obligation, and the TP review occurred between December 15, 2025, and February 18, 2026. **The county has until March 18, 2026, to submit a written County Response**, in accordance with the guidance provided in the “County Response Period and Protocol for 5-year Report Reviews,” issued to counties on October 22, 2025. The county’s full report will be combined with this document, any formal County Response, and the final Statewide Advisory Committee recommendations to create a final review package provided to the SCC Director for final determination of the county’s status within the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP).

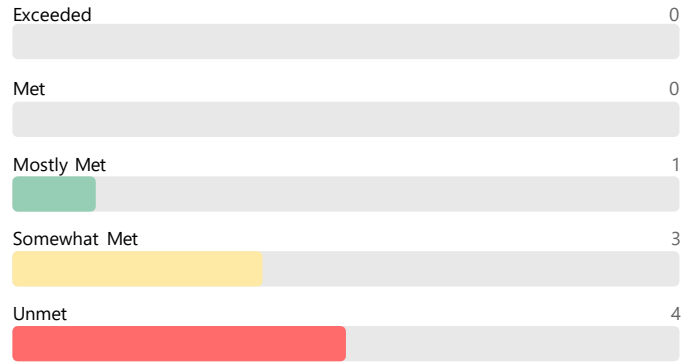
Figure 1. Workflow chart showing the components of each county’s final review package that will be provided to the SCC Director to make the final determination of each county’s VSP status following each five-year report. (This document is the second step in developing the final review package, indicated by the olive-green arrow titled Technical Panel Comments.)



Individual Determination Counts



Final Summary Determination Counts



Final Review Summaries

Agency: AGR || Reviewer Name:

Comments entered before of after review of other comments: After

Protection Overall Agency Determination: Unmet

Protection Final Comments:

WSDA Conclusion: Does not agree

WSDA does not agree that Mason County's assertion that they have met their goals and benchmarks.

BMP's

Mason county asserts they met most of their BMP implementation goals to maintain BMP implementation. While it does appear that based on the numbers supplied by Mason in Table 1 that they maintained BMP implementation for 2016 to 2025. Mason provided a number of spreadsheets, that included years, units, acres, feet. Tables do not always align, and are often confusing. In future years, WSDA would like to see more clarity around who is implementing the projects, timeframe, and units.

While WSDA appreciates that BMP data is separated out by watershed, WSDA suggests that at a minimum reporting should align with data in the work-plan. If data is collected at a county wide scale, and broken out into watersheds based on present ag within each of those watersheds, then data should be reported accordingly. If data is collected at the watershed scale, providing a sum for all watersheds would be helpful in assessing whether or not implementation goals and benchmarks were met.

Overall, WSDA does not disagree that the county has exceeded their goal to maintain BMP implementation, but needs more information to agree with their assertion. Additionally, connection between BMP implementation and protection of critical area functions and values would be helpful.

Monitoring

Mason county reported that agricultural acres within the county overall increased between 2011 and 2025. Sources of mapped agricultural land acres (aside from WSDA) is vague. WSDA would have liked to see more information regarding mapped ag lands by all entities.

Mason county reported the relationship between ag lands and critical areas in percentages based on ag acres within a watershed and reported CA intersect. With large uncertainty of ag acres, or changes to mapped areas of CA, we are uncertain whether changes are from increased mapped acres or changes in critical area intersect data, and need more information. It would be helpful if future reports include data sources (not just acronyms), and additional detail of analysis process.

Goal 4: Establish baseline monitoring program to measure benchmarks over a 10 year period. While it does appear that Mason County has created a plan for monitoring, no information was provided on whether the plan has been put into action.

Education and Outreach

Mason met their benchmarks for producers, including maintaining ISP's, outreach, and increase in annual operator participation. Education and outreach could further be enhanced by documenting types of activities and number of participants. In addition to mailers, district activities such as district newsletter, social media engagement, number and types of events, and engagement to site visits or ISP's that resulted from outreach and education.

Overall Comments

Overall, it appears that Mason has increased agricultural engagement within the county, however, without more details on mapped ag lands and analysis process, WSDA cannot evaluate "Maintain Baseline acreage of Agriculture and Critical Area Interface" for any of the critical areas or critical areas by watershed.

Assertions by the county demonstrate awareness and need for improved metrics. WSDA recommends that Mason County utilize adaptive management to ensure they have achievable, trackable goals and benchmarks that are tied to critical area function and value.

Enhancement Overall Agency Determination: Unmet

Enhancement Final Comments:

See above

Agency: ECY || Reviewer Name: Teresa & Chelsea

Comments entered before of after review of other comments: After

Protection Overall Agency Determination: Unmet

Protection Final Comments:

Thank you for your report submission. We want to acknowledge the amount of time and effort it takes to put a report together along with the implementation efforts over the last 5 years. Ultimately Ecology finds that the information provided in the report has too many unknowns for us to make a defensible determination that goals and benchmarks have been met. For this reason, we have defaulted to unmet for our official review decision and officially recommend Mason County go through adaptive management for the following reasons.

In general, the baseline instability and no verification or assurance that change in agricultural land has occurred has left us unable to agree with goal/benchmark assertions. The approved work plan includes "maintain baseline acreage of agriculture and critical area interface" as the standard. However, based on the information provided by the County and the variability of baseline information for the county, this metric has not been clearly measured or defined. Without a stable baseline or the ability to verify change detected in the baseline, there is too much uncertainty in the data.

