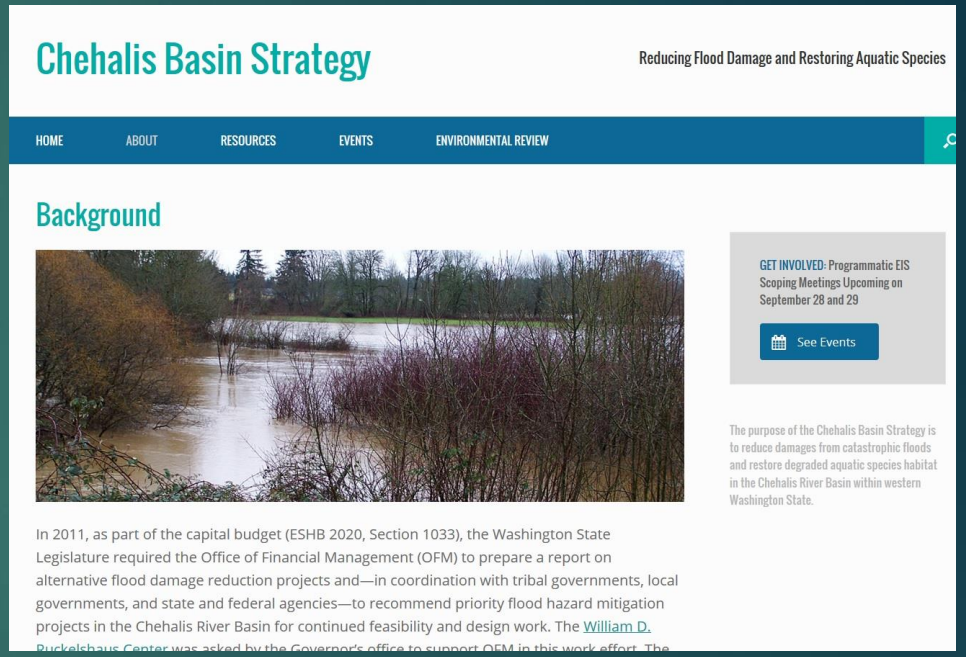
Chehalis Basin Watershed Management Plan

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP'S WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE CHEHALIS STRATEGY

Chehalis Strategy

- "The long-term goal of the Strategy is to make the basin a safer place for families and communities impacted by flooding, and to improve and restore aquatic species habitat now and for future generations."

- Focus on when there is "too much"



Watershed Planning Legislation

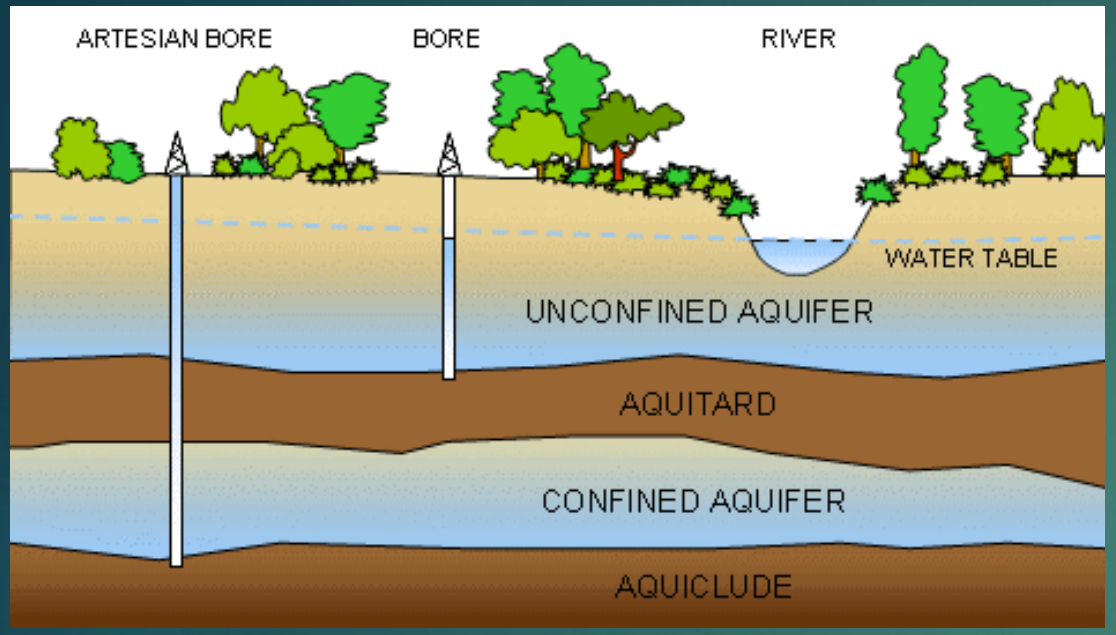
- Watershed Planning Act (RCW 90.82)
  - "The development of such plans serves the state's vital interests by ensuring that the state's water resources are used wisely, by protecting existing water rights, by protecting instream flows for fish, and by providing for the economic well-being of the state's citizenry and communities."
- Water for People & Water for Fish

