AGENDA

**WRIA 15 Watershed Restoration and Enhancement**

**Committee Meeting**

July 9, 2019 | 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.|[WRIA 15 Committee Webpage](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias__1962/37327/watershed_restoration_and_enhancement_-_wria_15.aspx)

## **Location**

Kitsap County Building 619 Division St, Port Orchard (Port Blakely Conference Room #370)

**Committee Chair**

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**Handouts**

Agenda

Project Site Visit Ideas

# Participants

Austin Jennings, David Nash, Bob Montgomery, Jonathon Decker, Nathan Daniel, Joel Purdy, John O’Leary, Alison O’Sullivan, Brittany Gordon, Alicia Olivas, Sam Phillips, Kirvie Mesebeluu-Yobech, Dave Ward, Paul Pickett, Stacy Vynne

# Welcome and Meeting Agenda

# Role of the Project Workgroup

The project workgroup’s role is to make recommendations to the committee and advise the technical consultants on identification and development of projects for the WRIA 15 watershed restoration and enhancement plan. The project workgroup may consider water acquisition offset projects, non-water acquisition offset projects, and other projects that support streamflow and habitat restoration for salmon and aquatic species (note that the final net ecological benefit guidance, anticipated by July 31, will include more detailed definitions on project types). More specifically, the workgroup supports identification of: 1) criteria for evaluating and ranking projects; 2) an initial list of projects; 3) a priority list of projects. The project workgroup will bring recommendations to the committee for review and approval.

The workgroup did not believe there were gaps in expertise or geographical representation for membership on the workgroup, but acknowledged that we may want to bring in technical expertise to discuss certain project types.

Some workgroup members expressed concerns about mitigation projects and about “double dipping” with projects on salmon recovery plans or using match with other funding sources (e.g. SRFB). While Ecology recognizes the concerns and sensitivities regarding pulling in projects from other recovery lists, it is important to keep in mind that RCW 90.94 does not refer to mitigation, but offset. This allows us flexibility in the types and locations of projects as well as the funding. However, the workgroup will want to take caution in how projects that appear on other recovery plan lists are considered for the watershed plan.

WRIA 15 touches three salmon recovery lead entities. Stacy has talked with all three and they have chosen not to engage at the committee level, but will engage as appropriate with the project workgroup. Hood Canal and West Sound are participating today. Nisqually has offered to review project ideas and draft project lists for any concerns, but does not feel the need to engage since most of their projects in WRIA 15 are in the nearshore.

There was a recommendation to work on strategies, not focus on projects, given that opportunities will change over time. Unfortunately, the legislation requires that we develop a list of projects as we need to demonstrate the amount of water offset and meet net ecological benefit (NEB). The further developed the projects, the easier it will be for Ecology to complete the NEB review. The workgroup may want to consider a geographic or reach approach where we consider general types of projects to complete in certain reaches as opportunities arise.

There was recognition that we will need an adaptive management approach given that projects may fail or new opportunities will arise after the plan is submitted to Ecology. We need to ensure longevity of the plan. The committee will discuss an approach to adaptive management in early fall as well as a structure for accountability (how to account for offsets and track new wells).

Some members of the workgroup see an opportunity to work with the salmon recovery lead entities to identify existing project ideas with streamflow benefit and minimize redundancy. There may be components of projects that are appropriate for streamflow or we may be able to enhance some of the projects to bring in greater benefit and more funding opportunities.

The workgroup should encourage prioritization of projects that are in place, in time, and closest to the anticipated impact. Stacy and Susan are working on language on this approach. The workgroup should focus on projects that put water back into the stream closest to intended impact. The second priority is projects that provide a regional benefit.

Workgroup members raised the need to make it very clear that all committee members are vetting projects with their entities as we go and not waiting until we have a final list to raise a concern. Concerns need to be raised and addressed early.

The workgroup recognized that criteria for project consideration is crucial. There was a suggestion to start with a discussion on the sideboards for projects and what we don’t want to include.