We are concerned about the statement that the protection goals of critical area functions and values on agriculture lands have been met. The report states that acres of critical area acreage that interfaces with agriculture county wide has increased compared to the 2011 baseline, which would negate that protection goals have been met.

Much of the data provided is inconclusive for identifying actual change in use on the ground. It is difficult to determine impacts to critical areas if we cannot verify that change has truly occurred, or if that change is due to agriculture or inaccuracies in how the agriculture critical area interface was mapped.

Some of the other items of note are as follows:

We appreciate the breakdown into watersheds but we still need to be able to compare what was accomplished to what is in the workplan. For targets like "protection - maintain 7.5 farm plans per year" it is confusing to track the breakdown by watershed without also having the county wide metrics clearly identified.

In general, we are not seeing the connection between maintenance of ag/critical area interface and function and values. This is an overall theme that should be evaluated through adaptive management.

Direct vs indirect effects based on location of BMP's and their proximity to critical areas is important. The reader/reviewer is left to assume what BMP effects actually benefited which critical areas over the 10 years of implementation. There are some BMPs such as wetland restoration that we can reasonably infer benefit wetlands. Similarly, a fence to protect a wetland or riparian area has clear benefits. In comparison, fences built for grazing/pasture management may have little or no impact if not in proximity to wetlands or riparian areas.

Critical area monitoring has not been specifically tied to a critical area. Even though streams and wetlands share some functions, tracking those functions in one does not automatically mean those results are the same in the other. Critical area monitoring should be relevant to that critical area. For example, "Functions and Values of wetlands monitored such as 200ft riparian buffer tree height, temperature, DO, fecal coliform, 303d listed waterways (Miles Intersect), and SWIFD salmon habitat (Miles Intersect) indicated no changes that reflected spatial data analysis." Were these specifically monitored for known wetlands? These indicators are generally used for streams specifically. Site potential tree height is a DFW stream riparian area metric and has not been applied to wetland best available science. Wetlands can improve water quality in a watershed and some of these metrics could be relevant for wetlands that are within the same drainage basin, but this relevance should be justified.

Critical Area Loss:

The report shows a significant loss of wetland through the mapped agriculture-wetland intersect (A 28% county wide decrease in

wetlands based on this data). We understand the updated wetland maps have changed, which has made tracking the baseline difficult. This has led to the inability to identify what has actually been lost. For this reason, adaptive management is needed for metrics that rely on these different datasets.

"In the ten-year period from 2016-2025, BMP's installed on agricultural lands that intersected with wetlands totaled 103 practices identified in the workplan to protect or enhance wetlands totaling 39 facility units, 275.64 acres, and 46569.54 feet."

This is not enough information to agree or disagree that the identified losses have been offset. Some practices have direct effects, and some have indirect effects as noted above. Without knowing the breakdown of practices and at least some information regarding the direct impact projects, we cannot assume that what has been installed is sufficient. For example, fencing has significant potential to provide direct protection of wetlands, however if it is installed on a stream with no wetlands, there is not a benefit to wetlands. In the breakdown of practices installed by watershed (supplemental documents) the historical practices/baseline practices include specific wetland restoration. However, in many watersheds that is not the case for the last 10 years of data. Over the last 10 years a total of 12.9 acres of wetland restoration was reported. It is also difficult to determine if losses have been offset when some information is in percentage of change and the other is in acres. Without additional information about implemented practices this is the only BMP we can assume had directly benefited wetlands.

Critical Area Monitoring:

For wetlands, we do not agree that the information provided for monitoring shows that wetland functions and values are being protected. If no wetland specific monitoring has been done, then that needs to be stated. Likewise, if some of these monitoring methods, such as dissolved oxygen or temperature were specifically administered in drainage basins with known wetlands, that data should be separated out.

Enhancement Overall Agency Determination: Unmet

Enhancement Final Comments:

Agency: DFW || Reviewer Name: Tom O'Brien & Sean Williams

Comments entered before or after review of other comments: After

Protection Overall Agency Determination: Mostly Met

Protection Final Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Mason County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) 5-year report. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW or Agency) is dedicated to preserving, protecting, and perpetuating the state's fish, wildlife, and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities. WDFW's review was completed in partnership with Regional Habitat Program staff and focused primarily on evaluating outcomes for Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (FWHCA).

WDFW partially agrees that Mason County met their VSP protection goals and benchmarks for FWHCA. The 5-year report demonstrates the county met several benchmark targets; however, elements of the report limit the Agency's ability to assess whether the established benchmark targets adequately protect fish and wildlife. Adaptive management is encouraged to make improvements to the county's program. WDFW's justification for this decision is outlined below.

Implementation Data:

The county's implementation data suggests measurable progress towards improving conditions for FWHCA on agricultural land. WDFW is pleased to see strong investments in riparian and wildlife friendly conservation, with over 180 acres of Riparian Forest Buffer plantings, 140 acres of Tree and Shrub plantings, 23 acres of Restoration of Rare and Declining Natural Communities, and 3,000 feet hedgerow plantings implemented countywide since 2011. These practices, along with others in the report, contributed to meeting the county's benchmark targets. WDFW appreciates the level of landowner participation the program has been able to achieve through engagement in Farm Plans and Individual Stewardship Plans. Collectively, these efforts demonstrate the county is actively working with the agricultural community to protect FWHCA on agricultural land.

