

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION TO WRIA 13 WATERSHED ASSESSMENT

1.1 WATERSHED PLANNING IN DESCHUTES WATER RESOURCE INVENTORY AREA (WRIA) 13

- **What is the WRIA Watershed Planning project?**

The WRIA 13 planning area includes the Budd/Deschutes, east Eld and Henderson Inlet watersheds. The WRIA 13 Watershed Management Project brings together government agencies with representatives of business, agriculture, environmental and other interests to develop a plan for allocating water, protecting water quality, and restoring fish habitat. The 1998 "Watershed Planning Act" (RCW 90.82) provides guidance and grant funding via the Department of Ecology. The Legislature's vision was to:

- Assess local water resource conditions, with...
- Maximum input from local citizens, resulting in...
- Local groups guiding state agencies in managing water resources.

The three phases of Watershed Planning stipulated in RCW 90.82 are:

- Phase 1 "Organizing" - During this effort, local governments, the Squaxin Island Tribe and State agencies (represented by the Department of Ecology) came together to sponsor the WRIA 13 Watershed Planning project. A Technical Committee and policy-setting Watershed Planning Committee were formed. Thurston County is the lead agency for the project.
- Phase 2 "Assessment" – The Technical and Watershed Planning committees considered a host of issues affecting water resource management. This Assessment is the culmination of this effort.
- Phase 3 "Plan" – A Plan will be prepared recommending actions to address the core issue of water quantity management. The associated issues of water quality and habitat will also be addressed in action recommendations, within the context of the other existing local efforts underway in these water resource arenas.

- **Which areas are included in WRIA 13?**

Washington was divided into Water Resource Inventory Areas by the Department of Ecology for record keeping and water resource management. "Water Resource Inventory Area No.13" (WRIA 13) encompasses 220 square miles in central Thurston County, including:

- The Deschutes River watershed and other smaller Budd Inlet direct tributaries;
- The east ½ of Eld Inlet including McLane Creek and Green Cove Creek;
- Henderson Inlet watershed including Woodland and Woodard Creeks; and
- The area draining directly to the Nisqually Reach.

Much of the designated Urban Growth Areas for Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater and Rainier are within the planning area, along with agriculture, rural residential areas and commercial timberlands.

- **What are you trying to accomplish? Haven't we already done watershed plans?**

Significant local and state water resource planning efforts from the 1980s-early 1990s include:

- Data collection on streams, lakes and groundwater extends back three decades, with 30 reports issued by local, state, tribal, and federal agencies.
- "Non-point" pollution Action Plans were adopted for Totten, Eld, Budd/Deschutes and Henderson inlets in the 1980's. Implementation led to upgrade of Eld Inlet shellfish harvest status in the early 1990's. Henderson Inlet is the subject of a renewed County-led effort to address declining water quality through a Shellfish Protection District.
- Stormwater Management Basin Plans have been compiled for all our urban basins, addressing localized flooding and water quality protection.
- Groundwater Management Plan was approved for north Thurston County in 1992.
- The Department of Ecology adopted "Instream Flow" rules for WRIA 13 in 1980 to protect streams and lakes from future surface water withdrawals and wells.
- WRIA 13 salmon recovery efforts launched in recent years to protect critical habitat.

However, water *quantity* management remains a significant challenge – expressed by the Governor and Legislative leadership as the need to ensure "water for fish and water for people." Concern about streamflow impacts has led to widespread denial of applications for new water rights to serve people and agriculture. The 1998 Legislature authorized the new WRIA-based watershed planning process in recognition of the need to involve local interests with all levels of government to address key water resource issues.

- **Isn't there plenty of water in our area?**

Our region is blessed with bountiful groundwater, streams and lakes – interconnected water resources dependent on local rainfall. The "pinch" time is during summer low-flow when our streams are dependent on groundwater. In the future, we will need to avoid tapping aquifers that are directly or indirectly in "continuity" with stream flows and provide mitigation where impacts are unavoidable.