# Review Ideas for Site Visits and Finalize Itinerary

Stacy reviewed the project ideas submitted to date by committee members. The purpose of the August site tours is to expose committee members to a few different types of projects that will help spur ideas for the WRIA 15 plan as well as provide some informal interaction for the committee outside of the formal meetings. The committee can visit other sites in the fall and winter, but we are hoping to keep the August visit logistically simple.

The committee provided feedback on the initial ideas to visit Clear Creek and the Port Gamble reclaimed water facility. There was a request to visit multiple sites on Clear Creek to see a variety of different project ideas (floodplain storage, beavers) and also to talk about some of the concerns that partners had on projects. There is interest in a reclaimed water facility. The workgroup raised two ideas – Port Gamble Resource Facility and Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe’s facility. KPUD is familiar with providing tours at the Port Gamble Resource Facility so we will likely visit that site.

The workgroup discussed future site visits and the possibility of having a focus on projects in the western part of the WRIA and southern part of the WRIA. Stacy will work on coordinating a future site visit in the fall. Potential sites to visit include:

* Big Beef / Seabeck: there are examples of restoration efforts next to areas that are in need of restoration. The Committee could visit the upper watershed and see the development pressure.
* Burley Creek
* Rocky Creek: uplands acquisition project with aquifer recharge.
* Coulter Creek hatchery with unused water right
* Newberry Heritage Park project: headwaters wetlands with storage opportunities.
* Salmonberry Creek project

# Approach to Project Identification and Development

The workgroup had an initial discussion on how to approach project identification.

* Some members of the workgroup expressed concern about a “shopping list” of projects and wanting to spend time on strategies and identifying the needs of each region.
* The workgroup recognized the need to look at the feasibility of the projects and likelihood of success. It is also important to consider projects that have the biggest ecological benefit no matter how difficult and expensive they may be.
* The workgroup discussed taking a regional approach, where folks with expertise in certain areas get together to share the knowledge and develop project ideas. These subgroups can then bring their thoughts back to the workgroup. Regional divides could follow the lead entity boundaries. Meetings should be scheduled to allow for those that have expertise across multiple regions to participate.
* The group briefly discussed projects that fall more into the “activities” category, such as policy or regulatory changes. The committee will begin discussing these opportunities in the coming months. Stacy does not expect this workgroup to work on policy or regulatory recommendations at this time (want more discussion and direction from the committee first) but may eventually be asked to do so by the committee.
* One member raised a concern around data gaps and the need to see more information in the webmap on flow measurements and salmon use of streams.
* The workgroup discussed the need to look at existing watershed assessments and priority watersheds as identified by the salmon recovery lead entities.
* In some cases, we may need to identify phased projects that start with a feasibility study – for areas where we know a project is needed but we aren’t sure exactly what we need to do. We will want to consider multi-phased projects as well as projects that might be outside of the box.
* It is important for the workgroup and committee to understand how Ecology will evaluate or “credit” extinguishment of development rights and decommissioning of wells. Stacy is working with technical staff and will provide information back to the committee as quickly as possible.
* The workgroup was not in agreement on whether there should be a review of existing project lists for relevant projects (salmon recovery , near term actions), but some do feel there is value. Bob and Stacy will likely do an initial review to see if there are projects (or potential for project enhancements) that jump out as having potential streamflow benefit. Any ideas will be brought back to the workgroup for review and discussion.
* Stacy requested that the workgroup members identify local recovery or capital improvement plans that can be considered for either projects or at least to ensure that our plan is in alignment with other plans. E.g capital improvement plans, floodplain management plans, basin plans, watershed assessments. Note that the west sound upland strategies and steelhead recovery plan are both in development.
* A question was raised about how we will consider lakes in this process and any potential projects.

# Action Items and Next Steps

Workgroup Homework for July 22:

* Bring a list of strategies, priorities for across the entire watershed
* Sideboards to projects – what is off the table in terms of project types of components of projects
* Send local plans for consideration for alignment but also projects (or project types/concepts)

Ecology and HDR Homework:

* Need to know the credit for the straws out of the ground, acquisition
* Develop discussion paper on projects
* Touch base with site visit “hosts”
* Begin evaluation of existing project concepts for further discussion with the workgroup