Monitoring Data:

The county's monitoring data partially supports the conclusion that FWHCA have been protected. WDFW appreciates the level of detail provided in the report and the use of multiple habitat and water quality metrics, however, the data was difficult to evaluate. Some of the data requires further analysis and validation, suggesting that improvements can be made to the county's monitoring program.

The county's intersection analysis suggests that FWHCA have been protected in some, but not all watersheds. The intersection analysis indicates there are fewer acres of agricultural land intersecting FWHCA in WRIA 14 and 15, with the most notable change occurring in WRIA 14. This data implies that agricultural activities are moving away from FWHCA, which is promising. However, it is unclear what's changed which leads to uncertainty about this analysis. In WRIA 22, mapped FWHCA are absent, and no change occurred. In WRIA 16, the data suggests that agricultural activities are expanding into FWHCA. This trend raises concerns about

potential habitat loss of sensitive riparian areas and indicates that additional management measures may be necessary. However, WDFW recognizes that some of these changes may also be due to improvements in the mapping of agricultural land and critical areas, restoration projects, natural disturbances, or development. Further analysis and validation of the intersection data, along with a description of how the county's implementation efforts offset any recorded impacts, are requested in future reports. This information will help WDFW better understand the cause of the reported changes and ensure that fish and wildlife habitat are adequately protected.

The county's High Resolution Change Detection (HRCD) data suggests that conditions have not degraded. The HRCD data identified 110 acres, 47 acres, 12 acres, and 16 acres of tree canopy loss in WRIA 14, 15, 16, and 22, respectively. The county's implementation data suggests that these impacts were offset with their investments in riparian forest buffer, tree/shrub, and critical area plantings. In all but WRIA 14, the acreage of plantings was greater than the acres of tree canopy loss identified by HRCD. Ideally, WDFW would like to see the county offset tree canopy loss with practices that directly result in new plantings. However, the Agency recognizes that other Best Management Practices (BMPs) also contribute to improving critical area function. In WRIA 14, over 276 acres of BMPs were implemented since 2011 that support improvements to FWHCA. In addition, the county's LiDAR analysis suggests that existing riparian tree cover is taller compared to 2011 levels and is providing improved function. This data leads WDFW to believe that impacts from tree canopy loss were offset. In future reports, the Agency would like to see the county analyze the HRCD data by riparian areas, as well as other critical areas, to better understand where the tree loss is occurring.

The county's water quality monitoring data is inconclusive, and we agree with the county that more data is needed to evaluate trends in temperature, dissolved oxygen, fecal coliform, and turbidity. WDFW suggest working with Ecology to support this work. In future reports, the Agency would like to see error bars and statistical significance included with the monitoring data.

Additional Recommendations:

WDFW appreciates the programmatic improvements the county has made over the last 5 years and would like to offer the following recommendations for strengthening the Mason County VSP Work Plan. WDFW staff are available as a resource for ongoing technical assistance.

The county's report included a significant amount of quantitative data, however, limited narrative was provided to explain how the data collectively demonstrates that critical area protection has been achieved. WDFW recommends the following:

- Provide a clear summary of how monitoring and implementation data support the conclusion that critical area protection has been achieved.
- Where losses have occurred, describe how implementation efforts have replaced or mitigated affected functions and habitat values to ensure critical area protection.

The county's report demonstrates that voluntary conservation practices are being implemented, however, the on the resulting on-the-ground outcomes were not always evident. WDFW recommends the following:

- Describe how the implementation efforts benefit critical area functions and values. For practices like fencing, try to differentiate between pasture fencing and livestock exclusion fencing from a critical area.
- Report implementation data at a smaller watershed-scale, such as the Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC-12) scale or for specific stream systems, to help reviewers better understand the localized outcomes.
- Highlight how implementation and monitoring data contributes to the protection and enhancement of riparian areas, given their importance to FWHCA.

Enhancement Overall Agency Determination: Somewhat Met

Enhancement Final Comments:

WDFW partially agrees Mason County met their VSP enhancement goals and benchmarks for FWHCA. The 5-year report demonstrates the county met their implementation and producer participation benchmarks; however, the monitoring data does not fully support the conclusion that critical area functions and values have been enhanced. The increased agricultural interface in WRIA 16 is concerning and does not suggest that conditions have been enhanced. In other WRIAs, it appears the conditions have not degraded below the 2011 VSP baseline for FWHCA, but it's unclear if functions have been enhanced. More supportive narrative and data validation of the critical area intersection analysis are needed to evaluate enhancement.

Agency: SCC || Reviewer Name: Levi Keesecker & Victoria Fischella

Comments entered before of after review of other comments: After

Protection Overall Agency Determination: Somewhat Met

Protection Final Comments:

Mason County's 5-Year Report demonstrates substantial conservation practice implementation, participation, engagement with related watershed initiatives, and investment in voluntary conservation practices on agricultural lands intersecting critical areas.

The County reports that critical area protection goals were met based primarily on conservation practice implementation, GIS intersection analyses, qualitative land cover change characterization, and data summaries from multiple monitoring programs. The breadth of monitoring approaches utilized is laudable, but SCC reviewers encourage continued adaptation and improvement in

monitoring methods, analyses, and summaries to improve connections between conservation practices and critical area functions and values.

