Discussion Guide: Project List Organization

WRIA 13 Committee, August 26, 2020

The purpose of today’s discussion is to develop a recommendation from the project subgroup to give to the WRIA 13 Committee on presentation of the project inventory in the watershed plan

The NEB Guidance states that there is no minimum requirement for the number or distribution of offset projects or actions within each WRIA. Chapter 90.94.030 RCW allows offsets for permit-exempt domestic wells to occur anywhere within a WRIA, provided the watershed plan achieves a NEB within the given WRIA (although the law does state that higher priority is given to projects that occur in the same time and place as the anticipated impact).[[1]](#footnote-1) This means committees have significant latitude to place offset projects at desired locations (e.g. most beneficial to fish, meet local feasibility considerations, etc.) regardless of whether these provide offsets within each of a WRIA’s subbasins (NEB Guidance pg.9).

Committees also have full discretion in terms of how they present the project list for the NEB determination as well as for consideration in future funding opportunities. The NEB guidance speaks to three ways of organizing the project list in the watershed plan, which are presented as options and not requirements:

* 1. High priority and lower priority: to identify which projects provide water offset “in-time” and “in-place” (higher priority)
  2. Tiering: reflect likelihood of implementation or contribution to achieving NEB, to influence technical consultant focus for project development.
     1. Note that the WRIA 13 Committee has already identified priority projects for the technical consultant analysis, and tiering may not be applicable to the WRIA 13 project list.
  3. Sequencing: most to least estimated project benefit contributing to achieving NEB, to influence future funding decisions.

The committee can determine the most appropriate way to organize the projects in the watershed plan.

## Does the committee have recommendations on presentation of the project inventory in the watershed plan?

As discussed above, the NEB guidance provides suggestions on ways the committee can organize the project list for presentation in the plan. Based on previous project subgroup discussions, some suggestions (from Angela) for how the project list may be organized are:

1. Present projects by subbasin.
2. Present projects by project type (e.g. “projects contributing towards offsets” and “projects contributing towards habitat improvements”).
3. Describe the likelihood of implementation, sponsorship, funding status, and stage of project development.
4. Present projects in a way that is easy for decision-makers to understand and provide feedback.
5. Retain all projects in the project inventory to include in an appendix.

Additional input from the subgroup and committee will help with presentation of projects in the September draft plan. The following is one example of how we could present the projects.

1. In Chapter 5 (Projects and Actions) provide a 1-2 paragraph summary of each of the offset projects developed in detail.
2. In Chapter 5 (Projects and Actions) provide a table of the additional projects that provide streamflow and habitat benefit that developed beyond the conceptual level (e.g. have a description, sponsor, cost estimate, etc). Use the suggestions from the workgroup and committee to inform the table components. (**See some examples of tables following the questions below.**)
3. In an Appendix, present the full project inventory including projects that are just at the conceptual level.

## Questions for the Committee

1. Does the Committee have additional suggestions on project content to include in the body of the plan or appendix?
2. Does the Committee support a mix of paragraph format and table format for the body of the plan?

