# 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**

September 10th, 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)*

Dana Sarff (*Skokomish Tribe*)

Ron Gold (*Mason PUD 1)*

Darin Hall (*Mason PUD 1*)

Kevin Shutty (*Mason County*)

Dave Windom (*Mason County*)

Kaitlynn Nelson (*Thurston County)*

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

Larry Boltz (*agricultural interests, Mason Kitsap Farm Bureau)*

Lois Ward (environmental interests, *Sierra Club*)

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

Paul Pickett (*Squaxin Island Tribe*)

Mark Golliet (*Green Diamond Resource Company, ex-officio*)

Erin Hall (*Olympia Master Builders*)

### Committee Representatives Not in Attendance\*

WDFW

### Other Attendees\*

Susan Gulick *(Sound Resolutions)*

Jimmy Kralj (*ESA*)

Chad Wiseman (*HDR*)

Mike Noone (*Ecology*)

Stacy Vynne McKinstry (*Ecology*)

Tom Culhane (*Ecology*)

Jim Pacheco (*Ecology*)

Paula Holroyde (*League of Women Voters*)

\*Committee attendance is based on WebEx participation.

## Welcome

Due to the spread of COVID-19 and the recommendations from Public Health Officials, the September 2020 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 August 2020 Meeting Summary

* Angela received comments on the following sections:
	+ Projects
	+ Plan Development
	+ Adaptive Management
* The committee approved the August 2020 meeting summary.

## Updates and Announcements

* WebEx meetings will continue for the foreseeable future.
* Ecology furlough schedule updates:
	+ September 25th
	+ October 30th
	+ November 30th
* Streamflow Restoration Grants for 2020 will be announced in late September or early October.
* Ecology has been developing a plan presentation to support committee members with local leadership review. Angela will generate a WRIA 14 presentation and distribute it to the committee.

# Operating Principles

* The WRIA 14 operating principles were reviewed by the committee given the shift to remote meetings. Angela proposed edits to the operating principles to reflect remote participation as well as the removal of committee members who have ceased participating in the process.
* Additional language was proposed to state that final approval of the plan may be given verbally at a meeting or in writing.
	+ Mason County expressed concerns with final plan approval being made verbally. Mason County suggested final approval be made in writing, and if an entity does not approve the plan, that they include a written description as to why they are rejecting the plan.
	+ Angela clarified that elsewhere in the operating principles that final plan approval may be submitted as written documentation. The proposed language change only applies to activities in a committee meeting.
* Language was also proposed regarding removal of committee members if they stop participating in the plan development process. After September 10th, if an entity does not participate, they will be withdrawn from the committee pursuant to certain criteria. This language was proposed to ensure that there will be full committee participation prior to plan approval since unanimous approval is required.
* The committee approved the revisions to the operating principles by full consensus of all Committee members

## Projects

* Angela provided a review of the project subgroup meeting, updates to projects in WRIA 14, project list organization in the plan, and an update to the project status list.
* Project Subgroup Updates
	+ HDR and PGG will continue to coordinate on the MAR analysis and compile information on favorable site descriptions and offset estimates. A project description package will be distributed to the committee. The offset quantification will be for the suite of projects, not individual opportunities.
	+ PGG will write-up information regarding the water rights analysis to include in the plan as a way to address future opportunities, or build off other projects. The table of prioritized water rights for analysis may be included as an appendix to the plan (with identifying landowner information removed). Erica (Squaxin Island Tribe) will conduct a windshield survey on ~10 water rights and the Committee may include that the water rights table as a “field check”.
		- It was noted that the areas included in the windshield survey will not be analyzed for current best management practices.
* Project Updates
	+ Mason County Rooftop Runoff: HDR has completed the analysis and developed a technical memo and description for committee review. As this project is Mason County-wide, the technical memo also includes portions of WRIA 15. Committee members are encouraged to review the memo, Angela will distribute it after the meeting.
		- Members discussed the regulatory context of the program. Will onsite recharge be required within the next 20 years? If so, should a fraction be determined for the likely benefits over 20 years?
		- Members discussed concerns about the calculations and the differences in project design and performance in soils of varying permeability (highly permeable versus highly impermeable).
	+ City of Shelton Reclaimed Water/WCC Source Switch: Project analysis and descriptions are complete and available for committee review. Committee members are encouraged to review the memo, Angela will distribute it after the meeting.
	+ Evergreen Mobile Estates: Project description is in development.
		- Waiting to see what the owner would do with the water right, and feasibility study in the works.
	+ Schneider’s Creek Source Switch: HDR is continuing coordination with Thurston County and the project description is in development.
		- The timing of the existing water right and the source switch to ground water is not compatible with the stream closure. Ecology’s interpretation is that this conflicts with the Foster decision, and so would require a legislative fix. However it is a still a valuable project to include in the plan with these restrictions noted.
	+ MAR: Project description is in development.
* Habitat Projects
	+ HDR is currently developing project descriptions for Skookum Valley Ag, Goldsborough Creek, and Steamboat Upper
* Categorical Projects
	+ Floodplain restoration, and forest stand age, project descriptions are in development with HDR.
* Project Organization in the Plan
	+ Angela led a discussion of potential methods for organizing projects in the plan: High priority/low priority, approach to reflect likelihood of achieving NEB, and sequencing to reflect most to least estimate project benefits.
	+ Angela asked the committee for recommendations on the presentation of the project inventory in the plan:
		- The committee supported including a 1-2 paragraph description of projects in Chapter 5 with additional details included in an appendix.
		- The committee supported including tables in the plan to show project offsets/benefits.
	+ This feedback will be used during the development of Chapter 5 (Projects).

