



Mason Conservation District
450 W. Business Park Road ● Shelton, WA 98584
Phone: (360) 427-9436 ● FAX: (360) 427-4396

June 20, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MASON CONSERVATION DISTRICT TO DEVELOP VOLUNTARY
STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM FOR AGRICULTURE**

Contact: John Bolender, District Manager
(360) 427-9436 x 121

Shelton – In 2006 Initiative 933 was placed on the ballot to address “taking” of agricultural lands from implementation of new development regulations. I-933 failed by 60%. The 2007 Legislature charged the Ruckelshaus Center to examine conflicts between protecting agricultural land and protecting critical areas under the GMA. A moratorium was placed on the requirement for local governments to update their critical area ordinances as they specifically applied to agricultural activities.

The 2011 Legislature passed the Voluntary Stewardship Program (ESHB 1886) as a result of the facilitated stakeholder discussions. ESHB 1886 established the voluntary stewardship program (VSP) was established at the [Washington State Conservation Commission](#) (WSCC). The program is an alternative approach for counties to protect critical areas on agricultural lands.

On January 17, 2012 the Board of County Commissioners adopted a Resolution opting-in to the program. Funding was not provided by the Legislature until July 2015 for Mason County to develop a program. In December 2015 the Board of Mason County Commissioners designated the Mason Conservation District to develop the program.

The Mason Conservation District is soliciting for participants on a stakeholder workgroup over the next several months. The District will introduce the community to the Voluntary Stewardship Program on June 28th, 6 PM at the Mason County Department of Public Works conference room.

Individuals interested in participating in the workgroup should contact the District. Additional information can be obtained about the program can contact John Bolender, District Manager, at (360) 427-9436, Ext. 121 or email at jbolender@masoncd.org