



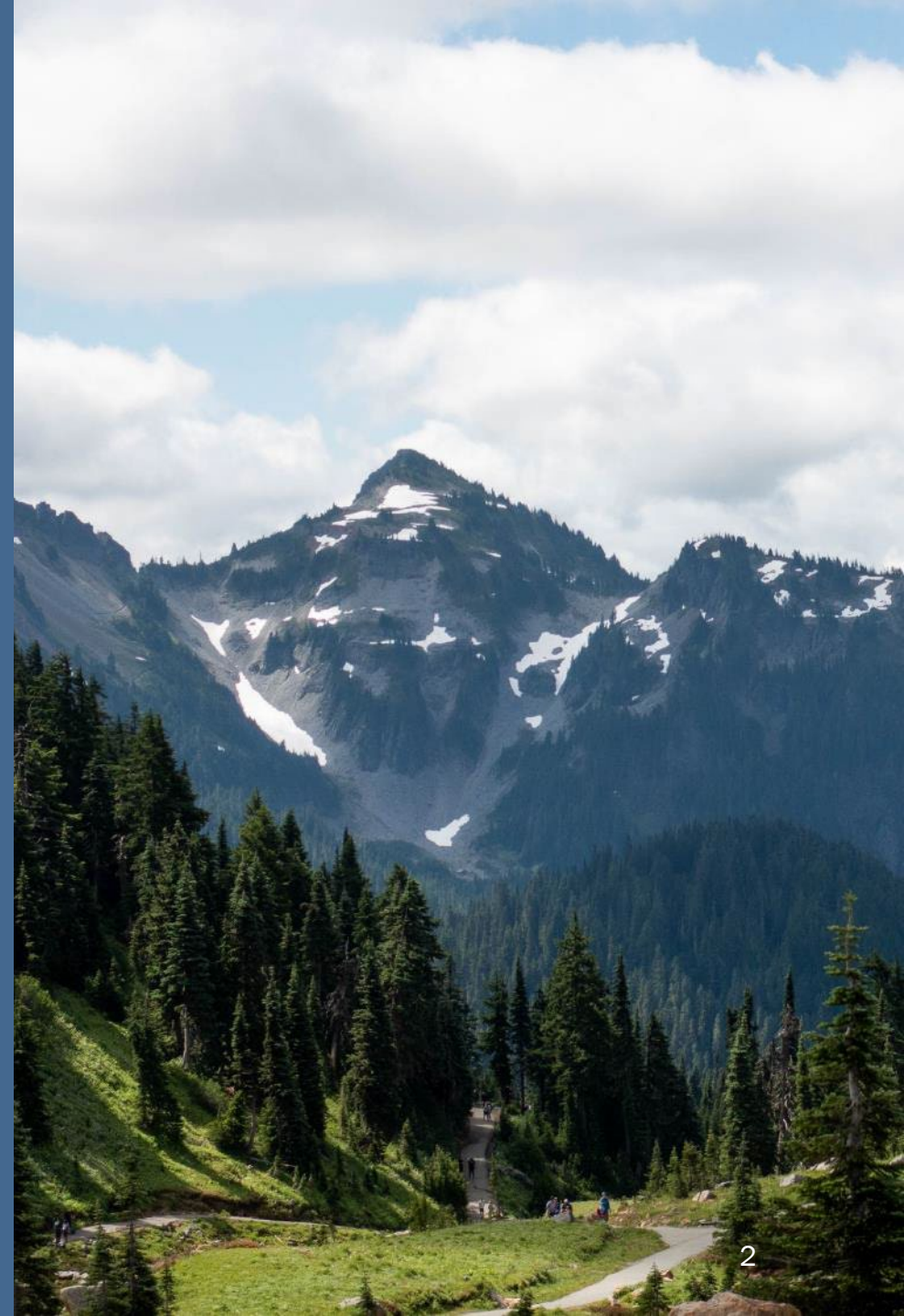
Water Supply Availability Committee

May 8, 2025

Water Resources Program



Recording!



