MEETING SUMMARY

**WRIA 15 Watershed Restoration and Enhancement**

**Committee Meeting**

May 7, 2020 | 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. | [WRIA 15 Committee Webpage](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias__1962/37327/watershed_restoration_and_enhancement_-_wria_15.aspx)

**Location**

WebEx

**Committee Chair**

Stacy Vynne McKinstry

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(425) 649-7114

**Handouts**

* Agenda
* Revised technical memos
* Water Rights Assessment maps
* Project Inventory
* Project review homework
* Policy Recommendations

# Attendance

Committee Representatives and Alternates \*

Joel Purdy (*Kitsap Public Utility District*)

David Winfrey (*Puyallup Tribe)*

StacyVynneMcKinstry *(WA Dept of Ecology)*

GregRabourn *(King County)*

Teresa Smith *(City of Bremerton)*

Allison Satter *(alternate - City of Bremerton)*

Dave Ward (*Kitsap County)*

Dave Nash *(alternate-Kitsap County)*

Zach Holt *(alternate - City of* *Port Orchard)*

Alison O’Sullivan (*alternate - Suquamish Tribe)*

JoyGaritone *(Kitsap Conservation District)*

Brittany Gordon *(WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife)*

Nam Siu *(WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife)*

Shawn O’Dell (*Washington Water Service - ex-officio)*

Austin Jennings (*alternate -* *Pierce County*)

Dan Cardwell *(Pierce County)*

Seth Book *(alternate - Skokomish Tribe)*

Dana Sarff (*alternate -* *Skokomish Tribe*)

Nate Daniel *(Great Peninsula Conservancy)*

Paul Pickett *(alternate - Squaxin Island Tribe)*

Randy Neatherlin *(Mason County)*

David Windom *(alternate – Mason County)*

Russ Shiplet *(Kitsap Building Association)*

Sam Phillips *(Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe)*

Mike Michael *(City of Bainbridge Island)*

Committee Representatives Not in Attendance\*

City of Gig Harbor

City of Poulsbo

Mason-Kitsap Farm Bureau (ex-officio)

Other Attendees

Susan Gulick *(Sound Resolutions, Facilitator)*

Angela Pietschmann (*Cascadia, Info Manager*)

Burt Clothier *(Pacific Groundwater Group)*

Bob Montgomery *(Anchor QEA)*

John Covert *(WA Dept of Ecology)*

Stephanie Potts *(WA Dept of Ecology)*

Angela Johnson (*WA Dept of Ecology*)  
Paulina Levy (*WA Dept of Ecology*)

Joel Massmann(*Suquamish Tribe)*

Bennett Weinstein *(WA Dept of Ecology)*

Parker Wittman *(Aspect Consulting)*

Tristan Weiss *(WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife)*

*\*Attendees list is based on roll call and participants signed into WebEx.*

# Meeting Agenda and March Meeting Summary

Susan summarized the last meeting and reviewed the agenda. *No revisions to the agenda.*

Stacy reviewed revisions to the April meeting summary provided by Squaxin Island Tribe. Ecology will post the final meeting summary on the committee webpage. *No further refinements to the meeting summary provided.*

# Updates and Announcements

Stacy provided updates from Ecology:

