# Ecology logo. A state of Washington shape separated into three bands of color; light blue, green, and dark blue. a sun sits in the middle of the light blue band.MEETING SUMMARY

**WRIA 13 Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committee**

August 26, 2020 | 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. |[Committee website](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias__1962/37325/watershed_restoration_and_enhancement_-_wria_13.aspx)

## Location

Webex**Committee Chair**

Angela Johnson
angela.johnson@ecy.wa.gov**Handouts**

1. July 2020 Meeting Summary
2. Operating Principles Discussion Guide
3. Project Update
4. Project List Organization Discussion Guide
5. Chapter 6 and 7 outlines
6. Consumptive Use Discussion Guide
7. CROSS-WRIA Water Conservation Proposals – policy and outreach education.

## Attendance

### Committee Representatives and Alternates \*

Angela Johnson (*Ecology – Committee Chair)*

Paul Pickett (Squaxin Island Tribe)

Dave Monthie (*Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team*)

Adam Peterson (*Thurston Conservation District*)

John Kliem (*Lewis County*)

Amy Hatch-Winecka (*WRIA 13 Lead Entity – Ex Officio)*

Donna Buxton (*City of Olympia*)

Wendy Steffensen (*LOTT-Ex Officio*)

Dan Smith (*City of Tumwater*)

Cynthia Pratt (*City of Lacey*)

Charlie Schneider (*Tumwater City Council*)

Kaitlynn Nelson *(Thurston County)*

Erin Hall *(Olympia MBA)*

Sue Patnude (*Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team*)

Julie Parker (*Thurston PUD*)

Jessie Barham (*City of Olympia*)

Noll Steinwig (*WDFW*)

### Committee Representatives Not in Attendance\*

### Other Attendees\*

Gretchen Muller *(Cascadia Consulting)*

Jimmy Kralj (*ESA*)

Mike Noone (*Ecology*)

Tom Culhane (*Ecology*)

Chad Wiseman (*HDR*)

\*Attendees list is based on sign-in sheet.

## Welcome

Angela and Gretchen kicked off the meeting with WebEx logistics. Gretchen took a roll call of all Committee member on the call. The group reviewed the meeting agenda.

Committee members were provided with a link to an interactive Google Slides presentation to promote engagement and capture comments during the discussion.

[These slides](https://app.box.com/s/q0dlbv729ha4mtaxhxdj8in7slh9vus6) can be accessed on Box.

## Approval of July 2020 Meeting Summary

* Angela received comments on the following sections:
	+ Water Rights
	+ Project Next Steps
	+ Plan Development
	+ Policy Proposals
* The meeting summary was approved by the Committee.

## Updates and Announcements

* WebEx meetings will continue into the foreseeable future.
* Angela provided an update to her furlough schedule:
	+ August 31
	+ September 25
	+ October 30
	+ November 30
* Streamflow Restoration Grant announcements will be made in late October or early November. Angela will send out more information when it is available.
* The Deschutes TMDL draft has been issued by EPA and is open for public comment until October 7th.
* A research article regarding forestry management rotations and its impact on water availability has been published in Oregon. This will be shared with the Committee.
* A presentation on a student Master’s thesis from Evergreen College will be held on September 21st at 2:00pm. This information will be shared with the group.

# Operating Principles

* Given that all future meetings will continue to be remote, the facilitation team wanted to review the Committee’s operating principles to make them consistent with our current remote situation in regards participation and the final vote on the plan.
* Suggested revisions were made regarding remote participation, final plan approval, and withdrawal/resignation.
* The Squaxin Island Tribe proposed a revision that final plan approval should be made during a normally scheduled Committee meeting.
* The City of Lacey requested clarification about how written approval by Committee members would be shared with Committee members. Language was clarified to state that written and verbal approval or disapproval will be shared with all Committee members.
* DERT questioned whether or not the provisions regarding withdrawal/resignation were necessary given that there are no entities who have stopped participating in WRIA 13 and that final plan approval is rapidly approaching.
	+ Ecology clarified that all Committee members will need to vote for the final approval of the plan, and so the proposed language will allow for assurances of full participation.
* Committee members agreed to the proposed revisions and adopted the changes in accordance with the operating procedures. Only the DERT representative abstained from the decision.

