

Sub-basin Discussion Guide

Why we need sub-basins:

RCW 90.94.030(3)(b) says plans must include actions to offset new consumptive use impacts associated with permit-exempt domestic water use. RCW 90.94.030(3)(b) states “The highest priority recommendations must include replacing the quantity of consumptive water use during the same time as the impact and in the same basin or tributary.”

Committee task:

Planning groups must delineate suitably sized sub-basins within WRAs. Sub-basins might not necessarily correspond with hydrologic basin delineations (i.e. watershed divides).

The role of the sub-basin workgroup is to consider options for WRIA 10 sub-basins, bring those options to the committee for discussion/decision, and refine selected sub-basin as needed. The full committee is expected to make a decision at our May meeting.

The sub-basin workgroup has focused on using the Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC) at the sub-watershed level (HUC 12). These HUC 12 levels are too small and numerous for our purposes, so the workgroup has lumped the sub-watersheds where appropriate.

Basic considerations:

- Areas of anticipated rural growth.
- Areas where little rural growth is expected.
- Surface hydrology and/or hydrogeology.

Other considerations:

- Too few sub-basins reduces understanding of relationships between where pumping effects will be and where benefits of offset projects will occur.
- Too many sub-basins can make it unwieldy to evaluate all of the offset projects needed to achieve a net ecological benefit for the WRIA.
- Existing or concurrent planning efforts may have already delineated sub-basins.
- Hydrogeological sub-basins (based on groundwater instead of surface water flows) can be more complex to delineate, since water in different aquifer levels can travel in different directions, and we don't have all the information on the hydrogeology.
- Priority areas for salmon recovery.
- Lake Tapps and the intake on the White River.

Questions for discussion:

- Are there planning efforts that you are familiar with that might have sub-basin delineations already in place that would be adequate for our needs?
- Are you comfortable relying primarily on a hydrologic (water drainage) sub-basin delineation?
- How do we split up the White River?
- Where are the areas of expected or anticipated rural growth?