Agenda



Time	Agenda item	Responsible
10:00 a.m.	Welcome and agenda Recap: Drought declaration process and implications	Caroline Mellor, Ecology
10:10 a.m.	Regional Climate Setting / ENSO	Karin Bumbaco, WSCO
10:25 a.m.	Mountain Conditions	Matt Warbritton, NRCS
10:40 a.m.	Streamflow and Groundwater	Nick Stufin. USGS
10:55 a.m.	Yakima Project	Teresa Hauser, BOR
11:10 a.m.	Water Supply Forecasts	Amy Burke, NWS
11:25 a.m.	Hydrologic threshold discussion	Committee members Ecology facilitates
11:45 a.m.	Discussion: What concerns do folks have for drought recovery and Water Year 2025?	All participants Ecology facilitates
11:25 a.m.	Wrap-up and next steps	Ecology

Committee Role

WSAC provides an important consultative and advisory role to Ecology related to:

- Current and forecasted water supply conditions;
- Whether the hydrologic drought threshold has been met or is likely to be met.

Meeting Objectives

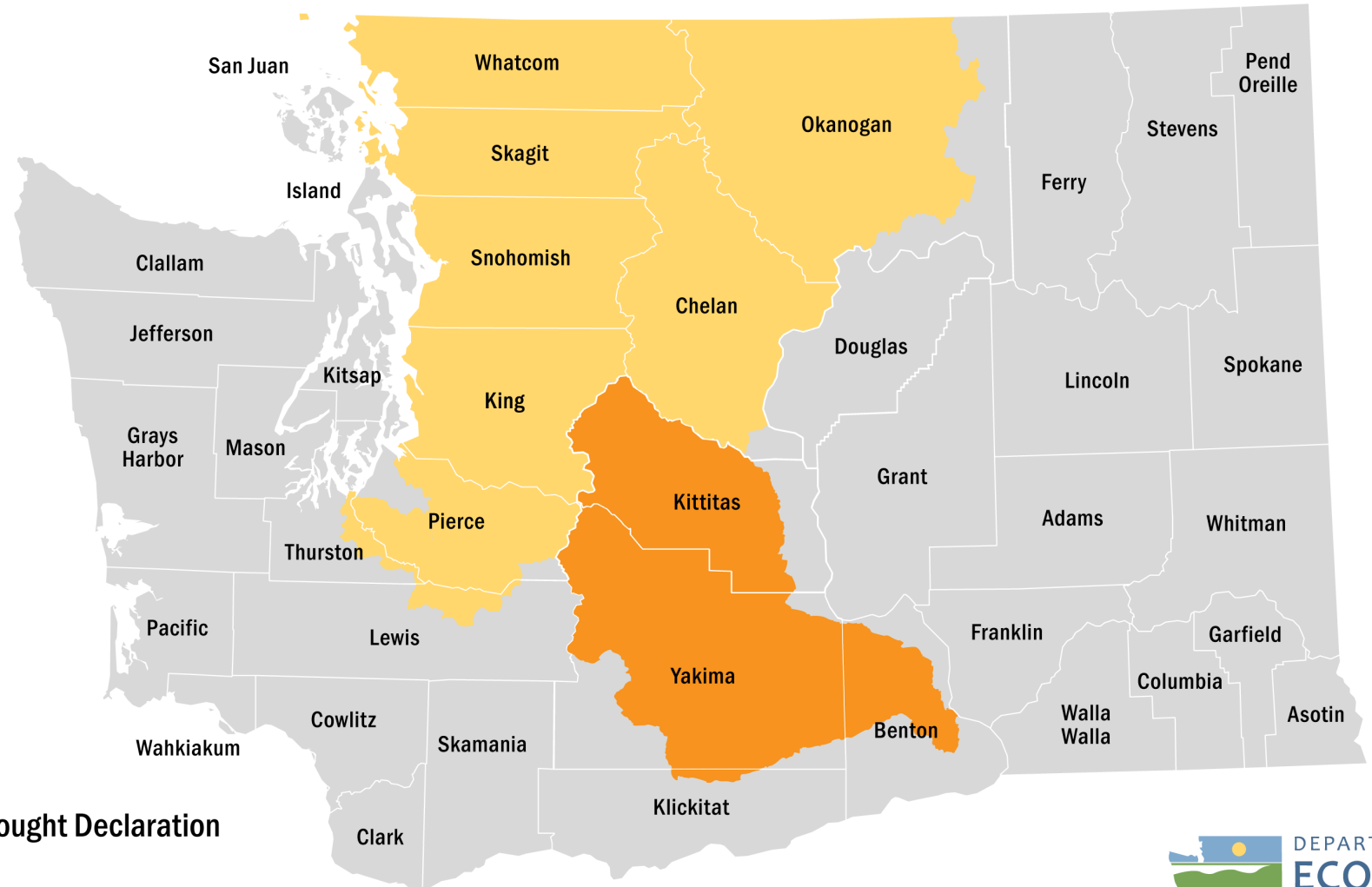
- Share pertinent info and assess water supply conditions in Washington as we enter Water Year 2025.
- Discuss if drought conditions warrant WSAC recommending to Ecology to convene the next steps in the state's drought declaration process to potentially expand the drought declaration for a portion of the state.