## Projects

* Recommendations from the Project Subgroup
	+ HDR and PGG will continue coordination on the MAR project package and the 10 favorable sites. A general MAR project description will be developed with an offset quantification.
	+ PGG will develop a written summary of their water rights analysis including language regarding irrigation efficiencies, opportunities for agricultural off-channel storage, and public water system efficiencies. The table of water rights to be included in the plan will have all identifying information removed.
	+ The Thurston Conservation District proposed separating water rights into surface and groundwater sources. Angela will work with PGG on this approach. Additionally, a subbasin summary was proposed to identify the water rights identified in each subbasin.
	+ Analysis of prioritized projects will continue and final offset estimations and project descriptions will be developed.
* Project Updates
	+ Schneider’s Prairie
		- Thurston County and HDR are finalizing the analysis.
		- LOTT is conducting wetlands rating for their project concept in the same area.
	+ Hicks Lake
		- Analysis is being finalized.
		- There would likely need to be a water quality component to this project given its location and stormwater source. HDR will coordinate with the City of Lacey regarding water quality.
		- Hicks Lake has a Lake Management Plan which likely means that water quality needs to be considered.
	+ Lilly Road
		- Analysis is being finalized.
	+ Spooner Farms
		- Project description is in development in coordination with the City of Olympia.
	+ Donnelly Drive Infiltration
		- Project description is in development.
	+ Thurston Conservation District Green Cove
		- Project is being discussed with the Thurston Conservation District.
	+ MAR Projects
		- Descriptions are in development.
	+ Habitat and Categorical project descriptions are currently in development.
* Project Organization in the Plan
	+ Angela provided an overview of the role of projects in the plan and potential ways in which to organize the project list in the final plan document.
	+ The Squaxin Island Tribe recommended organizing projects by subbasin and also proposed listing projects by water offset potential.
	+ Ecology also proposed spatially representing these projects in a map. This map is currently in development with HDR.
	+ Thurston County noted that a table organized by offset amount was provided as an appendix in the Nisqually plan, and that within the plan chapter, projects were organized by subbasin.
	+ Committee members agreed to organize the projects by subbasin, and also supported a map.
	+ Committee members also discussed the content to include in the text of the project chapter compared to the appendix.
		- Committee members agreed that a summary should be included in the text of the chapter, and additional details can be provided in an appendix.
		- Members discussed adding an acronym definition page as well.
		- Members agreed that a mix of paragraph and table format is appropriate.
* Question for the Committee:
	+ Are members comfortable with the list of water offset projects?
		- In general, Committee members are comfortable with the list of water offset projects.
		- Thurston County noted that it is important to ensure these projects result in sufficient offset and additional ideas can be added if needed.
		- The Squaxin Island Tribe would like to see further development of the list before making a judgement.
		- HDR noted that the water offset projects that have been analyzed already estimate an offset value that is higher than the highest consumptive use estimate. With MAR projects, this estimate will go higher and approach a safety factor range.
		- Additionally, Ecology noted that they view the methods to evaluate consumptive use as inherently conservative.
	+ Are members comfortable with the distribution of water offset projects?
		- Committee members felt that the distribution of projects could be improved.
		- HDR noted that there are not projects in the middle Deschutes subbasin, but this area will be covered by MAR projects. Additionally, the peninsulas and McClane are light on projects.
	+ Are members comfortable with the water offset estimates?
		- Committee members were comfortable with the information presented so far and requested additional information as more analyses are completed.