Protection conclusions rely heavily on spatial overlap metrics and narrative descriptions (e.g., “minimal” land cover change) without clear documentation of data sources, vintages, assumptions, or quantified thresholds. Spatial metrics do not adequately capture function or values unless accompanied by qualitative supporting information to provide essential context. While numerous monitoring approaches and programs are cited—including water quality, habitat, and riparian condition datasets—the data analysis and presentation are sometimes difficult to interpret. As a result, it is challenging to distinguish true on-the-ground change from dataset evolution, classification differences, or mapping refinements.

Implementation of conservation practices appears robust overall but the presentation and summary of the data limits interpretation of the connection between implementation and specific critical areas and/or functions and values.

Strengths of the report include: conservation practice implementation met or exceeded targets, measurable riparian restoration monitoring methodology (using LiDAR), connection of VSP activities with key watershed initiatives and partners, and the exceedance of farm plan targets indicating strong participation.

Enhancement Overall Agency Determination: Somewhat Met

Enhancement Final Comments:

Mason County documents extensive voluntary implementation of conservation practices intended to enhance critical area functions and values, including riparian buffers, livestock exclusion, waste management systems, habitat plantings, and wetland- and erosion-sensitive BMPs. Implementation metrics—such as BMP counts, treated acres, facility units, and linear feet— indicate an increase in enhancement-oriented activity across all four WRAs, reflecting strong landowner engagement and program delivery.

However, the report generally does not provide quantified functional indicators or summarized monitoring results linking BMP implementation to measurable enhancements in critical area functions and values. Enhancement conclusions are based on assumed benefits of BMPs rather than demonstrated outcomes derived from monitoring data.

SCC reviewers find that Mason County has made meaningful progress toward enhancement through voluntary implementation and targeted investment; however, additional data synthesis and clearer linkage between practices and functional outcomes are needed to fully substantiate enhancement claims.

Final Review Summaries by Agency

The following tables and charts summarize the findings of the TP review. Each agency's evaluation of the second 5-year report is broken out by protection and enhancement goals and benchmarks.

WA State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) FINAL REVIEW SUMMARY			
	DETERMINATION	GOALS	BENCHMARKS
PROTECTION	UNMET	Met = 0 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 2	Met = 5 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 10
ENHANCEMENT	UNMET	Met = 0 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 2	Met = 0 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 0

WA State Department of Ecology (ECY) FINAL REVIEW SUMMARY			
	DETERMINATION	GOALS	BENCHMARKS
PROTECTION	UNMET	Met = 0 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 2	Met = 0 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 14
ENHANCEMENT	UNMET	Met = 0 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 2	Met = 0 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 0

WA State Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) FINAL REVIEW SUMMARY			
	DETERMINATION	GOALS	BENCHMARKS
PROTECTION	MOSTLY MET	Met = 0 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 2	Met = 8 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 5
ENHANCEMENT	SOMEWHAT MET	Met = 0 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 2	Met = 0 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 0

WA State Conservation Commission (SCC) FINAL REVIEW SUMMARY			
	DETERMINATION	GOALS	BENCHMARKS
PROTECTION	SOMEWHAT MET	Met = 1 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 1	Met = 11 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 5
ENHANCEMENT	SOMEWHAT MET	Met = 1 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 1	Met = 0 Unmet = 0 Need More Information = 0

Figure 2. All TP agencies' combined individual determinations for Protection and Enhancement goals and benchmarks addressed in the county's report.

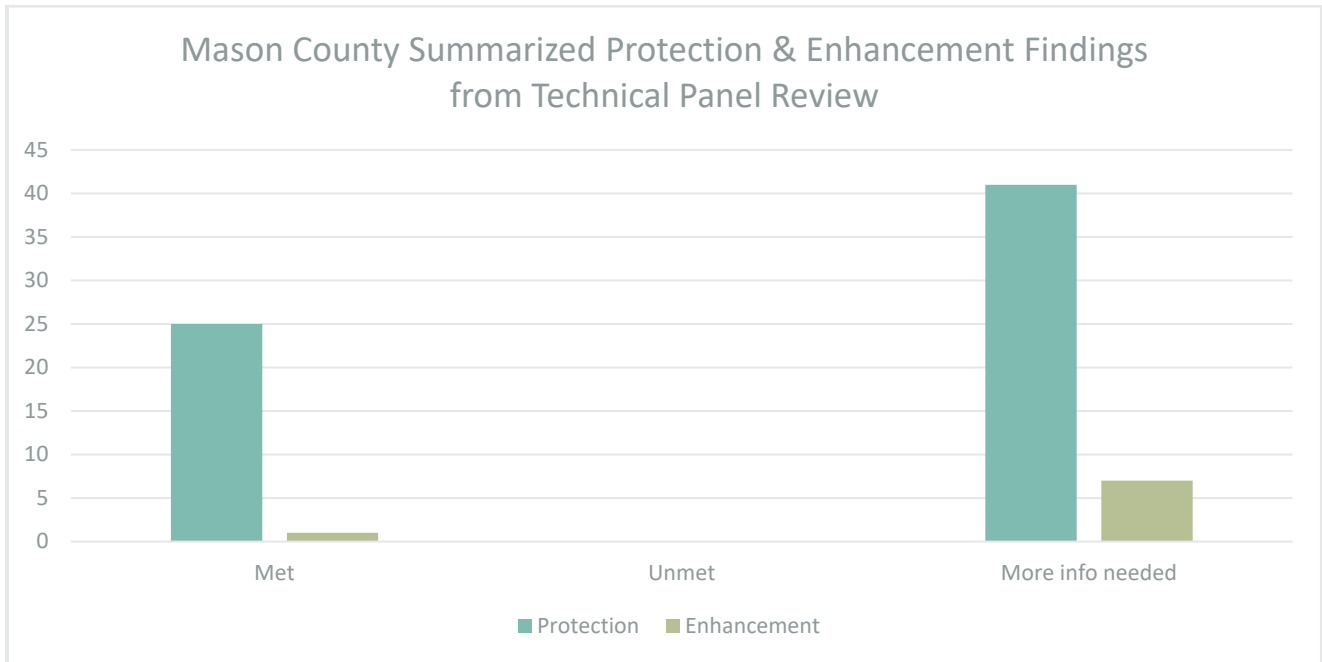


Figure 3. Each of the four TP agencies' total individual determinations for Protection goals and benchmarks.

