

Quick Overview of Thurston Watershed Management **(<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/planning/natural-res/natural-wria.htm>)**

In 1998, the state Legislature approved the Watershed Management Act, which encourages local communities to develop plans for protecting local water resources and habitat. Lawmakers wanted local governments and citizens to develop plans since they know their own regions best. Although the 1998 law does not require planning, Thurston County and local governments chose to step up to the task.

WRIA is an acronym for “Water Resource Inventory Area” (pronounced “why-ruh”). WRIsAs are watershed planning areas established by the Department of Ecology. Washington State is divided into 62 distinct WRIsAs, each loosely drawn around a natural watershed or group of watersheds.

Thurston County has been a participant in watershed planning in four WRIsAs: the Nisqually River Watershed (WRIA 11), the Upper and Lower Chehalis River Watershed (WRIsAs 22 and 23), the Kennedy-Goldsborough Watershed (WRIA 14), and the Deschutes Watershed (WRIA 13).

Nisqually River Watershed (WRIA 11)

The lead agency for the Nisqually River watershed planning effort is the Nisqually Indian Tribe. The Nisqually Watershed Management Plan was adopted at a joint meeting of the Lewis and Thurston County Commissioners and the Pierce County Council in April 2004. Lead Agency Contact: George Walter, (360) 438-8687, or email gwalter@nwifc.wa.gov .

Thurston County Contact: Scott Clark, Planning Department Director, (360) 709-3005 or email clarks@co.thurston.wa.us .

Chehalis River Watershed (WRIsAs 22/23)

The lead agency for the Chehalis River watershed planning effort is Grays Harbor County. The Planning Unit is the Chehalis Basin Partnership. The Chehalis Basin Watershed Management Plan was adopted at a joint meeting of the Thurston, Mason, Grays Harbor, and Lewis County Commissioners on May 28, 2004. Lead Agency Contact: Lee Napier, (360) 249-4222, or email lnapier@co.grays-harbor.wa.us .

Thurston County Contact: Scott Clark, Planning Department Director, (360) 709-3005 or email clarks@co.thurston.wa.us .

Kennedy-Goldsborough Watershed (WRIA 14)

The lead agency for the Kennedy-Goldsborough watershed planning effort was Mason County. The Planning Unit was unable to reach consensus in adopting the plan, therefore the planning effort was terminated. Lead Agency Contact: Pam Bennett-Cumming, (360) 427-9670 ext. 287, or email pambc@co.mason.wa.us .

Thurston County Contact: Jeanne Kinney, (360) 754-4580 ext. 7845 or email kinneyj@co.thurston.wa.us .

Deschutes River Watershed (WRIA 13)

The lead agency for the Deschutes River watershed planning effort was Thurston County. The Planning Unit was unable to reach consensus in adopting the plan, therefore the planning effort was terminated. Thurston County Contact: Jim Bachmeier (360) 357-2491 ext. 4275 or email bachmej@co.thurston.wa.us .

Agriculture Components

Chehalis River Watershed (WRIAs 22/23)

http://www.chehalisbasinpartnership.org/watershed_plan/watershed_plan.html

Agriculture is only 10.7% of the land use and is located right next to watershed. Irrigation use is another concern but this has reduced as cropping patterns have changed but it still represents a significant use of the water. Starting in the early 1800s logging and agriculture had impacts on stream channels and riparian vegetation but they are currently in “recovery” after modified practices.

Commercial dairy, livestock and crop farming operations are predominantly located in the low-lying valleys adjacent to the Chehalis River and its major tributaries, including the South Fork Chehalis, Newaukum, Skookumchuck, Black, Satsop, and Wynoochee Rivers, and Scatter Creek. Principle crops include pasture, hay, and silage, with some vegetables and small grains. Berries are grown in the Chehalis-Centralia area. Several Christmas tree farms are located along the Skookumchuck River and in the Chehalis-Centralia area. Several private aquaculture facilities are located in the Grand Mound/Rochester area.

Economic and population pressures tend to promote land use changes from forestry and agriculture to more intensive uses. There are strategies and policy options to encourage preservation of forest and agricultural land, to manage all types of land use for water resource quality, and to provide protection to water resources even as land uses change.

