## Adaptive Management

The WRIA 14 Committee supports an adaptive management process for implementation of the WRIA 14 watershed plan. Adaptive Management is defined in the Net Ecological Benefit Guidance as ‘*an interactive and systematic decision-making process that aims to reduce uncertainty over time and help meet project, action, and plan performance goals by learning from the implementation and outcomes of projects and actions”*. Adaptive management will help address uncertainty and provide more reasonable assurance for plan implementation.

The WRIA 14 Committee recommends the following:

## Tracking and Monitoring

It is important to track the growth of permit-exempt wells in the watershed as well as the projects and policies that were planned to offset the impacts of these exempt wells. Data on these items will all the WREC to determine whether planning assumptions were accurate and whether adaptation is needed as new information is provided.

1. The WRIA 14 WERC recommends that the following information be tracked on an ongoing basis:

* Building permits issued that include permit-exempt wells
* An ongoing list and map of new permit-exempt wells in the WRIA since the enactment of RCW 90.94.030
* Status of implementation for each project included in this plan (see recommendation 1. C. below)
* Status of policy recommendations included in this plan

1. The WRIA 14 WREC also recommends that a research and monitoring strategy should be developed for WRIA 14 that addresses the following:

* Streamflow monitoring
* Groundwater monitoring
* Precipitation and drought conditions
* Land use changes
* Water usage and water supply data

1. In order to track project implementation, The WRIA 14 WREC recommends tracking streamflow restoration projects and new domestic permit-exempt wells to: 1.) improve the capacity to conduct implementation monitoring of streamflow restoration projects and actions, 2.) develop grant funding opportunities and track associated costs, and 3.) provide a template for adaptively managing emergent restoration needs. The Committee recommends piloting the Salmon Recovery Portal (https://srp.rco.wa.gov/about), managed by the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), for satisfying these needs. The implementation of project tracking through a pilot program using the Salmon Recovery Portal will be coordinated by the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife in collaboration with the Washington Department of Ecology, RCO. Ecology is not statutorily obligated to implement projects included in approved watershed plans developed through the RCW 90.94 process. To improve harmonization of streamflow restoration with ongoing salmon recovery efforts, local salmon recovery Lead Entity Coordinators shall be consulted prior to initial data uploads. University of Washington data stewards will be employed to conduct data entry, quality assurance, and quality control.

Table 1 summarizes the entities responsible for carrying out this recommendation and associated funding needs.

*Table 1: Implementation of Tracking and Monitoring Recommendation*

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| Action | Entity or Entities Responsible | Funding Considerations |
| Track building permits issued with permit exempt wells. | Ecology (via reporting from counties and cities). | The number of building permits and associated fees are transmitted to Ecology annually. No additional funding is needed. |
| Maintain an ongoing list and map of new PEWs within each sub-basin. | Ecology | Updated with new permit-exempt wells provided by local governments. No additional funding is needed. |
| Maintain a summary of the status of implementation for each project | WDFW using the Salmon Recovery Portal | WDFW may need additional funding to support maintaining the salmon recovery portal. |
| Maintain a summary of the status of each policy recommendation. |  |  |
| Prepare a research and monitoring strategy for WRIA 14 | WREC Committee (or another entity with similar representation is WREC is not continued) | Funding would be needed for the development and implementation of the strategy. It is assumed this would come from the legislature. |

## Reporting

The data collected above will be provided to WREC members and other interested persons through annual reporting and a self-assessment every five years. This will provide information on whether the plan’s recommendations are being implemented and whether they are having the anticipated effects.

1. The WRIA 14 WREC recommends annual reporting as follows:

Mason and Thurston Counties will prepare and submit a brief memo to Ecology by April 1, 2022, and every year thereafter during the planning horizon period, describing:

* The number of new building permits associated with new domestic permit-exempt wells issued in the prior calendar year.
* The email addresses associated with the new building permit recipients where available.
* A brief description of the status of each WRIA 14 projects/actions included in this plan, drawn from the Salmon Recovery Portal.
* Any other implementation actions to date, including any changes in approach since the last report, and any challenges identified that may require a change in approach.
* Ecology will share this report with WREC members and other interested parties.

1. The WRIA 14 WREC recommends a self-assessment be prepared every five years as follows:

Mason and Thurston Counties will prepare and submit to Ecology and WREC members by July 1, 2026, and every five years thereafter during the planning horizon period, a description of:

* The total (cumulative) number of new building permits associated with domestic permit-exempt wells issued from January 19, 2018 thru the most recent calendar year.
* The status of the implementation of WRIA 14 projects/actions.
* An estimate of the quantity of water and instream flow benefits realized through implementation of projects/actions identified in this plan.

The WREC will convene to prepare:

* Recommendations for new projects or actions, revisions to planned projects or actions, or removal of planned projects or actions. (See Recommendation 3 below)

Table 2 summarizes the entities responsible for carrying out this recommendation and associated funding needs.

*Table 2: Implementation of Reporting Recommendation*

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| Action | Entity or Entities Responsible | Funding Considerations |
| **Annual Reports** | * Counties compile information into a single report. * WDFW provides information on project status, drawn from the Salmon Recovery Portal * Ecology compiles information into a single report for distribution to WREC and other interested persons. | * Counties would prepare reports using existing resources. * Ecology staff would compile reports using existing resources. * WDFW may need additional funds to manage the Salmon Recovery Portal. |
| **Five-Year Self-Assessment:** | * Counties prepare initial report. * Ecology compiles information into a single report for distribution to WREC and other interested persons. * WREC convenes to prepare recommendations (See Recommendation 3 below) | * Counties may need funding to complete the estimate of benefits realized. * State funding or staff support will be needed to reconvene the WREC. (See Recommendation 3 below) |

## Oversight and Adaptation

The WREC believes it is essential to have a group of engaged stakeholders to continue to collaborate on the implementation of this plan. The WRIA 14 WREC recommends that the WREC be continued, with staff support from Ecology and ongoing financial support from the state. The WREC would be responsible for:

* Meeting regularly and coordinating on efficient implementation of the plan.
* Reviewing annual reports.
* Preparing recommendations as part of the five-year self-assessment (see Recommendation 2 above)

Table 3 summarizes the entities responsible for carrying out this recommendation and associated funding needs.

*Table 3: Implementation of Oversight and Adaptation Recommendation*

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| Action | Entity or Entities Responsible | Funding Considerations |
| **Continuation of WREC** | * Ecology provides staff support * WREC members continue to participate | * Ecology will provide staff support with existing resources. * WREC members will continue to participate without compensation. * Additional state funding may be needed for technical work, facilitation, or other actions to support adaptive management (see Recommendation 4 below) |

## Funding

The WREC believes that it is essential that the state’s investment in WRE plans would be imperiled if ongoing oversight of implementation is not formally continued, including a process to adaptively manage the plan as new information emerges. The WRIA 14 WREC recommends that the legislature provide funding and a structure to monitor plan implementation (including annual tracking of new permit-exempt wells and project implementation by subbasin) and develop a process to adaptively manage implementation if Net Ecological Benefit is not being met as envisioned by the Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Plan.

Table 4 summarizes the entities responsible for carrying out this recommendation and associated funding needs.

*Table 4: Funding Recommendation*

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| Action | Entity or Entities Responsible | Funding Considerations |
| Funding of Adaptive Management | * Legislature | * The legislature should provide funding and a structure to monitor plan implementation and develop a process to adaptively manage implementation if Net Ecological Benefit is not being met as envisioned by the Plan. |