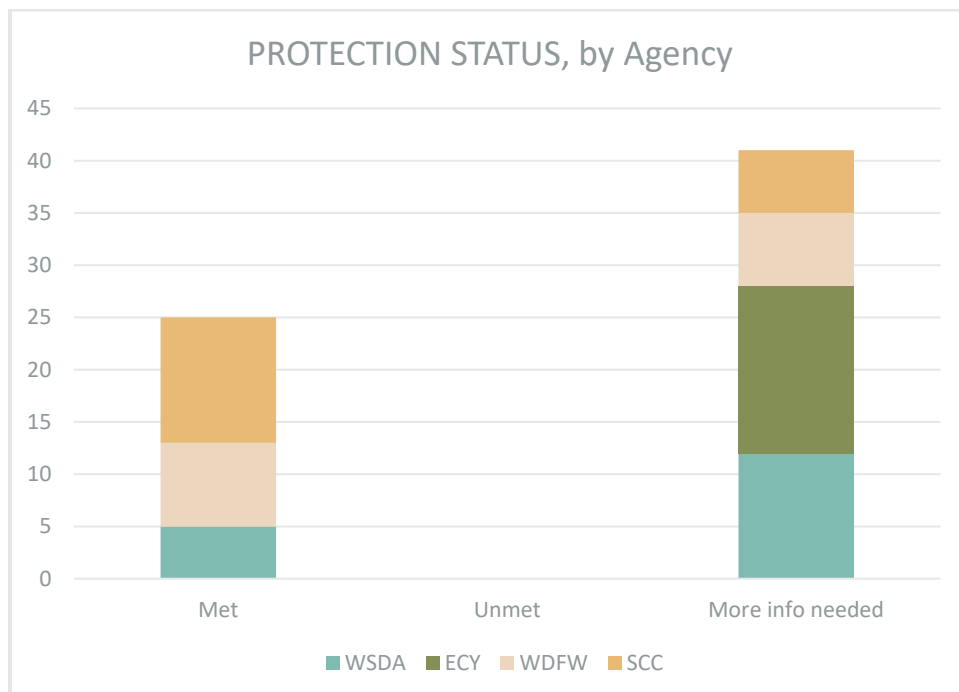
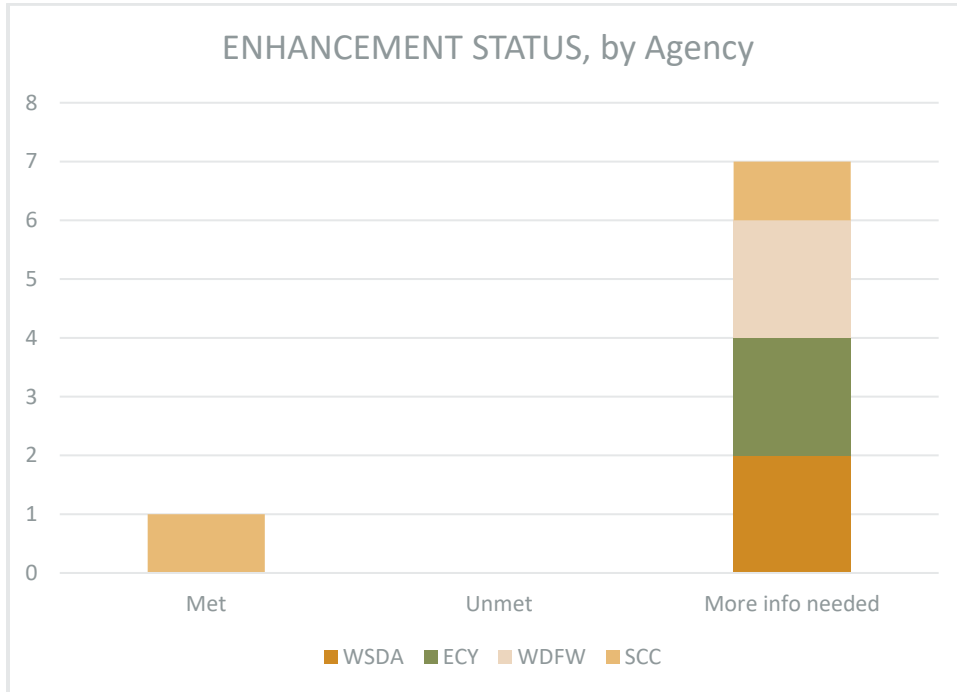


Figure 4. Each of the four TP agencies' total individual determinations for Enhancement goals and benchmarks.



5-Year Report Individual Reviewer Comments

The TP agencies reviewed the county's report by evaluating the individual goals and benchmarks for protection and enhancement of critical areas, and for agricultural viability, and outreach and participation for some counties.

