

County Response Period and Protocol for 5-year Report Reviews

October 22, 2025

New Process

The Washington State Conservation Commission's (SCC) Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) has adjusted the 5-year reporting review timeline to accommodate participating counties' interest in potentially providing clarifications following formal review of submitted reports by the Technical Panel (TP) agencies. Each 5-year reporting cycle ends with a final determination from the SCC Director (Director) for each county's status in the program. To make those determinations, the Director may review all 5-year report contents, all comments provided by the TP, and all recommendations from the Statewide Advisory Committee (SAC).

VSP staff has built more structure into the reporting process and the reviews, evaluations, and recommendations completed by the TP and SAC. This work led to the creation of a County Response Period during the review process for 5-year reports. The County Response Period is a three-week period in which counties will have access to the final TP review comments and can provide a written response for consideration by the SAC and the Director.

For the second 5-year reporting cycle (also known as the 10-year reports), there is no template being provided to counties to follow, nor is there an online form to complete. The final TP comments will be provided to each county in the same format they are provided to the SAC and the Director. The comments will include an overall evaluation of the county's 5-year report, a summary analysis of the TP agencies' findings specific to protection and enhancement goals and benchmarks, and feedback specific to individual entries included by the counties in their 5-year reporting template.

County Responsibilities

Counties may choose to provide a written response to any comments made by any Technical Panel agency. **Counties are not required to provide any response to the TP comments during the County Response Period.** Written responses should be saved as a .pdf file and submitted by email to SCC's VSP Coordinator by the assigned deadline for each county.

SCC is not providing any guidance or requirements on how responses should be formatted. However, counties should consider how to effectively communicate responses or clarifications to any comments made by the TP. Providing references to the specific comments being addressed in the county's response will help the SAC and the Director with their recommendations and determinations, respectively.

Review of County Responses

Responses submitted by counties will be added to the final review package for the SAC and Director in advance of the SAC review meeting for each county. That review package will already include the complete 5-year report and the TP comments for each county. The SAC review meetings will consist of a short presentation for each county by the VSP Coordinator that includes a summary of findings and comments from the TP and an overview of any submitted county response to those comments.

The SAC will discuss the presented materials and can ask any county staff and/or TP agency staff to clarify any report contents, review comments, and/or county response materials. Following discussion and consideration of all submitted materials, the SAC will make a motion to pass a final recommendation for each county's post-reporting program status to the Director. That motion and its outcome will be included in the final review package provided to the Director to assist in making a final determination on each county's program status.

What makes up the final review package?