- **Where will we get water for future development? Don't we have plans for this already?**

The population within WRIA 13 is anticipated to grow from approximately 150,000 to 225,000 in the coming twenty-five years. Long-range Buildable Lands "capacity" estimates anticipate roughly 300,000 residents in the planning area. (Further

information is provided in Chapter 3.) Under the Growth Management Act, jurisdictions are “assigned” population to be accommodated – including responsibility to provide essential services like water. But at this point we do not have a long-term, region-wide water supply strategy to accommodate population while protecting natural resources.

The long-range water supply strategy in the WRIA 13 Plan is anticipated to:

- Incorporate water demand and supply projections from Water System Plans and growth management population projections;
- Comply with State regulatory requirements to protect instream flow and examine opportunities to improve stream habitat;
- Examine all feasible opportunities to “stretch” existing supplies through conservation and examine opportunities for “new” supplies such as the Reclaimed Water program sponsored by our regional wastewater utilities (LOTT). One million gallons per day is anticipated to be available for non-potable uses beginning around 2005 - with eventual production of reclaimed water anticipated to reach 15 million gallons per day.

- **What has been accomplished so far?**

The Technical and Watershed Planning Committees have considered many issues affecting water resource management in WRIA 13. Existing data and information from numerous existing studies and plans were collated. In addition, three new studies were undertaken:

- Water rights records for WRIA 13 were mapped into the County GeoData system. In addition, aerial photos of existing land use were compared with original “purpose” of the water right, to identify potential changes in water use that may affect water right status.
- Deschutes Groundwater Inflow Survey was conducted to improve our understanding of “gaining” and “losing” sections (reaches) of the river;
- Woodland Creek Target Flow project has been initiated, to improve our protection of critical flows for our streams and supplement the 1980 WRIA 13 Instream Resource Protection Program rules adopted by DOE.

- **What is the timeline for the Plan?**

Committee action is due by October 2004, based on grant funding conditions stipulated by the Legislature in RCW 90.82. If a recommended Plan is adopted by the Committee, it will be submitted to the County Commissioners. After public hearings, the County Commissioners can adopt the Plan, send it back to the Committee for revision or reject the Plan. .

- **How can we learn more and get involved?**

More information is available at:

- Web site and links are at
http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/wwm/divisions/utility_development.htm

- Contact staff person Tom Clingman for more information at (360) 357-2491 or clingmt@co.thurston.wa.us. Staff can also put you in touch with the Watershed Planning Committee member representing your interest group or area.

1.2 WRIA 13 WATERSHED PLANNING COMMITTEE (as of April 2004)

Interest	Representative
<i>Non-Governmental Committee Members</i>	
Agriculture	Rick Nelson Cattlemen's Association
Aquaculture	Diane Cooper, Taylor United/ Pacific Coast Oyster Growers Assoc
Forestry	Julie Stengell Weyerhaeuser
Environmental Group	Peggy Bruton Sierra Club Sasquatch Group
Development	Doug DeForest Olympia Master Builders
Industrial Water User	
Business	Mike Massoth Lacey/Thurston Co Chamber of Commerce
Realtors	Nick Adams Hodges
Water Supplier: Non-Gov't	Jerry Peterson WA Water Service Co
Fishery Groups	Paul Sparks Trout Unlimited
Henderson Watershed Council	Steve Langer
Eld Watershed Council	Ed O'Brien
Deschutes resident	Mike Pettit
<i>Governmental Representatives</i>	
Thurston County	Kathy Wolfe
Squaxin Island Tribe	Jeff Dickison
City of Olympia	Matthew Green
City of Lacey	Virgil Clarkson
City of Tumwater	Jerry Murphy
City of Rainier	Dennis McVey
Thurston PUD #1	Bud Kerr
Thurston Conservation District	Kris Vangorkum
State of Washington	Steve Craig, Department Of Ecology

Contact via staff member Tom Clingman, (360) 37-2491 or clingmt@co.thurston.wa.us

THURSTON COUNTY

Water Resource Inventory Area 13

