

THURSTON COUNTY A-18 AGRICULTURAL USES – CRITICAL AREAS

PLANNING COMMISSION – OCTOBER 5, 2022

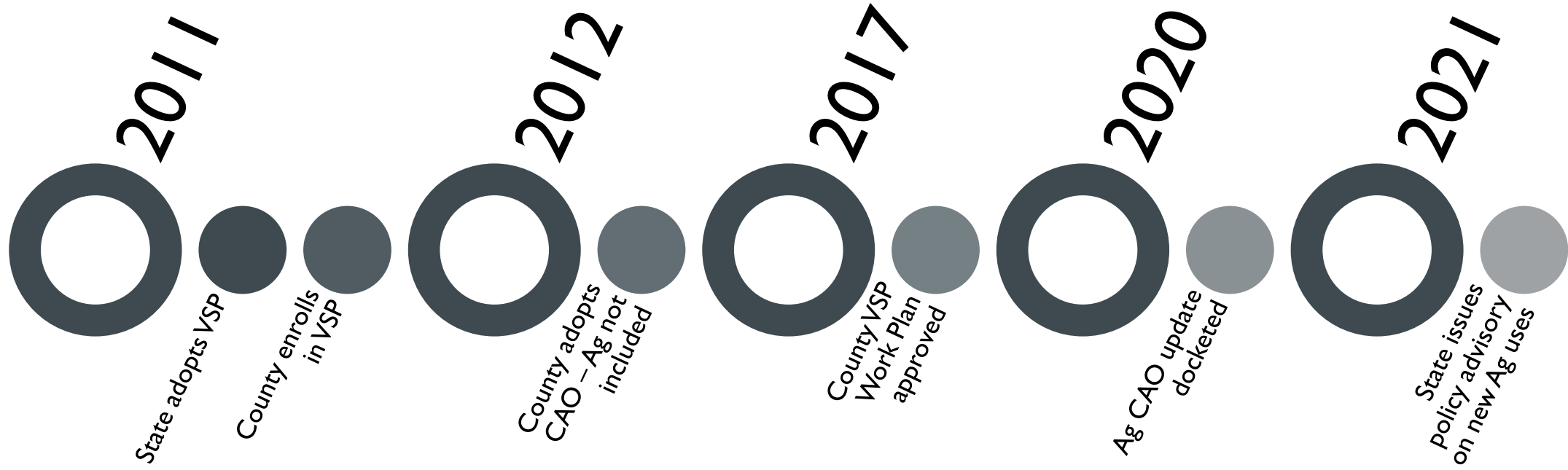


Agricultural Uses – Critical Areas Code Update

TONIGHT'S PLAN OF ACTION

- **Project background and scope**
- **Review conservation planning concept**
- **Share further research**
- **Present draft code amendments**
- **Discussion and questions**
- **Schedule a public hearing**

PROJECT BACKGROUND



PROJECT SCOPE

Update critical areas protections for 'New Agricultural Activities'

- Lands converted to agricultural use after July 24, 2012
- New agricultural facilities built after July 24, 2012 on existing or new ag land
- Expansion of agricultural facilities (outside existing footprint) on existing ag land



PROTECTING AND ENHANCING CRITICAL AREAS THROUGH CONSERVATION PLANNING

Department of Commerce's Critical Areas Handbook states:

“Conservation plans are intended to help agricultural operators maintain productive and economically viable agricultural land, while protecting and enhancing critical areas and water quality using best available science and effective mitigation measures. Conservation Plans can effectively reduce impacts from farm activities on natural resources with solutions unique to each farm to avoid or minimize adverse impacts with mitigation techniques.”



CONSERVATION PLANNING APPROACH

- Reflects state guidance on CAO compliance
- Builds on VSP Program
- Balances goals for protecting working farmlands *and* critical areas
- Provides opportunities to incentivize beneficial conservation projects and climate-smart activities



JULY 20 CONCEPT REVIEW – CONSERVATION PLANNING APPROACH

Conservation Planning Process

- Prepared by technical service provider; reviewed and approved by county
- Identify benchmarks and mitigation measures for impacts--ensuring site-specific 'no net loss'
- Farmers participate in monitoring and adaptive mgmt. as prescribed in plan; county to enforce

Conservation Plan Components

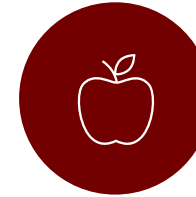
- Goals
- Maps, Scope, and Timeline
- Implementation Plan
- Monitoring & Compliance



Applicable Date
July 24, 2012



Resource Constraints
**Limited Demand for
New Ag Activities**



Conservation Plan
Checklist Approach
Limited Applicability



Integrating Agroforestry
Clearly Defining



Monitoring & Compliance
**Self Assessments &
County Follow-Up**

QUESTION REVIEW

CODE UPDATES – SUMMARY

Repeal and replace Chapter 17.15 TCC, *Agricultural Activities Critical Areas*

- **Details conservation planning option for new agricultural activities to comply with CAO**
- New purpose statement, applicability, and general requirements sections
- Updated definitions
- New sections clarifying existing/ongoing versus new agriculture uses
- New provisions to remove barriers to conservation enhancement projects and climate mitigation activities
- Farm Conservation Plan standards, requirements, monitoring and compliance

Updating Title 24 *Critical Areas Ordinance*

- **Default option for new agricultural activities to comply with CAO**
- Updated references and definitions
- Revisions to use tables to include new agricultural activities and facilities

MOTION

- *“Move to schedule a public hearing on November 2, 2022 at 7:00 PM or soon thereafter for ‘Development Code Docket item A-18, Agricultural Uses – Critical Areas Code Update,’ which amends the Thurston County Code, Chapter 17.15 and Title 24 related.”*

QUESTIONS?

Project Page

Agricultural Uses – Critical Areas

<https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/planning/Pages/devcode-ag-cao.aspx>

Project Contact:

Ashley Arai, Agriculture Community Program Manager

ashley.arai@co.thurston.wa.us