# 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 14 Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committee**

June 11, 2020 | 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. |[committee website](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias__1962/37326/watershed_restoration_and_enhancement_-_wria_14.aspx)

## Location

WebEx**Committee Chair**

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

1. Project update
2. Draft template for policy recommendations
3. Potential Policy and Regulatory Recommendations Tracking Sheet
4. Proposals for Potential Plan recommendations

## Attendance

### Committee Representatives and Alternates \*

Angela Johnson (*Ecology – Committee Chair)*

Seth Book (*Skokomish Tribe*)

Ron Gold (*Mason PUD 1)*

Darin Hall (*Mason PUD 1*)

Kevin Shutty (*Mason County*)

Dave Windom (*Mason County*)

Kaitlynn Nelson (*Thurston County)*

Brad Murphy (*Thurston County*)

Ken Gill (*City of Shelton*)

Barbara Adkins (*Mason CD, ex-officio)*

Alison Cook (*WDFW)*

Paul Pickett (*Squaxin Island Tribe*)

Erin Hall (*Olympia Master Builders, residential construction industry)*)

Fern Schultz (*Department of Health, ex-officio*)

### Committee Representatives Not in Attendance\*

Mason-Kitsap Farm Bureau (*agricultural interests)*

Washington Chapter of the Sierra Club *(environmental interests)*

### Other Attendees\*

Susan Gulick *(Sound Resolutions)*

Jimmy Kralj (*ESA*)

Rebecca Brown (*Ecology*)

Chad Wiseman (*HDR*)

Peter Schwartzman (*PGG*)

Tom Culhane (*Ecology*)

Patti Case (*Green Diamond Resource Company*)

Paula Holroyde (*League of Women Voters*)

John Turk (*Consultant to Skokomish Tribe*)

James Reyes (*Mason PUD 1*)

Steve Hagerty (*WRIA 14 Salmon Recovery LE*)

Erica Marbet (*Squaxin Island Tribe*)

## Welcome

Due to the spread of COVID-19 and the recommendations from Public Health Officials, the June WRIA 14 meeting was held via WebEx conference. Angela and Susan kicked off the meeting and provided instructions for participants to participate remotely. Committee members introduced themselves. The group reviewed the meeting agenda.

## Approval of May 2020 Meeting Summary

* Comments were received on the following sections:
	+ MAR analysis by PGG
	+ Policy Proposals (WDFW Project Tracking)
	+ Skokomish Irrigation Analysis
* Suggested edits were discussed and Committee members approved the May 2020 meeting summary.

## Updates and Announcements

Angela provided updates from Ecology:

* All committee meetings will continue to be held over WebEx for the foreseeable future.
* 63 applications were received for the 2020 Streamflow Restoration Grant round, 2 of which were from WRIA 14. Over $88 million was requested, but only up to $22 million in funding is available.
* Ecology and the Squaxin Island Tribe held their quarterly meeting to further their discussions of the plan development process.
	+ Committee members were reminded that Ecology is able to arrange single or recurring meetings with any interested member or organization.
* The [WRIA 1 Rule Amendment](https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Water-supply/Protecting-stream-flows/Instream-flow-implementation/Nooksack-basin-rule) has been adopted by Ecology and takes effect June 27, 2020.
* Angela distributed a metering report prepared by Ecology for information purposes based on questions that have arisen from multiple WREC groups. Committee members may reach out to Angela with any questions.

# Policy and Adaptive Management: Potential Plan Recommendations

The committee discussed various proposals that have been prepared for committee consideration. Committee members used [interactive slides](https://app.box.com/s/imr6zbj76f8zdcxwuianmt8wutal0kkg) to provide feedback during the meeting.