Drought Emergency Declaration

On April 8, 2025, Ecology declared drought in the **Upper Yakima, Lower Yakima and Naches watersheds**, due to low reservoir storage and compounding deficits.

Drought advisory for Pierce, King, Snohomish, Skagit and Whatcom counties, along with Okanogan and Chelan counties.

*The utilities of Everett, Seattle and Tacoma do not expect issues for their customers.



Drought Conditions

Drought conditions - two requirements:

- 1. Hydrologic threshold** – An area is receiving, or is projected to receive, less than seventy-five percent of normal water supply.
- 2. Hardship threshold** – Water users and the environment are or are expected to experience undue hardship.

This Committee advises on the hydrologic threshold.

See: [RCW 43.83B.405](#) and [WAC 173-166-050](#).

Water Supply Factors

Water
year to
date

- Snowpack
- Precipitation
- Temperature
- Soil moisture

Hydrologic
threshold
for
drought
was met
in 2025

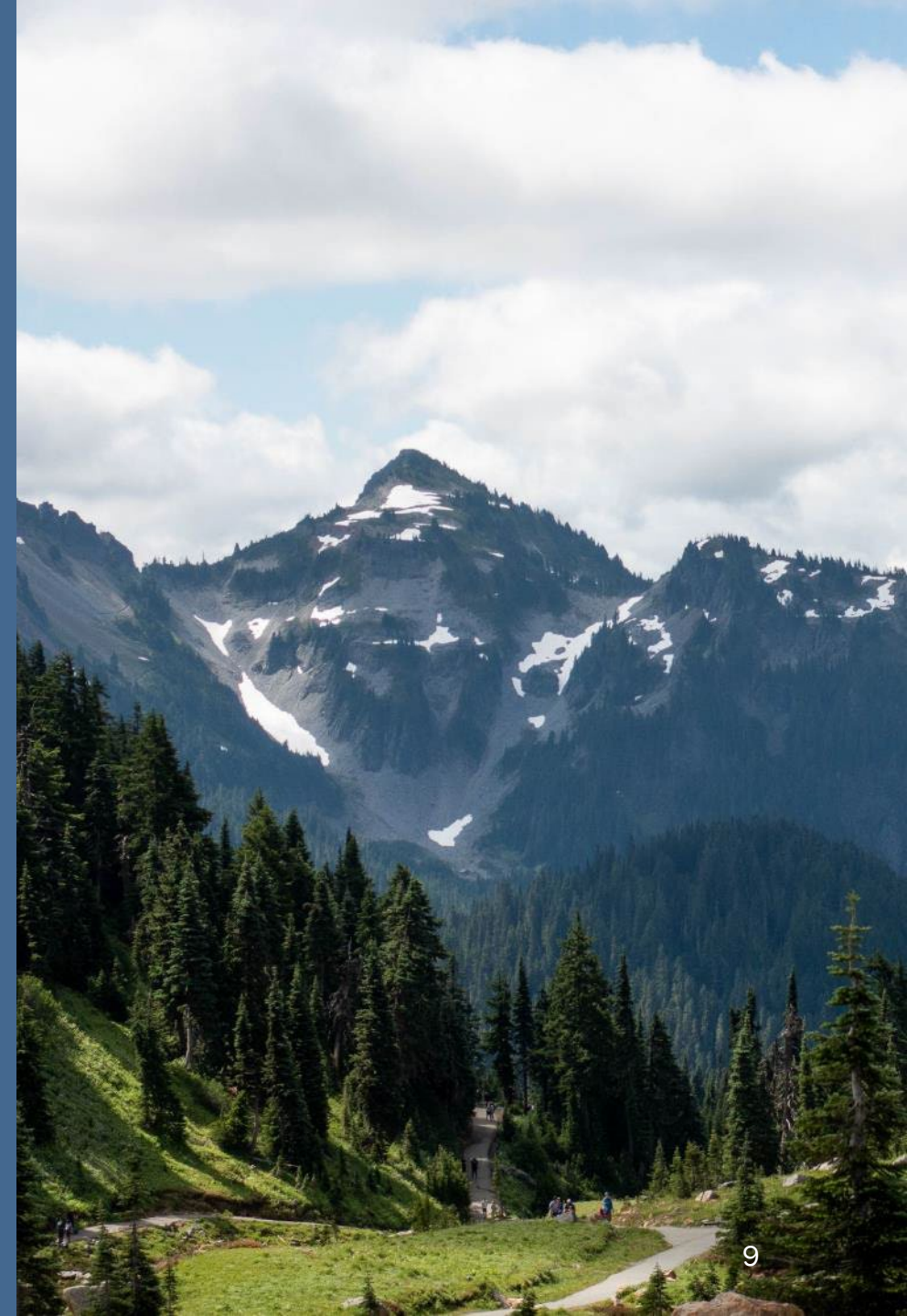
Forecasts

- Streamflow
- Precipitation
- Temperature
- Soil moisture





Implications of a Drought Declaration



What Does a Declaration Do?

Provides Ecology with the authority to:

1. Expedite emergency water transfer applications.
2. Establish a grant program to mitigate hardships to water users and the environment.



Drought Advisory

Advisory tool:

- Indicates that drought conditions may develop.
- Public awareness & preparation tool to support readiness.
- Drought relief tools not available.
- Acknowledges there are multiple types of potential drought impacts.



Drought Response Funding

Grants to governmental entities:

- Federally recognized Tribes
- Counties, cities, and towns
- Water and sewer districts
- Public utility districts
- Port districts
- Conservation districts
- Irrigation districts
- Watershed management partnerships

Additional Implications

State agencies – Ecology can enter into interagency agreements to fund drought response efforts

- Examples: DOH, DFW, SCC, AGR

Eligibility for federal drought funding

Important communications tool

Example Drought Response Grant Projects

Agriculture or livestock

- Purchasing or leasing water or water rights
- Replacing intakes, pumps, and related accessories