Table 1. Sample table for presentation of projects contributing toward consumptive use offset in the body of the plan.\*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Number** | **Project Name** | **Offset Type and brief description** | **Subbasin(s)** | **Water Offset**  **(Annual AF)** | **Projected Timing of Benefit** | **Additional Benefits** | **Project Sponsor** | **Optional Elements (cost, tier, readiness to proceed, priority)** |
| 1 | Schneider’s Prairie | Off-Channel re-connection and infiltration | Deschutes, Lower | 140 | Critical Period | **Off-channel coho rearing habitat; Water temperature** | **Thurston County** |  |
| 2 | Hicks Lake | Stormwater Infiltration in series with existing stormwater treatment | Woodland | 296 | All Year |  | **City of Lacey** |  |
| 3 | Lilly Road/ 26th Avenue | Re-direct excess stormwater seepage from Mill Pond neighborhood to wetland to the northwest. | Boston Harbor | 120 | All Year |  | **City of Olympia** |  |
| 4 | Spooner’s Farm | New City of Olympia park; acquire and retire Spooner water right, use city water. | Deschutes, Lower | 10 | Irrigation Season |  | **City of Olympia** |  |
| 5 | Donnelly | Improve neighborhood stormwater infiltration, avoiding surcharge and runoff to Chambers ditch | Deschutes, Lower | 14 | All Year |  | **Thurston County** |  |
| 6 | Deschutes River MAR | Several candidate locations for MAR of diverted Deschutes River water from high flow periods, exceeding instream minimum flows or ecological flows. | Deschutes, Upper, Deschutes Middle, Deschutes, Lower | TBD | Critical Period | **Water temperature** | **???** |  |
| 7 | Water Rights (?) | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |  | **???** |  |
|  | WRIA 13 TOTAL WATER OFFSET |  |  | 580 |  |  |  |  |
|  | WRIA 13 Consumptive Use Estimate\*\* |  |  | 396 - 513 |  |  |  |  |

\* Information shown in table is in DRAFT form as project analysis is ongoing, for discussion purposes only.

\*\*Consumptive use estimate is based on working numbers, for discussion purposes only.

Table 2. Sample table for presentation of projects contributing toward consumptive use offset by subbasin.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Subbasin** | **Consumptive Use (Annual AF)** | **Water Offset**  **(Annual AF)** |
| Boston Harbor | 40 - 58 | 120 |
| Cooper Point | 31 - 45 | 0 |
| Deschutes Lower | 51 - 74 | 164 |
| Deschutes Middle | 99 - 144 | TBD |
| Deschutes Upper | 4 - 6 | TBD |
| Johnson Point | 70 - 102 | 0 |
| McLane | 22 - 32 | 0 |
| Spurgeon Creek | 12 - 18 | 0 |
| Woodland Creek | 22 - 33 | 296 |

Table 3. Sample table for presentation of projects contributing towards habitat improvements in the body of the plan.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Number** | **Project Name** | **Description** | **Sub-Basin(s)** | **Ecological Benefits (included streamflow benefits and timing of benefit if applicable)** | **Project Sponsor** | **Optional elements (cost, tier, readiness to proceed, priority)** |
| 1 | Spurgeon Creek Re-Meander | Channel re-alignment to increase channel length and sinuosity | Spurgeon | Increase floodplain connectivity; increase usable aquatic habitat area; increase fish cover; increase habitat complexity | Thurston County |  |
|  | Chambers Creek | Channel re-alignment to increase channel length and sinuosity at the confluence with Chambers Ditch. | Deschutes, Lower | Increase floodplain connectivity; increase usable aquatic habitat area; increase fish cover; increase habitat complexity | Thurston County |  |
|  | Woodard Creek | Add LWD and riparian vegetation | Boston Harbor | Increase floodplain connectivity; increase usable aquatic habitat area; increase fish cover; increase habitat complexity | Thurston County |  |
|  | McLane Creek | TBD | McLane | TBD | Thurston County |  |
|  | Green Cove Creek | TBD | Cooper Point | TBD | Thurston County and City of Olympia(?) |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. RCW 90.94.030(3) (b) At a minimum, the plan must include those actions that the committee determines to be necessary to offset potential impacts to instream flows associated with permit-exempt domestic water use. 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. Lower priority projects include projects not in the same basin or tributary and projects that replace consumptive water supply impacts only during critical flow periods. The plan may include projects that protect or improve instream resources without replacing the consumptive quantity of water where such projects are in addition to those actions that the committee determines to be necessary to offset potential consumptive impacts to instream flows associated with permit-exempt domestic water use.

   (c) Prior to adoption of the watershed restoration and enhancement plan, the department must determine that actions identified in the plan, after accounting for new projected uses of water over the subsequent twenty years, will result in a net ecological benefit to instream resources within the water resource inventory area. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)