* Proponents of a potential policy recommendation have completed a template that provides basic information on the potential recommendations. All submittals may be viewed on [Box.](https://app.box.com/s/xs5o54e7hp1r77g1mz5zb9g5yo8i9anz)
* Water Supply Data for Comprehensive Water Planning: Squaxin Island Tribe
	+ This proposal would provide the committee with a more complete understanding of the impacts of cumulative water use. The Squaxin Island Tribe believes it’s required by the law, but hopes the Committee will adopt the proposal to make the legal disagreement moot.
	+ Several committee members noted that they believe this proposal extends beyond the scope of the Streamflow Restoration Law. They did not agree that an analysis of past water use was necessary because the law focuses on new uses.
	+ Committee members questioned if there is past information available on permit-exempt well use, and Ecology noted that past information is not comprehensive.
	+ Other committee members noted that this type of information would be useful, but there were concerns raised about the scope of the law, capacity to complete the work, and the relative priority of this recommendation.
* Study of County Planning for Streamflow Restoration Effectiveness: Squaxin Island Tribe
	+ This proposal would encompass a study of how planning and permitting in the four south sound counties supports protection and enhancement of streamflow restoration through protection of groundwater recharge and other mechanisms.
	+ The study would help committee members learn which programs and policies have been beneficial and where gaps exist.
	+ Questions were raised by county representatives about how this proposal relates to existing code and laws.
* County Policies to Promote Connections to Group A Systems: Squaxin Island Tribe
	+ This proposal would raise standards to promote connections to Group A systems instead of permit exempt wells. Potential actions could include incentive programs.
	+ The Department of Health noted that Mason County does not have a Coordinated Water System Plan, which is used in other areas to require hookups to Group A systems.
		- Without such a plan, there are few ways to push individuals towards Group A systems.
		- As such, the Department of Health is particularly interested in incentive programs that would encourage homeowners to connect to existing Group a systems.
	+ Other members expressed support, particularly related to potential incentive programs for homeowners.
	+ Some committee members expressed concerns about potential impacts to homeowners and other barriers. Because this falls directly on homeowners, members would be more supportive of incentive programs with funding assistance. Additionally, members pointed out that there are existing requirements based on the feasibility of hooking up to a system, plus it’s common that systems don’t have capacity.
	+ Next steps: Paul and Fern will discuss options to enhance this idea before it is brought back to the committee for further discussion.
* Drought Response Program: Squaxin Island Tribe
	+ This proposal has three elements: 1) drought water use restrictions from RCW 90.94; 2) a water conservation plan for permit exempt wells to be implemented when droughts are declared (being discussed statewide); and 3) a compliance and enforcement program.
	+ There was general support for a drought response element to the plan, particularly for the drought use limitations in the law and an education program. There was disagreement over including a compliance element.
	+ Next Steps: The Discussion will continue with the Counties regarding compliance. Ecology’s role will need further discussion by management. Potential to use this proposal as an adaptive management tool.
* Upgrade Well Reporting: Squaxin Island Tribe
	+ This proposal would update well reporting to make improvements to Ecology’s well log database and provide more information regarding the specific location of wells.
	+ Ecology has been advocating for changes like this, however, they may require changes to the WA administrative code. Including this in the plan might help advance those changes.
	+ Next steps: This proposal has broad support. Paul will work with other WRIAs that are considering this to refine the language and it will be included in the draft plan chapter for committee consideration.
* Adaptive Management Response: Squaxin Island Tribe
	+ The Squaxin Island Tribe has proposed a adaptive management response proposal to maintain accountability.
	+ The proposal would create a structure to collect information about plan implementation to inform the success of the plans, and actions that occur based on information on PE well construction and offset project completion.
	+ Committee needs to discuss which metrics and information should be tracked: number of wells, projects implemented, effectiveness of projects, etc.
	+ WDFW raised concerns about existing requirements for project monitoring, specifically for water offset projects.
	+ Mason County expressed a need to establish an organization to continue meeting and provide adaptive management support and coordination.
		- The Squaxin Island Tribe supported this proposal.
	+ Next steps: There is broad support for developing an adaptive management recommendation. The committee will work on details in upcoming meetings.
* Project Tracking Proposal: WDFW
	+ This proposal is continuing to be refined and committee members will be provided with an update soon.
* There were no updates regarding the Water Master Proposal from the Squaxin Island Tribe

## Plan Development

This portion of the meeting was used to provide updates on the plan development process.

