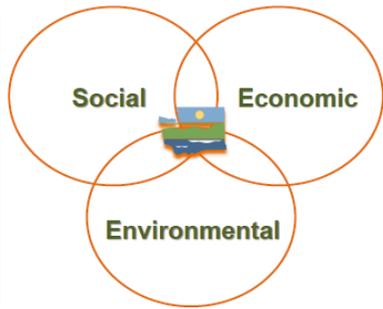


East Fork Lewis River Partnership for clean water



The East Fork Lewis River – a valuable natural resource

The East Fork Lewis River is a regional gem in Southwest Washington, encompassing 212 square miles of Clark and Skamania Counties. The watershed consists of a variety of land uses, multiple jurisdictions and permits, and has significant public access and riparian connectivity. Efforts to acquire property in the watershed for conservation and recreational use is what makes the East Fork Lewis River such a valuable resource, not only environmentally, but also socially, and economically. The East Fork Lewis River provides significant recreational use and enjoyment for anglers, kayakers, swimmers, hikers, and campers. The watershed also supports important stormwater, wastewater, and drinking water services for residents and businesses in the watershed. Additionally, the East Fork Lewis provides water for agriculture, supporting the numerous small hobby farms and wineries that make up the watershed's landscape.



Why is clean water important?

To support recreational use in the watershed, there are criteria for how much bacteria can be in the water. Areas with elevated bacteria levels increase risks to people swimming, wading, or fishing; therefore efforts to lower bacteria levels are important to achieving water quality that is safe for public health. Similarly, from a temperature standpoint, temperature criteria function to support aquatic life in the watershed. The East Fork Lewis River provides important habitat for salmonids and the ability to cool water temperatures is critical to supporting long-term salmonid recovery, as elevated water temperatures create poor conditions for fish and wildlife.



Developing a Water Cleanup Plan

Currently, the East Fork Lewis River and its tributaries are on the State's polluted waters list for bacteria and temperature impairments, which drives the need to develop a Water Cleanup Plan. A Water Cleanup Plan is a non-regulatory, voluntary, implementation-based plan that aims to achieve water quality standards in the absence of a traditional Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). The success of this water cleanup planning effort is important because not achieving water quality standards through this process could result in the development of a traditional TMDL.



The Water Cleanup Plan for the East Fork Lewis River will look like a 9 element watershed plan. The [East Fork Lewis River Watershed Temperature and Bacteria Source Assessment Report](#) functioned to identify causes and sources of pollution, estimate load reductions needed, and identify critical areas; and the [East Fork Lewis River Partnership](#) will work together to co-develop the goals, management measures, implementation actions, and project timeline to address water quality impairments. The Partnership will also develop a public education and outreach strategy, and a long-term monitoring plan to measure progress.

What is the East Fork Lewis River Partnership?

The Partnership is made up of Ecology staff and Implementation Partners from local, state, federal, and tribal governments; non-profits, and private industry. The goals are to work within the Partnership to develop a project list to address bacteria and temperature issues; to meet water quality standards and support all beneficial uses in the watershed in the absence of a traditional TMDL; to solidify the watershed's eligibility for 319 funding; to strengthen partnerships, collaboration, and relationship building; and to support, celebrate, and take credit for existing projects, programs, and planning efforts that are underway in the watershed. The Partnership will meet regularly through the summer of 2019.