Chehalis Basin Partnership

- The Chehalis Basin Partnership was formed in 1998 under RCW 90.82, the Watershed Management Act, to provide a framework for local citizens, interest groups, and government organizations to work collaboratively to identify and solve water-related issues.
- **Members:** The people living in the Chehalis Watershed are the ones who are going to be the most affected by water resource management decision-making. That's why it's important to have the widest diversity of voices participate in developing plans for the watershed.

Chehalis Basin Watershed Management Plan

- Water Quantity
  - Water for agriculture
  - Water in private wells
  - Water for municipalities
  - Water in streams for fish
- Water Quality
- Planning
- Outreach, Education & Public Information
- Habitat



Management of flooding, habitat, land use and human water use – *all are connected*

Relevant Recommendations from the Chehalis Basin Watershed Management Plan

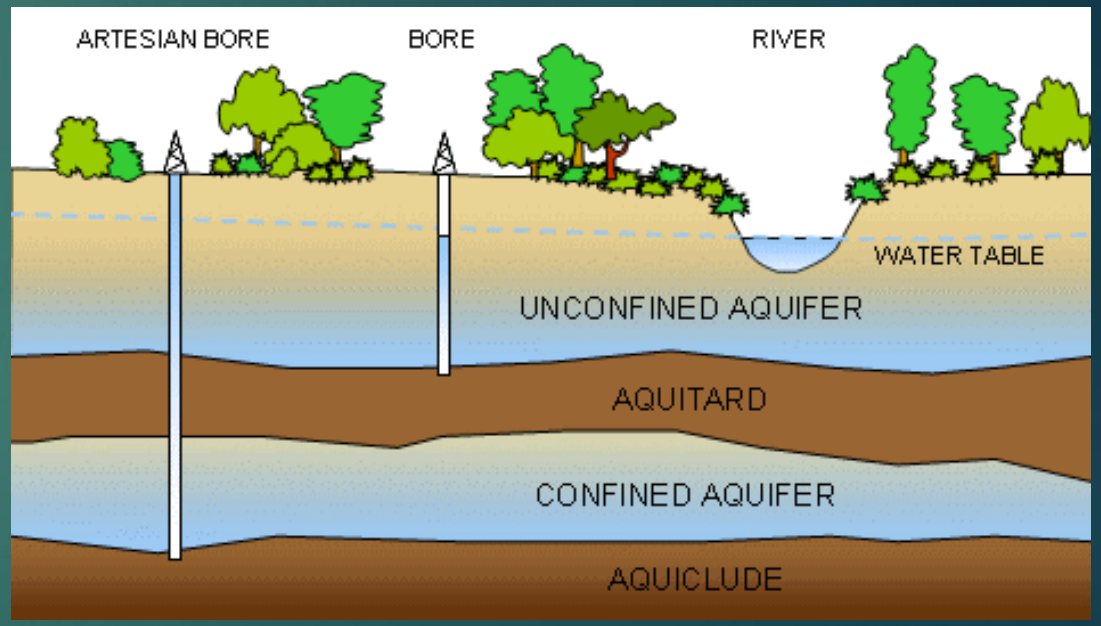
WMP Recommendations

- Conduct groundwater study
- Identify tools for meeting water quantity goals
- Understand impacts of exempt wells
- Promote water conservation
- Protect high quality waters & clean impaired ones
- Evaluate adequacy of “instream flows”
- Coordinate habitat efforts in the basin

1. Further USGS study on groundwater flow, water budget

- Science questions:
  - How does water flow between above and below ground?
  - How might changes on the landscape affect groundwater?

- Management Question:
  How can you effectively manage seasonal water flows in the Chehalis Basin?