## Plan Proposals

* Adaptive Management
	+ Susan provided the committee with a review of the adaptive management section to be included in the WRIA 14 plan.
		- Susan will clarify language regarding reporting so that is not duplicative with current reporting requirements and clarify which entity will be responsible for developing a report.
		- Squaxin Island Tribe noted that WRIA 12 envisioned no implementation group, while WRIA 13 is proposing an implementation group.
		- Thurston County expressed concerns that the reporting implies that certain actions will be taken by specific groups or entities. Instead, they suggested making the language more flexible to account for changes and different methods.
		- Mason County proposed that a watershed group form and continue to meet, similar to the watershed group in the Chehalis Basin, however the group supported flexible language if commitments change.
* Policy Proposal Survey
	+ In general, most policies reviewed in the survey were marked by committee members as good ideas that needed revisions.
	+ For those proposals that were viewed favorably but need additional edits, they will be included into the draft plan with revised language in response to comments.
	+ Seven proposals were flagged as problematic and grounds for rejecting the plan.
		- The Squaxin Island Tribe noted a concern that previous discussions appeared to reach agreement, but then were blocked anyway. Therefore, additional discussions are not likely to change the status of these proposals.
		- Mason Kitsap Farm Bureau stated that their concerns were primarily focused around metering and considerations for agriculture.
		- These proposals will not be included in the draft plan unless concerns are resolved between the proponents and opponents.

## Plan Development

* Angela provided a review of the required plan elements: consumptive use estimate, offset opportunities, and net ecological benefit (NEB).
	+ If the committee approves the plan, Ecology will review the plan and make a determination on plan adoption. Angela noted that the Committee will need to submit the plan allowing sufficient time for Ecology’s review.
	+ If the committee does not approve the plan, Ecology will finalize the plan and send it to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board for technical review prior to plan adoption and potential rulemaking.
* Angela provided an update on the status of plan chapters and review. Chapters 5-7 are currently in development and will be distributed with the compiled draft plan the week of September 14th. Chapter 5 will contain examples of projects, but will not be complete. Chapter 7 will be an outline that will be completed in a following draft.
* Chapter 7: Net Ecological Benefit
	+ Angela discussed that a NEB chapter is an optional element of the plan.
	+ Angela provided committee members with a draft template for a NEB chapter. This outline would generate information about water offsets and consumptive use to see if projects will exceed the expected amount of consumptive use. Additionally, this outline would generate information regarding habitat benefits from proposed projects.
	+ The committee agreed to develop a NEB chapter in the plan.
	+ The Squaxin Island Tribe shared their comments on the NEB outline, which including the following suggested additions/changes:
		- Identify the ecological characteristics that are in important in WRIA 14.
		- Outline the benefits and impacts of the projects.
		- Consider how the benefits/impacts relate to the ecological characteristics and whether or not there will be a net benefit.
	+ Mason County expressed an interest in having consistency between WRIA 14 and WRIA 15.
		- The template generated by HDR will be tailored to suit each committee but will cover the same larger themes.
	+ Ultimately, NEB will be considered WRIA-wide, but the committee can choose to provide information on NEB on a subbasin scale, or consider identifying higher priority on where PE well impacts are the largest.
		- Ecology clarified that project offsets must at least exceed consumptive use estimates for the WRIA. NEB should be achieved with a mixture of water offset and habitat projects. NEB does not need to be met with water offset projects only.
	+ Committee members were asked to provide feedback on the NEB template by September 17th. Angela will use this feedback to develop Chapter 7 with HDR.