The following pages document the individual assessments for the component parts of the complete second 5-year report from each TP agency. Some assessments may include additional comments from the TP agencies. Careful review of the individual assessments may provide more perspective to develop a County Response to the TP Comments or facilitate other programmatic improvements following this reporting cycle.

This document has been provided to the county, the Statewide Advisory Committee, the Technical Panel, and the SCC Director in advance of the county's schedule meeting with the Statewide Advisory Committee.

Individual Reviewer Comments

1. County Basic Information -- || Regulatory Backstop Comments

Workgroup Determination:

Agency Determination: Met

-- SCC

1. County Basic Information -- || Regulatory Backstop Comments

Workgroup Determination:

Agency Determination: N/A

-- AGR

1. County Basic Information -- || Protection Goals Not Met Comments

Workgroup Determination:

Agency Determination: N/A

-- AGR

1. County Basic Information -- || Enhancement Goals Not Met Comments

Workgroup Determination:

Agency Determination: N/A

-- AGR

2. Summary Overview -- || Summary of agricultural industries and primary conservation practices

Workgroup Determination:

Agency Determination: Met

-- SCC

2. Summary Overview -- || Summary of natural resource concerns and critical area protection and enhancement practices used in the watersheds

Workgroup Determination:

Agency Determination: Met

-- SCC

2. Summary Overview -- || VSP Cost-share using capital funding

Workgroup Determination:

Agency Determination: Met

-- SCC

2. Summary Overview -- || VSP Cost-share using operating funding

Workgroup Determination:

Agency Determination: N/A

-- SCC

2. Summary Overview -- || Summary of agricultural industries and primary conservation practices

Workgroup Determination:
Agency Determination: N/A

-- AGR

2. Summary Overview -- || Summary of natural resource concerns and critical area protection and enhancement practices used in the watersheds

Workgroup Determination:
Agency Determination: N/A

-- AGR

2. Summary Overview -- || VSP Cost-share using capital funding

Workgroup Determination:
Agency Determination: N/A

-- AGR

2. Summary Overview -- || VSP Cost-share using operating funding

Workgroup Determination:
Agency Determination: N/A

-- AGR

3. Goals Results -- Protection || Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011

Workgroup Determination: Met
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- ECY

3. Goals Results -- Enhancement, Participation || Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures

Workgroup Determination: Met
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- ECY

3. Goals Results -- Agricultural Viability || Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses

Workgroup Determination: Met
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- ECY

3. Goals Results -- Protection, Enhancement, Participation, Agricultural Viability || Establish baseline monitoring program to measure benchmarks over a ten year period

Workgroup Determination: Met
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- ECY

3. Goals Results -- Protection | | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- DFW

3. Goals Results -- Enhancement, Participation | | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- DFW

3. Goals Results -- Agricultural Viability | | Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- DFW

3. Goals Results -- Protection, Enhancement, Participation, Agricultural Viability | | Establish baseline monitoring program to measure benchmarks over a ten year period

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- DFW

3. Goals Results -- Protection | | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

Self-Identified A.M. needed.

-- SCC

3. Goals Results -- Enhancement, Participation | | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

Self-Identified A.M. needed.

-- SCC

3. Goals Results -- Agricultural Viability | | Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- SCC

3. Goals Results -- Protection, Enhancement, Participation, Agricultural Viability | | Establish baseline monitoring program to measure benchmarks over a ten year period

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: Met

Self-Identified A.M. needed.

-- SCC

3. Goals Results -- Protection | | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- AGR

3. Goals Results -- Enhancement, Participation | | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- AGR

3. Goals Results -- Agricultural Viability | | Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: N/A

-- AGR

3. Goals Results -- Protection, Enhancement, Participation, Agricultural Viability | | Establish baseline monitoring program to measure benchmarks over a ten year period

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- AGR

4. Benchmarks Results -- Protection, | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011; Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses; Establish baseline monitoring program to measure benchmarks over a ten year period; | Maintain BMP Implementation

Workgroup Determination: Exceeded

Agency Determination: Met

-- DFW

4. Benchmarks Results -- Protection, | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011; | Maintain baseline acreage of Agriculture and Critical Area Interface

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- DFW

4. Benchmarks Results -- Protection, Participation, Agricultural Viability, | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011; Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses; | Maintain 7.5 completed farm plans (Individual Stewardship Plans) per year

Workgroup Determination: Exceeded

Agency Determination: Met

-- DFW

4. Benchmarks Results -- Protection, Participation, Agricultural Viability, | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011; Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses; Establish baseline monitoring program to measure benchmarks over a ten year period; | Maintain outreach to all operators annually

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: Met

-- DFW

4. Benchmarks Results -- Enhancement, | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures; | 5% annual increase of BMP implementation (based on averaged annual implementation over 5 year period of each BMP through the County)

Workgroup Determination: Exceeded

Agency Determination: Met

-- DFW

4. Benchmarks Results -- Participation, | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011; | Return rate of 15 ISP Checklists per year

Workgroup Determination: Exceeded

Agency Determination: Met

-- DFW

4. Benchmarks Results -- Participation, | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures; | Return rate of 23 ISP Checklists per year

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: Met

-- DFW

4. Benchmarks Results -- Participation, | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures; Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses; | Increase annual number of completed Farm Plans (Individual Stewardship Plans) to 16