* The competitive streamflow restoration grant round application closed on April 30, 2020. Ecology will post summaries and numbers from the grant round on the [streamflow grants webpage](https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/How-we-operate/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Streamflow-restoration-implementation-grants) by mid May. Ecology will review applications through August and anticipate leadership determination of final list for funding in September.
* COVID-19 plan: Ecology will continue to hold meetings remotely as long as there is sufficient participation from committee members. Please let Stacy or Susan know if you or your entity is unable to continue participating.
* Stacy will send calendar invitations for WRIA 15 committee meetings through February 2021 (booking extra holds for months with a fifth week; note no meeting in July).
* Plan development update: Ecology is piloting chapters for WRIA 10 and will then develop draft chapters for WRIA 15. First set of chapters for WRIA 15 review anticipated by early June. Chapters will cover background information, overview of watershed, summary of subbasin delineation, and results.
* Ecology met with the Department of Fish & Wildlife (DFW). DFW believes that beaver projects should count towards NEB, but offset value cannot be accurately quantified.
* Ecology met with representatives from the Skokomish Tribe and their consulting team (Aspect) to discuss their irrigation analysis.
* Ecology will meet with representatives from the Puyallup Tribe in May to check in across multiple committees.
* Ecology reached out to conservation districts (Kitsap, Pierce, and Mason Counties), lead entities (Hood Canal Coordinating Council, West Sound Partners for Ecosystem Recovery), and the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group (HCSEG) for feedback on the WRIA 15 project list. Stacy will share feedback as received.
* Ecology will continue to post additional resources (e.g., information on metering pilot) to Box and share with the committee as they are ready.

# Committee Feedback on Technical Memos

Ecology redistributed the Subbasin Delineation technical memo and the Growth and Consumptive Use technical memo in April for committee feedback. The committee reviewed comments together to decide which revisions are accepted. These technical memos will form the basis of plan chapters. All comments received are posted to [Box](https://ecy.box.com/v/WRIA15TechnicalMemos).

**Reference Materials**

* [Subbasin Memo](https://app.box.com/s/8yjz3xd30rxwgrlc6t8cg4z64irmapgu)
* [Growth and Consumptive Use](https://app.box.com/s/op9ih55otvyxin604fp18mp98bttcjsr)
* [Review Comments](https://ecy.box.com/v/WRIA15TechnicalMemos)

**Discussion**

* **Subbasin Delineation technical memo** 
  + Sam Phillips (Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe) requested more detail on how the committee will assess projects (closest to anticipated impact). The committee expressed no concerns about adding this detail.
  + Ecology will include a footnote explaining the term watershed characterization “assessment unit” and explain what is meant by the term in-text (i.e., start at a fine scale and work up to a broader scale).
  + Ecology will send revisions to technical consultants to finalize memo and use as the basis for plan chapter.
* **Growth and Consumptive Use technical memo**
  + Ecology received revisions from Pierce County, Kitsap PUD, and the Squaxin Island Tribe. Refer to [Box](https://ecy.box.com/v/WRIA15TechnicalMemos) for specific revisions.
  + The consultants will add detail to clearly identify how high and low growth scenario scenarios were calculated for Pierce and Kitsap Counties.
  + The committee agreed to keep using the terms “Water System Data Method” (and describe up front that this data came from Kitsap PUD) and “USGS Groundwater Data Method” to describe consumptive use methodologies.
  + Paul Pickett (Squaxin Island Tribe) wanted to make sure language describing the USGS method is clear.
  + Nam Siu and Tristan Weiss (WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife) expressed DFW’s continued concern regarding consumptive use sampling methodology and whether the samples collected are representative of the population.
    - Ecology and DFW will meet in 2 weeks to further discuss how to address DFW’s concerns in the plan. DFW has stated that concerns with the methods will not impact their approval of the plan.
    - Ecology invites DFW and others to provide “dissenting opinion” memos if they disagree with methodology in plan (to be included as an appendix).
  + Stacy will redistribute the memo with edits for final review from committee.

# Projects: Status and Needs

Burt Clothier (Pacific Groundwater Group) provided an update on PGG’s water rights assessment and associated maps of initial results. PGG is not prioritizing water rights that have priority dates later than the instream flow rule (rule already takes precedence over these rights). PGG is only included finalized rights (no applications/claims) in its list.

The committee discussed potential projects within the island subbasins—Vashon/Maury; Bainbridge Island; and South Sound (Anderson/McNeil and Ketron Islands)—to: (1) determine if there are sufficient projects to offset potential impacts; (2) identify gaps; and (3) provide direction to the technical consulting team for further development of projects.