## Other Technical Items

* Angela provided an overview of current PE Well growth and consumptive use estimates that the Committee determined to be “working numbers” at the January 2020 meeting. Angela and Susan discussed with the Committee if it was appropriate for the group to select final estimates for inclusion in the plan.
* Consumptive Use and Permit Exempt Well Growth
	+ Growth estimate working number range: 4,006 – 4,294 wells/connections added between 2018 and 2038. These numbers were generated with an initial estimate, and a revised growth estimate that includes some growth within water system service areas.
		- The revised growth estimate includes an analysis of new PE wells that may occur within water system service areas.
	+ Consumptive use: Previously, the committee agreed to use the Irrigated Area Analysis method of replacing the “0 acre values” from the aerial analysis with a minimum value of 0.05 acres as a primary working number. This resulted in an irrigated area of 0.10 acres.
		- The CU estimates based on an irrigated area of 0.10 acres were discussed for both growth projections estimates:
			* Initial growth: 708.3 afy
			* Revised growth: 759.2 afy
		- Angela also showed estimates for consumptive use using the 95% Upper Confidence Limit (UCL) of the aerial analysis, which resulted in an irrigated acreage of 0.14 acres. These results were shown for both growth projection estimates:
			* Initial growth: 964.7 afy
			* Revised growth: 1,034 afy
		- The draft projected water offset value for WRIA 14 is ~1,147 afy from the projects analyzed to date.
	+ The Skokomish Tribe requested that the study they provided on outdoor irrigation, performed by Aspect Consulting, be included as an appendix to the plan.
	+ Mason County noted that they would be comfortable with the revised growth estimate values (4,294 new PE wells) and using 0.10 irrigated acres for the consumptive use analysis. Mason County suggested that the committee adopt these numbers and continue project analysis.
	+ The Squaxin Island Tribe noted that they support using a range of values for the consumptive use estimate, and expressed concerns that these numbers do not account for climate change and high OFM growth estimates. They suggested using the consumptive use estimates based on 0.14 irrigated acres (95% UCL) as a higher goal to achieve through adaptive management, to account for uncertainties such as climate change and future growth.
	+ Mason County expressed concern with continuing to change the values.
	+ The Skokomish Tribe agreed with the Squaxin Island Tribe that the estimates do not account for climate change and higher growth estimates.
	+ Thurston County proposed a compromise to use the growth projections as is and include a climate change chapter where additional information about climate change considerations and the impact of climate change on consumptive use could be addressed.
	+ Ecology stated that the outdoor irrigation method does account for climate change. The methods use the irrigation rates for commercial turf grass, when in reality, landowners do not use nearly as much water. The irrigation estimates are inherently conservative.
	+ Mason County stated that climate change is an important consideration, and asked if the Squaxin Island Tribe was comfortable with any of the CU estimates, or if they were opposed to all of them.
		- The Squaxin Island Tribe suggested an approach: the higher number could be the target for each subbasin, but the basin as a whole could use the lower target number.
		- Certain subbasins have more salmon resources than others.
	+ Susan shared with the committee that the most important part is to find sufficient projects that members believe will offset the impacts of new permit exempt wells, as opposed to focusing solely on the consumptive use numbers. Members may disagree on the assumptions to use for consumptive use but still agree that the plan as the whole provides the desired offset.
	+ **The committee agreed to use the revised growth Permit Exempt well projection (4,294 wells). The initial method will be included in the technical memo for background and comparative purposes.**
	+ **The committee agreed to use the consumptive use analysis based on 0.10 irrigated acres as the “most likely” estimate. The committee agreed that the consumptive use analysis based on 0.14 irrigated acres could be included in the plan as a goal to achieve through adaptive management as a measure of success.**
		- **Based on the growth estimate of 4,294 new PE wells, the consumptive use estimates are:**
			* **759.2 afy (most likely estimate)**
			* **1,034 afy (“success” goal to achieve through adaptive management)**
	+ The Squaxin Island Tribe noted that their goal for this plan is to add water to streams. If the projects offset water beyond the consumptive use estimate produced by the irrigated area of 0.14 acres, they would be more certain. Projects offset water somewhere between the consumptive use estimates generated from the irrigated area of 0.10 and 0.14 acres would raise concerns, and additional projects may be needed. Project offsets below the consumptive use estimate generated from the irrigated area of 0.10 acres represents a problem because offset water is likely not exceeding PE Well consumptive use.
		- The Skokomish Tribe agreed with this statement.
	+ Committee members should submit comments to Chapter 4 by the end of September 10, 2020. Angela will revise Chapter 4 based on Committee member comments and today’s discussion – the group will review comments at the October meeting.

## Public Comments

* No public comments were provided.

## Next Steps and Adjourn

* Next committee meeting is October 8, 2020
* Angela will schedule the next project subgroup meeting.
* Angela will send project descriptions to committee members.
* Committee members should comment on the NEB outline.
* Angela will update Chapter 4 based on today’s discussion, and comments received by September 10, 2020.
* Susan and Angela will work to develop a draft of Chapter 6 to include policy proposals based on survey results and today’s discussion, as well as adaptive management discussions.