* Committee members were reminded that technical memos will soon be distributed for their review. These memos will cover permit exempt well growth projections and consumptive use. These memos, after review, will be used to develop the relevant plan chapters.
* Chapters 1-3 of the plan will be distributed for committee review soon (mid-June).
* Chapter 4 will be available for review later in the summer.
* Chapter 5 (projects) will be developed as information becomes available.
* The committee reviewed the overall plan review timeline.
* Policy and adaptive management recommendations will probably be in Chapter 6.
* There will be a comment tracking spreadsheet for members to review all comments.

## Projects

The Committee discussed ongoing project development and evaluations. Project information can be found on [Box.](https://app.box.com/s/7h8olb6egyncuixysjg5yeaepxj5ziqy)

* A brief update was provided for some of the projects identified for further analysis.
	+ Skookum Creek: The Squaxin Island Tribe has requested Streamflow Restoration grant funding to conduct outreach to holders of certificated water rights to ask if they would be willing to perform an analysis of how much of their right they are using, and whether or not they would be interested in putting an unused portion in trust. The Committee is continuing to discuss this project opportunity for inclusion in the plan.
	+ HDR is continuing their work with the City of Shelton on the Evergreen Mobile Home Estates project that has potential for water offset if the water right associated with this property is available for retirement into trust.
	+ Skookum Creek Agricultural Areas: This project provides several opportunities for habitat restoration and is being proposed by the Squaxin Island Tribe. The Committee has been discussing whether or not the habitat restoration opportunities could also apply to water offset quantification. Given the feedback from WDFW (previously sent in a memo) raising concerns about quantifying water offsets from habitat projects such as this, the Committee discussed shifting focus to developing the habitat only elements of the project.
		- WDFW clarified their support for a project of this type to contribute to NEB, as opposed to using a project like this towards the water offset goals.
	+ The committee agreed to give direction to the technical consultants to not analyze the water offset potential of habitat projects for the time being, and may revisit this conversation at a later date for specific projects.
* PGG provided updates to the committee regarding the water rights and MAR analyses. Angela has distributed updated water right evaluation data from PGG and has requested feedback from Committee members. The group will discuss this further at the next project subgroup meeting to identify project opportunities from this information.
* HDR also shared their work on a GIS tool (Paleo Mapper) to identify floodplain restoration opportunities in the watershed which Angela distributed a link for.
	+ This work would identify candidate locations for floodplain restoration and the general fish benefits of these project types.
	+ HDR led a review of the tool and explained which areas would be more beneficial for these types of projects: unconfined floodplains, areas in flood zones, vacant lots, etc.
	+ Committee members were urged to use the tool and share ideas about candidate locations.
	+ HDR will also be producing a written background and methods document that committee members will be asked to review.

## Public Comment

Patti Case from Green Diamond Resource Company expressed interest in serving as an ex-officio member of the committee. This will be discussed at the next committee meeting.

## Action Items for Committee Members

* The next committee meeting is July 9th, 2020 from 9 am – 1 pm.
* Committee members who intend to submit additional plan proposals should submit them to Angela and Susan ahead of the July meeting.
* Committee members will be asked to provide comments to draft chapters 1-3 of the WRE plan. Substantive comments will be reviewed at the July meeting.
* Committee members with action items for project development will continue to provide information to the project subgroup and Committee.

## Action Items for Ecology

* Angela will set up the next project subgroup meeting.
* Angela will distribute additional plan proposals that are received.

## Action Items for Technical Consultants

* HDR will continue work on the projects identified for their analysis.
* HDR will work with Ecology to update technical memos for distribution.
* PGG will revise the water rights analysis at Committee direction for prioritization.
* PGG will continue work on the MAR analysis.