At the April committee meeting, members were asked to highlight projects with the highest [realistic] potential for offset in the short term (by subbasin) for further discussion at the May meeting. Stacy summarized the results of this homework assignment, noting that over 40 projects were identified as a priority for further investment of resources.

**Reference Materials:**

* [Water Rights Acquisition Assessment](https://ecy.box.com/v/WRIA15WRAcquisitionsAssess)
* [WRIA 15 Project Inventory](https://ecy.box.com/v/WRIA15ProjectInventory)
* [April 2020 – Project Homework](https://ecy.box.com/v/April2020ProjectHomework)
* [WRIA 15 Web map](https://hdr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d7d02dedb57241aa81dd7eb376c8625a)

**Discussion**:

* **PGG Water Rights Assessment**
  + Paul Pickett (Squaxin Island Tribe) agrees with using a geographic analysis approach at the subbasin level, and that areas within the subbasin may need special focus. He suggested PGG work with representatives from each subbasin to further narrow down and vet the list of water rights (based on local knowledge of growth patterns and salmon streams). Paul recommends caution when screening out potential water rights completely at this time.
  + Joel Purdy (Kitsap PUD) expressed concern around Ecology’s incomplete source dataset used by PGG in their analysis. The map does not capture groundwater rights in regions where known rights exist. PGG is working with Ecology staff to revise and refine the dataset.
  + Burt wants to work with members of the committee subbasin by subbasin to prioritize water rights for further vetting. The Project Work Group will discuss PGG’s analysis in more detail during May 21st meeting. The committee should send subbasin recommendations and/or requests for refinement of the water rights to Stacy by May 19th to be considered in the workgroup discussion.
* **Project Inventory – Bainbridge Island**
  + The inventory includes habitat, stream augmentation, and storage projects (provided by City of Bainbridge Island representatives).
* Mike Michael (City of Bainbridge Island) noted that the City is continuing to identify projects internally and with stakeholders on the island. The City is working with Bob Montgomery (Anchor QEA) to vet a potential gravel pit infiltration project near the Tilz site on the island. **Project Inventory – South Sound Islands (Anderson, McNeil, and Ketron)**
  + No projects proposed yet (but growth projections are minimal). Stacy Vynne (Ecology) will reach out to Nisqually Lead Entity to discuss project options.
  + Brittany Gordon (DFW) noted that the McNeil Island Wildlife Area may have options for restoration projects. DFW would not sponsor these project as they do not have water impacts to offset, but it is an opportunity to partner if other groups need a project. Stacy will reach out to discuss McNeil Island project options with Tristan Weiss (DFW).
* **Project Inventory – Vashon/Maury** 
  + Project list currently includes water rights projects that came out of a project in King County and a potential MAR project from John Covert.
  + Greg Rabourn (King County) noted he is looking into several potential projects with interested parties, including: a Shingle Mill Creek beaver dam analogue; Upper Judd / Shingle Mill Creek conservation easements; Beall Creek fish passage. Stacy will follow up with Greg to add projects to the inventory.
* **Project Inventory – Overall**
  + Brittany Gordon (DFW) recommended the committee continues to identify additional projects (especially in Hood Canal) to include in the inventory to mitigate uncertainty.
  + Dave Ward (Kitsap County) would like to revisit whether this project list is sufficient after the committee has made more progress on quantifying the associated offset benefits.
  + Joel Purdy (Kitsap PUD) added a project related to KPUD stream augmentation wells. In Kitsap County basins where offset is most needed, KPUD to install wells that are dedicated only for stream augmentation. Pumping rate could be adjusted for season, precipitation rates (e.g. drought) or number of permit exempt wells as adaptive management component. A single well could provide the entire offset for a subarea. [Note potential conflict with Foster court decision – project idea under discussion with Ecology.]
* **Direction for technical consultants**
  + Over 40 projects identified by committee members as priority for further development and inclusion in the plan. The Project Work Group will discuss the results of April’s homework assignment and develop a short list of projects they would like the technical consultants to further develop and bring back to June committee meeting for further discussion / refinement.
  + Paul Pickett (Squaxin Island Tribe) would like technical consultant support on the “Wastewater reclamation infiltration - City of Belfair” project.
  + Dave Ward (Kitsap County) would like the technical consultants to discuss the “Infiltrate County Owned Gravel Pit Near Port Orchard Airport” project with Jon Brand (Assistant Director of Public Works - retiring soon).