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: Met

-- DFW

4. Benchmarks Results -- Participation, | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures; | Increase annual operator participation levels by 50%

Workgroup Determination: More data required

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- DFW

4. Benchmarks Results -- Agricultural Viability, | Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses; | Maintain baseline acreage of Interface

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- DFW

4. Benchmarks Results -- Agricultural Viability, | Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses; | Maintain baseline acreage of Agricultural Activity

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- DFW

4. Benchmarks Results -- Agricultural Viability, | Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses; | Maintain 2011 annual average baseline of 7.5 completed Farm Plans

Workgroup Determination: Exceeded

Agency Determination: Met

-- DFW

4. Benchmarks Results -- Enhancement, | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures; | Reduce agricultural and fish and wildlife conservation area interface to less than 2011 baseline by: (1) maintaining and reconfiguring agricultural activities away from habitat areas; or (2) utilizing BMPs specific to habitat areas

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- DFW

4. Benchmarks Results -- Protection, | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011; Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses; Establish baseline monitoring program to measure benchmarks over a ten year period; | Maintain BMP Implementation

Workgroup Determination: Exceeded

Agency Determination: Met

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Protection, | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011; | Maintain baseline acreage of Agriculture and Critical Area Interface

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Protection, Participation, Agricultural Viability, | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011; Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses; | Maintain 7.5 completed farm plans (Individual Stewardship Plans) per year

Workgroup Determination: Exceeded

Agency Determination: Met

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Protection, Participation, Agricultural Viability, | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011; Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses; Establish baseline monitoring program to measure benchmarks over a ten year period; | Maintain outreach to all operators annually

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: Met

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Enhancement, | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures; | 5% annual increase of BMP implementation (based on averaged annual implementation over 5 year period of each BMP through the County)

Workgroup Determination: Exceeded

Agency Determination: Met

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Participation, | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011; | Return rate of 15 ISP Checklists per year

Workgroup Determination: Exceeded

Agency Determination: Met

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Protection, | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011; | Return rate of 15 ISP Checklists per year

Workgroup Determination: Exceeded

Agency Determination: Met

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Participation, | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures; | Return rate of 23 ISP Checklists per year

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: Met

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Participation, | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures; Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses; | Increase annual number of completed Farm Plans (Individual Stewardship Plans) to 16

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: Met

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Participation, | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures; | Increase annual operator participation levels by 50%

Workgroup Determination: More data required

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Agricultural Viability, | Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses; | Maintain baseline acreage of Interface

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: Met

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Agricultural Viability, | Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses; | Maintain baseline acreage of Agricultural Activity

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: Met

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Agricultural Viability, | Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses; | Maintain 2011 annual average baseline of 7.5 completed Farm Plans

Workgroup Determination: Exceeded

Agency Determination: Met

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Enhancement, | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures; | Reduce agricultural and wetland interface to less than 2011 baseline: (1) maintain and reconfigure agricultural activities away from wetland areas; or (2) restoring and enhancing wetlands in or near agricultural activity utilizing wetland sensitive BMPs

Workgroup Determination: More data required
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Enhancement, | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures; | Reduce agricultural and erosion hazard area interface to less than 2011 baseline by: (1) maintaining and reconfiguring agricultural activities away from erosion areas; or (2) utilizing BMPs specific to erosion areas.

Workgroup Determination: Met
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Enhancement, | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures; | Reduce agricultural and fish and wildlife conservation area interface to less than 2011 baseline by: (1) maintaining and reconfiguring agricultural activities away from habitat areas; or (2) utilizing BMPs specific to habitat areas

Workgroup Determination: Met
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- SCC

4. Benchmarks Results -- Protection, | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011; Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural land into other uses; Establish baseline monitoring program to measure benchmarks over a ten year period; | Maintain BMP Implementation

Workgroup Determination: Exceeded
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- ECY

4. Benchmarks Results -- Protection, | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011; | Maintain baseline acreage of Agriculture and Critical Area Interface

Workgroup Determination: Met
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- ECY

4. Benchmarks Results -- Protection, Participation, Agricultural Viability, | Protect critical area functions and values on agricultural lands at a watershed level as they existed as of July 22, 2011; Ensure the viability of agriculture and reduce the conversion of agricultural

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Workgroup Determination: Exceeded
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- ECY

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Workgroup Determination: Met
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Workgroup Determination: Exceeded
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Workgroup Determination: Exceeded
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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4. Benchmarks Results -- Participation, | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures; | Return rate of 23 ISP Checklists per year

Workgroup Determination: Met
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Workgroup Determination: Met
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Workgroup Determination: More data required
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Workgroup Determination: Met
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Workgroup Determination: Exceeded

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- AGR

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Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Workgroup Determination: Exceeded

Agency Determination: Met

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Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: Met

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Workgroup Determination: Exceeded
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Workgroup Determination: Exceeded
Agency Determination: Met

-- AGR

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Workgroup Determination: Met
Agency Determination: Met

-- AGR

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Workgroup Determination: Met
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Workgroup Determination: More data required
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Workgroup Determination: Met
Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- AGR

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Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Workgroup Determination: Exceeded

Agency Determination: Met

-- AGR

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Workgroup Determination: More data required

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

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Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- AGR

4. Benchmarks Results -- Enhancement, | Enhance critical area functions and values through voluntary, incentive-based measures; | Reduce agricultural and fish and wildlife conservation area interface to less than 2011 baseline by: (1) maintaining and reconfiguring agricultural activities away from habitat areas; or (2) utilizing BMPs specific to habitat areas

Workgroup Determination: Met

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- AGR

5. Critical Area Losses -- Protection Loss | | in 2011, 18.43% of agricultural land intersected with Wetland. In 2025, 10.24% of agricultural land intersected with Wetland. In 2011, this intersect accounted for 2.52% of all wetland acreage in the county, in 2025, this status is maintained at 2.11% intersect of all Wetland acreage. The moderate Decrease is consistent with population growth trends, and the 24% increase of agriculture in Mason County from 2011-2025, and the 32% loss in wetland acreage county wide based on 2025 publicly available data results.