## Plan Development

* Angela provided the Committee with a review of the required plan elements: expected consumptive use, potential offset opportunities, and an overall net ecological benefit.
	+ If the Committee approves a plan by consensus, Ecology will review the plan and make an NEB determination.
	+ If the Committee does not reach consensus, Ecology will complete the plan elements by building upon what has been generated by the Committee. The Salmon Recovery Funding Board will complete a technical review of the plan.
	+ Angela also provided a summary of the chapter review process.
	+ The draft compiled plan is scheduled to be shared with the Committee in early September.
	+ Chapter 4 and the accompanying technical memo were shared with the Committee for review in late August. Comments are due by September 9, 2020.
* Status Update: Chapter 6 (Policy and Plan Implementation)
	+ During the August 12 subgroup meeting, policy leads reviewed the revisions made to the proposed policies for inclusion in the plan. The subgroup identified remaining concerns and made recommendations for which policies to be included in the draft chapter for the full Committee to review. The facilitation team then developed a draft write-up for this section.
	+ The facilitation team also developed a draft plan implementation section which includes proposals from Committee members related to adaptive management, input received from the interactive google slides, the policy survey, and group discussions. This also includes the cross-WRIA high level statement requesting funding and authority for adaptive management from the legislature.
	+ Committee members were reminded to carefully review the full policy proposals as those details will be included in an appendix to the plan.
* Gretchen provided a review of the list of policy proposals that will be included in Chapter 6.
	+ Committee members were reminded to provide comments via the comment tracker by September 9th.
* Chapter 7: NEB for Watershed Planning
	+ Angela provided a review of the NEB requirements of the plan development process.
	+ A draft template was developed to review the potential process for conducting an NEB analysis. These tables help evaluate the attributes of projects that would contribute to NEB.
	+ DERT asked about the importance of metering and how NEB will be measured after the plan is produced.
		- Ecology clarified that metering is not always an effective tool, and that consumptive use can be tracked conservatively using other methods.
	+ For NEB, Ecology will consider what the projects are, where they are located, what the offset estimate is for each project, and where the offsets are in relation to the uses.
		- However, offsets do not need to occur in the same subbasin where uses occur. In WRIA 11, a large amount of offsets happened in a subbasin with low use, but those offsets provided valuable habitat benefits.
	+ The Squaxin Island Tribe suggested this chapter include assumptions that NEB will be achieved if certain things happen (for example, projects get implemented).
		- Assumptions could include: projects will happen as described, the amount of water offset will be inline with the estimated amount.
		- Paul will provide more information regarding these assumptions to Angela. Additionally, Angela will ask the Committee to contribute ideas for similar assumptions.
		- The City of Olympia supports the idea of including assumptions
	+ DERT stated that the more habitat projects included in the plan the closer the plan moves to achieving NEB.
	+ Committee members were asked to provide feedback on the NEB template by September 4th.

## Other Technical Items

* Check-in on Consumptive Use Offset
	+ In January, the Committee settled on working numbers for consumptive use.
	+ Angela provided a review of the consumptive use working numbers to the Committee.
	+ The working numbers arise from three variations of the irrigated areas analysis
		- 0.09 acres (correction factor): 396 afy
		- 0.1 acres (substitute ‘0’ values for ‘0.05’): 435 afy
		- 0.12 acres (95% upper confidence limit): 513 afy
	+ Working range is 396 – 513 afy
	+ Current draft estimate of water offset from projects is 580 afy, which will be revised as analysis of projects continue.
* The Squaxin Island Tribe requested further discussion of a safety factor.
* DERT still has concerns with the methodology used to estimate outdoor irrigation and discrepancies between the values in WRIA 13 and other watersheds.
	+ Ecology clarified that the estimates in watersheds adjacent to WRIA 13 are consistent with these estimates. Additionally, northern watersheds have documented differences in outdoor water use (WRIA 7 and 8). These areas have homes with larger lawns, and are in drier climates. In WRIA 13, many properties are forested and have much smaller lawns.
	+ HDR’s comparability study is linked in the discussion guide which includes the mean irrigated acres by parcel across the WRIAs.
* Ecology asked what other information is needed for Committee members to have sufficient information to vote on these values.
	+ A range of estimates is not ideal, but doable if it is thoroughly justified by the Committee.
	+ Angela will redistribute the comparability memo and an updated calculation spreadsheet.
	+ Lewis County agrees with the values we have now and expressed concerns about changing the numbers without firm logic behind them.
	+ The workgroup will discuss this again before the next Committee meeting.
	+ Thurston County noted that the description of these values in the plan will be important to provide sufficient context.
	+ City of Olympia echoed concerns about changing the numbers, and stated that a single number would be ideal, but a range could work as well.
	+ City of Lacey is comfortable with the numbers as they are and can see the value in a range, but would like to speak internally before making a decision.
* Committee members were asked to think further about the consumptive use estimate and PE well growth values so decisions can be advanced.

## Public Comment

No public comment was made.

## Next Steps and Action Items

* Angela will share the forestry research article and information about the Evergreen State College Master’s thesis presentation mentioned during updates.
* Angela will recirculate the Committee’s operating principles.
* Angela will work with PGG to develop the water rights summary.
* A compiled draft plan will be circulated in early September, but will likely continue to have gaps that the Committee has not decided on.
* The next Committee meeting will be on September 23, 2020.
* Angela will schedule the next technical workgroup/project subgroup meeting
	+ Committee members should come prepared to that meeting to discuss the consumptive use estimate and develop a recommendation for a path forward to the Committee.