Relevant Groundwater Studies Already Completed

- Ely, D.M., Frasl, K.E., Marshall, C.A., and Reed, Fred, 2008, Seepage investigation for selected river reaches in the Chehalis River basin, Washington: U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Report 2008-5180, 12 p.
- Fasser, ET., Julich, RJ., 2010, Groundwater Levels for Selected Wells in the Chehalis River Basin, Washington: U.S. Geological Survey Data Series 512
- Gendaszek, A.S., 2011, Groundwater-surface water interactions within the surficial aquifers of the Chehalis River Basin, Washington [poster]: 8th Washington Hydrogeology Symposium, Tacoma, Washington, April 26-28, 2011.
- Gendaszek, A.S., 2011, Hydrogeologic framework and groundwater/surface-water interactions of the Chehalis River basin, Washington: U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Report 2011-5160, 42 p.
- Gendaszek, Andy, 2010, Groundwater-Surface Water Interactions within the Chehalis River Basin: Presentation by U.S. Geological Survey to the Chehalis Basin Partnership, Tacoma, WA, November 19, 2010 (PDF, 6.3 MB)
- Project Underway: Water Budget of the Upper Chehalis River Basin;Funded by City of Centralia and USGS

2. Resolve issues related to exempt wells

- Science question:
  Where might individual wells be affecting/ affected by surface water levels?

- Management question:
  Could a strategic groundwater-pumping schedule be developed for a particular site that would delay the impact on the river until the high flow period?

3. Develop tools for meeting water quantity needs

- Wetlands for water retention
- Water capture/storage facilities throughout the watershed
- Aquifer storage
- Off-channel storage

4. Encourage Ecology to work with basin communities to develop flexible strategies for water rights

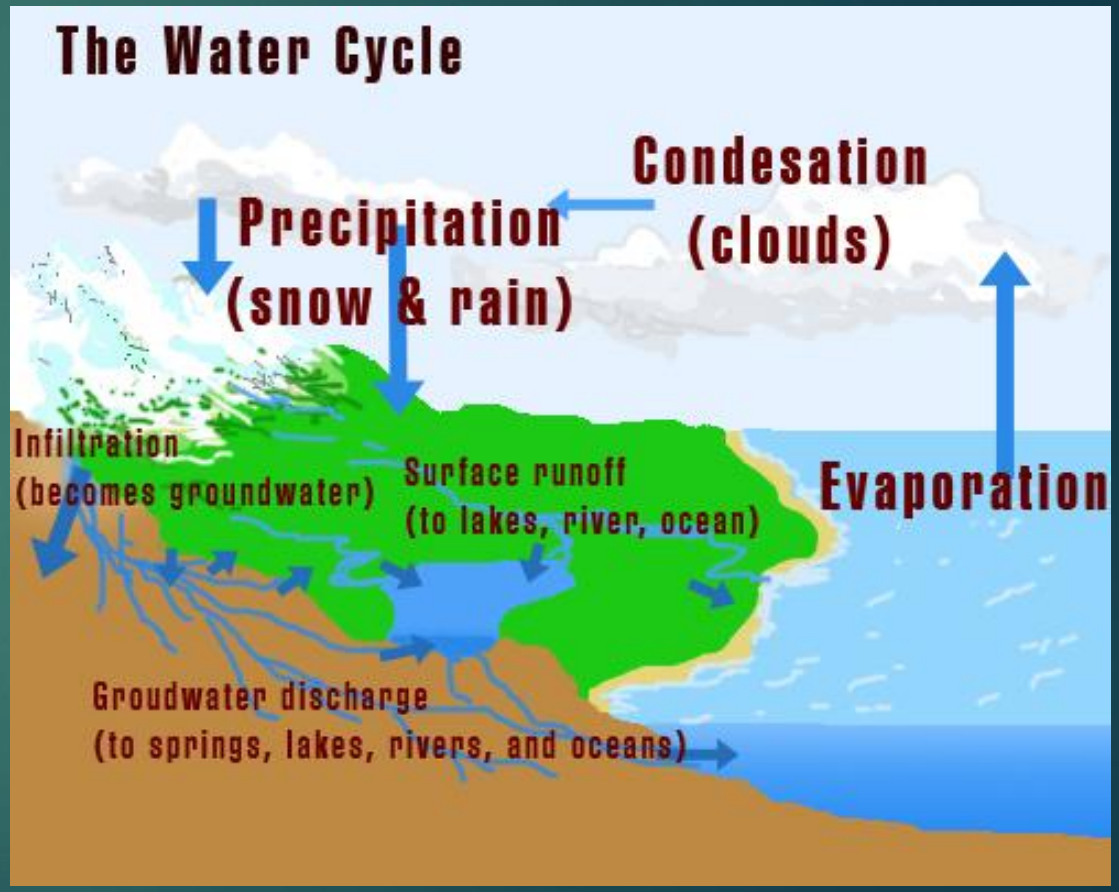
- Water Banks: The water bank could be used to help users find each other and share water if they are ever regulated or need to acquire additional water rights.
- Water Trusts: The acceptance of a water right into the Trust Program generally requires that the purpose of use of the right itself be changed from the original use to instream flow or other uses.
  **(*If water goes to instream flows, furthers aquatic species goals!*)