# Consumptive Use

Stacy summarized the special committee meeting held on April 22nd to discuss whether the group could reach agreement on a consumptive use estimate / path forward. Participants shared perspectives on what they support and preferred estimates; two general points of view emerged: (1) group supports using outdoor irrigation method as high end consumptive use estimate; (2) group supports using outdoor irrigation method as a starting consumptive use estimate (leaving option open to consider additional safety factor within consumptive use or other components of the plan).

Parker Wittman (Aspect Consulting on behalf of Skokomish Tribe) presented the results of Aspect’s irrigation analysis for the Skokomish Tribe. The results of the Tribe’s analysis help validate consumptive use assumptions. The committee will consider including results memo as a reference/appendix as an approach to planning for dry years.

**Reference Materials**:

* [4/22 Meeting Summary](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1962/images/WREC/WRIA15/202004/WRIA15SpecialCUMeeting22April2020summary.docx) (special meeting of committee subgroup to discuss consumptive use)
* [Skokomish Irrigation Analysis slide presentation](https://app.box.com/s/8v25j3dizinverpbe85g26kbdmq9gozp)

**Discussion**:

* WRIA 22/23 (Chehalis Basin) has a similar offset target and agreed to use the outdoor irrigation method to estimate consumptive use without including an additional safety factor. A summary of their consumptive use results are available on [Box](https://app.box.com/s/bu0cpip5oo5aizqtk6ldbn2hltiybvyn).
* The committee agreed to put the consumptive use conversation on hold for now and revisit it when the committee has a draft plan, a more built-out project list, and has further developed recommendations for policy and adaptive management.

# Refinement of Policy Recommendations for Plan

A workgroup met on April 27 to discuss a path forward for developing and vetting policy recommendations. Susan shared a policy/regulatory recommendation proposal template that committee members could use to bring proposals to the committee. She also walked through the input Ecology has received to date on plan recommendations. The committee discussed proposals from the Department of Fish & Wildlife and Squaxin Island Tribe.

**Reference Materials**:

* [WRIA 15 Policy and Regulatory Recommendations](https://app.box.com/s/ck2t9eyb324w0pjz91cag49w6056750p)
* [April 27 Workgroup Meeting Notes](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias__1962/37327/watershed_restoration_and_enhancement_-_wria_15.aspx)
* [Proposal template](https://app.box.com/s/nhrwodbz8r8it2e9ibvyi3z14iesu2ts)
* [Policy and Adaptive Management Proposals](https://app.box.com/s/fi15hj9jhqs978toab057tz5rgkbqacx)