Public water supply

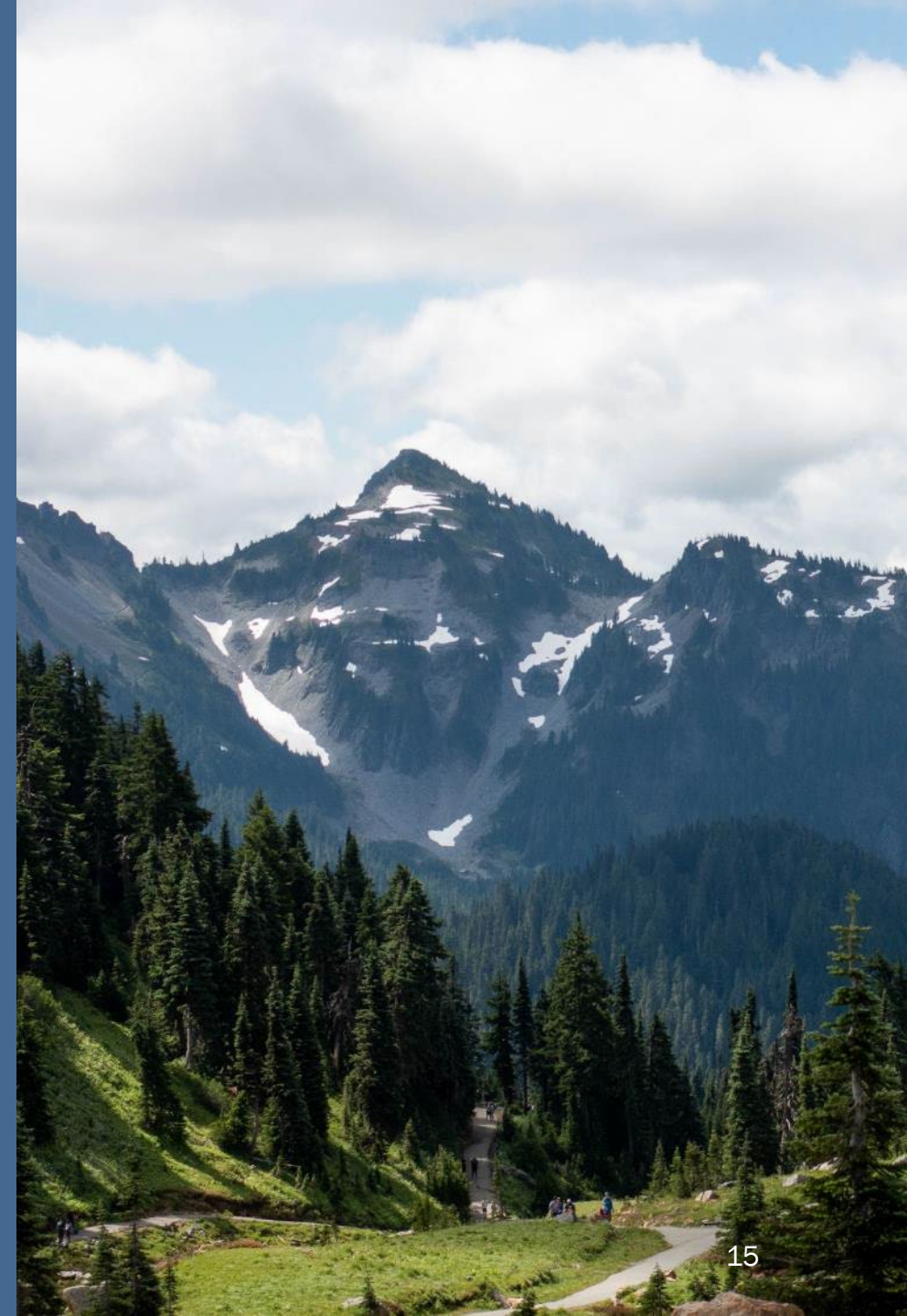
- Transporting emergency water supplies
- Implementing water conservation strategies

Fisheries and wildlife

- Eliminating migration barriers
- Modifying stream channels adjacent to a hatchery