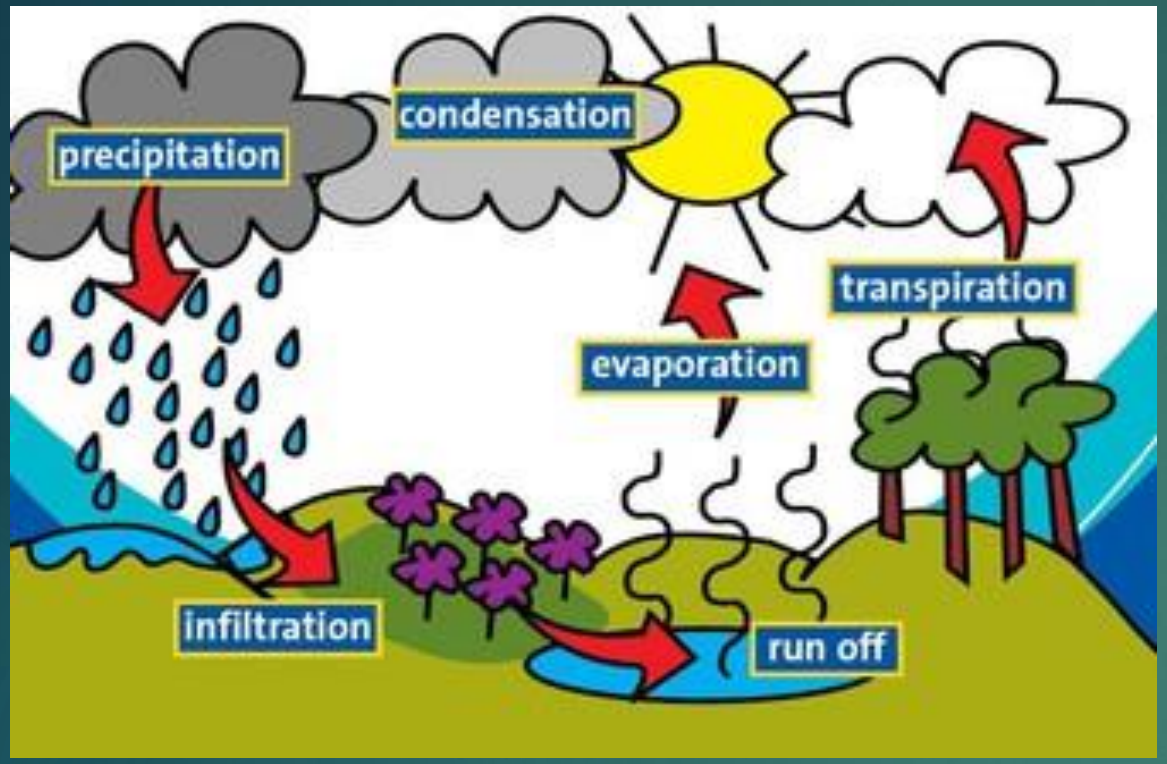
5. Engage CBP

- Engage with the Chehalis Basin Partnership, which still serves as an information-sharing forum for local governments, citizens and others with an interest in the basin's water resources.
- Consider tapping into knowledge of original members before lost

Summary Recommendations for Chehalis Strategy

- Continue work to understand groundwater in the Chehalis Basin
- Tap into technical and policy studies already completed by CBP
- Access CBP member knowledge as a resource





Thank You!

For more information, visit our website:
www.chehalisbasinpartnership.org