Workgroup Determination:

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

Based on the information presented, the Technical Panel finds no clear evidence of VSP-attributable degradation of critical area functions and values; however, reported spatial “losses” of wetlands and fish and wildlife habitat appear to be largely driven by changes in publicly available datasets rather than verified on-the-ground conversion. Field verification, HRCD analyses, and functional monitoring indicators (e.g., water quality, riparian condition) do not corroborate the magnitude of spatial losses suggested by some datasets. At the same time, documented increases in BMP implementation indicate active efforts toward protection and enhancement. Overall, critical areas appear to have been actively managed for protection and enhancement, though confirmation of outcomes requires improved monitoring synthesis.

-- SCC

5. Critical Area Losses -- Protection Loss | | Updated Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Priority Habitat Area (FWPHA) Identified a 50% reduction (452 Acres) in FWPHA intersecting Agricultural Lands from 2011 baseline to 2025 in WRIA 14 Kennedy - Goldsborough.

Workgroup Determination:

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

Based on the information presented, the Technical Panel finds no clear evidence of VSP-attributable degradation of critical area functions and values; however, reported spatial “losses” of wetlands and fish and wildlife habitat appear to be largely driven by changes in publicly available datasets rather than verified on-the-ground conversion. Field verification, HRCD analyses, and functional monitoring indicators (e.g., water quality, riparian condition) do not corroborate the magnitude of spatial losses suggested by some datasets. At the same time, documented increases in BMP implementation indicate active efforts toward protection and enhancement. Overall, critical areas appear to have been actively managed for protection and enhancement, though confirmation of outcomes requires improved monitoring synth

-- SCC

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Workgroup Determination:

Agency Determination: More Information Needed

-- DFW

6. Critical Area Monitoring -- | | LiDAR Canaopy height analysis caculating area of restorable (Site Potential Tree Hight > 0ft < 5ft) Riparian acres along 200ft stream buffer, Analysis Perfomed by WRIA, HUC, and Agricultural Parcel, over 600,000 Acres, as new lidar becomes available.

Workgroup Determination:

Agency Determination: N/A

SCC reviewers acknowledge and appreciate Mason County's inclusion of a substantial amount of critical area monitoring data, which demonstrates a strong commitment to data collection and evaluation. However, the monitoring section would benefit from improved organization and clearer synthesis, as the volume and presentation of data made interpretation difficult in some areas. SCC reviewers encourage the county to strengthen the linkage between reported BMP implementation and observed monitoring outcomes, including a clearer explanation of how monitoring results demonstrate protection and/or enhancement of critical area functions and values.

-- SCC

7. Agricultural Viability -- ||

Workgroup Determination:
Agency Determination: N/A

-- AGR

8. Landowner Participation -- || Approaches being used in landowner outreach and technical assistance.

Workgroup Determination:
Agency Determination: Met

-- DFW

8. Landowner Participation -- || Approaches being used in landowner outreach and technical assistance.

Workgroup Determination:
Agency Determination: N/A

-- AGR

9. Adaptive Management -- ||

Workgroup Determination:
Agency Determination: N/A

Yes. SCC reviewers recommend adaptive management of Mason County's Work Plan goals and benchmarks to improve clarity, measurability, and long-term evaluability, consistent with RCW 36.70A.720(1)(e). Several benchmarks rely on complex or evolving spatial datasets, qualitative descriptors, or cumulative implementation totals that make it difficult to determine whether protection or enhancement outcomes have been achieved. Adaptive management is warranted to refine benchmarks so they more clearly connect BMP implementation with critical area functions and values. The summaries of implemented projects presented in the current report provide a strong basis for future reporting and goal/benchmark targets. SCC reviewers recommend continued refinement of this approach to implementation monitoring to better connect conservation practices to expected critical area benefits (e.g., reduced erosion, increased habitat, etc). Data provided to support effectiveness monitoring, such as water quality and flow, would benefit from additional context and clarity to establish linkages between conservation practice implementation and critical area functions and values. For example, identifying the monitoring locations in relation to agricultural land use (e.g., upstream or downstream) and connecting specific monitoring parameters (e.g., turbidity or nutrients) to intended purpose of conservation practices would improve clarity. Water quality data may not immediately respond to increased conservation practice implementation due to legacy effects and/or lag times. More information on strengths/weaknesses of water-quality based monitoring for the effects of voluntary conservation can be found on the VSP website in the presentation titled: "Info Session for Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework (ACPF) & Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) - May 2023" The LiDAR-based canopy cover methodology is promising and may be beneficial to implement in other Mason Co. Watersheds if data allows Assessing to what extent VSP outreach efforts have increased conservation practice implementation would be helpful to evaluate efficacy of approaches. SCC reviewers appreciate that Mason County continues to improve and adapt VSP monitoring

-- SCC