**Discussion**:

* **Proposal Template**
  + Stacy will distribute the proposal template for feedback and then share a final version. Policy leads should use the template going forward when brining forward proposals for discussion with the committee.
* **Project Implementation Tracking Proposal**
  + Tristan Weiss (Dept of Fish & Wildlife) proposed using the [Salmon Recovery Portal](https://srp.rco.wa.gov/about) (SRP) as a pilot for project implementation tracking. Tracking projects through planning and implementation phases will enhance the Committee’s ability to conduct implementation monitoring at the sub-basin and WRIA scale, monitor grant funding, identify plan successes and deficiencies, and streamline project development. This proposal is for all eight WRECs.
  + SRP would memorialize proposed efforts in plan and allow for basic implementation monitoring. Information tracked would include location, project proponents, project goals, phases of each project, anticipated offsets / ecological benefits, and cost over time.
  + DFW would fund the initial costs associated with uploading projects in basin; develop quality assurance protocols; and facilitate aspects of conversation with RCO.
  + Local support will be needed for collecting and loading data.
  + Trained University of Washington [Olympic Natural Resources Center](http://www.onrc.washington.edu/) data stewards would help with initial setup in SRP. Committee members noted that it’s important to have a long-term plan for monitoring and data stewardship so that initial time investments are worthwhile. DFW would need ongoing local support to monitor project implementation.
  + SRP seems to have the flexibility needed to handle a diversity of projects/actions statewide. Tracking policy actions and conservation efforts may be more challenging. A concern was raised that SRP may only tell part of the story (not a go-to place for all plan information, such as policy recommendations).
  + Ecology could consider including a requirement in the streamflow restoration grants to capture critical project information into SRP.
  + Paul Pickett (Squaxin Island Tribe) noted the need to track offsets for completed projects and real water, which could be linked to Ecology reporting requirements.
  + Committee members should contact Stacy or Tristan if they are interested in working with DFW to further develop the proposal.
* **Water Master Proposal**
  + Paul Pickett (Squaxin Island Tribe) presented a proposal for an Ecology Water Master to help with compliance and enforcement of regulations (i.e., assessing instream flows; looking for illegal water uses; education, outreach, and technical assistance; and complaint response).
  + Stacy noted that Ecology has limited compliance and enforcement staff spread across the Northwest and Southwest regions. These staff focus on large water right violations that have the greatest potential impact to (1) the instream resource and (2) senior water rights holders. The new enforcement positions created in last year’s budget were funded for orca recovery efforts and are focused on watersheds with the greatest Chinook salmon populations. While Ecology is not opposed to a new Water Master position, clarity is needed around how the position would be funded and how the position relates (or doesn’t) to the Streamflow Restoration planning process and permit exempt well use.
  + Randy Neatherlin (Mason County) does not support Water Master enforcement within the County but supports the education/outreach idea.
    - Dan Cardwell (Pierce County) noted that right now state law already authorizes Ecology to enforce permit exempt well limits. Dan will connect with Mason County.
    - Dave Ward (Kitsap County) noted that county lines are political, not ecological, so enforcement should be considered WRIA-wide. Dave raised the concern that we might be identifying a solution for problem that may not exist.
  + The committee agreed to defer further Water Master discussion until the committee has determined which recommendations to include in its plan.
* **Other Issues**
  + Paul Pickett described the outcomes of his discussions with Pierce County staff on policy and adaptive management issues.
  + He also offered two points: 1) to finalize the plan the Committee will need to understand the trade-off of a high CU number versus a package of policy and adaptive management items that really get implemented. 2) He would like specific ideas from the counties to put in the plan, not just good intentions.

# Public Comment

No public comment.

# Action Items for Committee Members

* Send subbasin recommendations/requests and any specific areas for focus for PGG regarding the water rights analysis to Stacy by May 19th for consideration at the May 21st project workgroup meeting.
* Provide feedback on Growth and Consumptive Use technical memo to Stacy by May 19th.
* Let Stacy know if you’d like to join the Project Workgroup meeting on May 21st.
* Provide feedback on policy/regulatory recommendation proposal template by Friday, May 15th.
* Reach out to Stacy or Tristan if you want to further engage in development of the project implementation tracking tool proposal.

# Action Items for Ecology and Consultants

* Ecology will redistribute the Subbasin Delieantion and Growth and Consumptive Use technical memos with edits to the committee for final review.
* Stacy will reach out to (1) Nisqually Lead Entity to discuss project options for South Sound; and (2) DFW to discuss McNeil Island project options.
* Stacy will share the results of the WRIA 22/23 consumpitve use discussion.

# Upcoming Meetings

* Next Project Workgroup meeting: Thursday, May 21, 2020.
* Next committee meeting: Thursday, June 4, 2020, 9:30 a.m., WebEx.