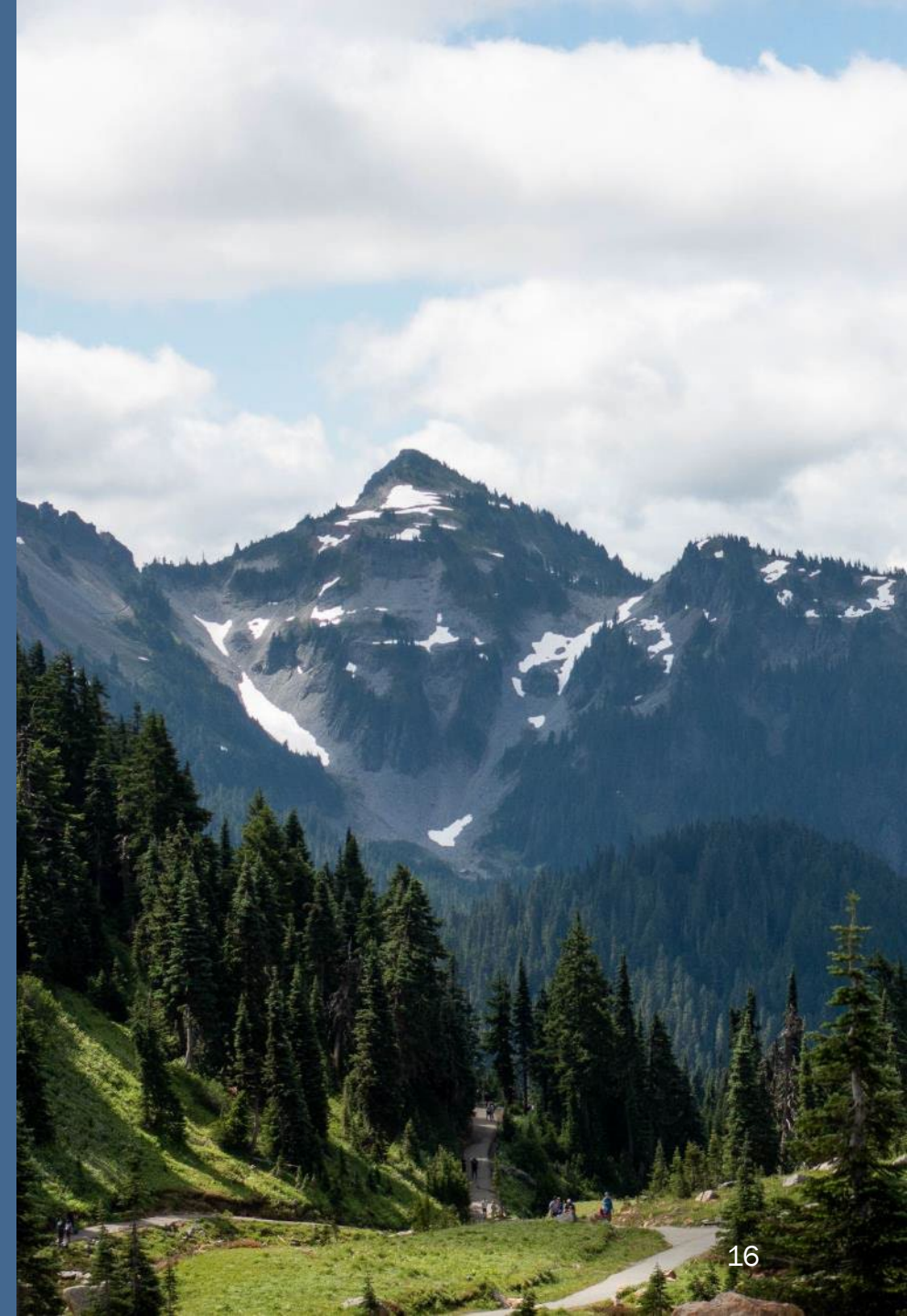


Presenters





Hydrologic threshold discussion



Drought declaration process: WSAC Step

Hydrologic threshold discussion –

- Geographic areas for a potential extended drought declaration.



Hydrologic Threshold Discussion

Do the below watersheds, or any other areas, meet the hydrologic threshold for drought conditions (less than 75% of normal water supply)?

North and Central Cascades Watersheds:

- Nooksack, Lower Skagit - Samish , Upper Skagit, Stillaguamish, Snohomish?
- Cedar – Sammamish, Duwamish – Green, Puyallup – White, Nisqually?
- Methow, Okanogan, Chelan, Entiat, and Wenatchee?

Eastside:

- Kettle, Sanpoil, Nespelam?
- Palouse?

Olympic watersheds:

- Elwha-Dungeness?

*Proposal to keep the areas served by the utilities of Everett, Seattle & Tacoma in drought advisory status.

Discussion Question

For all meeting attendees:

What concerns do folks have for Water
Year 2025?

Declaration Process Next Steps

- With a WSAC recommendation to Ecology to convene EWEC (Executive Water Emergency Committee), Ecology works with the Director to convene in coming weeks.
- EWEC advises on the hardship threshold and provides a recommendation to the Governor.
- Ecology coordinates with Governor's office to issue a drought declaration.



Drought Info

- Updated drought website: [Drought Response - Washington State Department of Ecology](#)
 - Declaration: [Order of Determination by the Director](#)
 - Press release: [April 8 - Drought - Washington State Department of Ecology](#)
- [Water Supply Availability Committee \(WSAC\) website](#)



Thank you

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