Nisqually River Watershed (WRIA 11)

Agriculture represents 5-10% (6.8%) of land use and western portion is seeing increased development. The largest portion of agriculture is made up of small- and medium-scale agricultural holdings that include livestock, poultry, some truck farming, and fur farming are located throughout the Humid Transition Zone. An exception to these small-scale operations is the Wilcox Farm located near Harts Lake, where dairy cattle and chickens are raised in large numbers and constitute an important source of jobs in the local area

Most irrigation within the Nisqually Basin is in support of livestock operations. Approximately 75 percent of the irrigated cropland is in forage crops. Numerous horticulture crops including sweet corn, snap beans, and strawberries are also grown in addition to tree seedlings, nursery stock, and Christmas trees. Irrigated agriculture conducted in support of livestock farming may increase slightly over the next 20 years if market conditions remain strong; however, no large-scale increase is projected. (Areas of greatest potential include the South Prairie near Yelm.)

Farming includes only about 6,500 acres and much of this is in non-irrigated pasture lands. The development of agricultural lands is restricted by the limited availability of suitable soils.

Nisqually watershed sustainability goals

2030 Goals

- Previously developed conservation (farm) plans are fully implemented

2020 Objectives

- Conservation (farm) plans for all commercial farms have been developed
- Incentives that promote purchase of development rights and/or conservation easements have been created

- Conservation plans for all small farms requested by owners

Actions to Complete by 2015

- Provide technical assistance to farmers for sustainable agriculture
- Promote the local farming economy with farmers markets and community supported agriculture (CSA) programs
- Achieve a balance between incentives and regulations in the agriculture sector

Actions to Complete by 2010

- Develop a pamphlet for new small farmers
- Promote the connection between the urban and rural community (e.g. tours promoting understanding of farming and farmers' issues)

Kennedy-Goldsborough Watershed (WRIA 14)

The Kennedy-Goldsborough watershed consists of 15.5% irrigated agricultural use. Salmon habitat has been degraded. I found information that lists agriculture % for various reaches in Mason county ex. Johns Creek Reach 02 is 1% agriculture, Goldsborough Creek Reach 03 is 3% agriculture, Goldsborough Creek Reach 04 is 6% agriculture. Mill Creek Reach 01 is 10% agriculture and the drainage basin has been modified partially due to conversion of forested to agriculture land which has led to bank erosion.

The reports indicate that most reaches suffer from loss of riparian vegetation or water quality issues and lists them as management issues. There are also issues relating to diversion of water for irrigation. However, I was not able to find information that suggests if any steps are being taken to manage the issues.

Who is Involved

Chehalis River Watershed (WRIAs 22/23)

Chehalis River Council - <http://www.crcwater.org/Welcome.html> -

P.O. Box 1712

Centralia, WA 98531

Email: crc@crcwater.org

Chairman: Rob Schanz
Vice Chair: Janet Strong
Secretary: Margaret Rader
Treasurer: Karen Knutsen
At large: Susan Troyanek

The Chehalis Basin Partnership - <http://www.chehalisbasinpartnership.org/>

Jane Atha
360-736-9391 x547
jatha@centralia.edu

Bonnie Canaday, Chair
360-330-7674 bcanaday@compprime.com

Mark White, Vice Chair
360-970-5957
mwhite@chehalisribe.org

Nisqually River Watershed (WRIA 11)

Nisqually River Council and Citizens Advisory Committee– <http://nisquallyriver.org/>

12501 Yelm Highway SE, Olympia, WA 98513
360.438.8715

info@nisquallyriver.org
www.nisquallyriver.org

Ashley Von Essen, Nisqually River Council Program Coordinator –ashley@nisquallyriver.org

Justin Hall, Nisqually River Foundation Executive Director -justin@nisquallyriver.org

Sheila Wilson, Nisqually River Education Project Program Coordinator –sheila@nisquallyriver.org

Nisqually Watershed Implementation Plan Committee (2007)

PLANNING UNIT:

Representative - Agency

Alan Corwin – Thurston Public Utility District
Bruce Lachney - Small Scale Agriculture
Chelan Jarrett - Town of Eatonville
Chris Wilcox – Wilcox Farms
Clark Halvorson - Nisqually Indian Tribe
Deborah Johnston - Fort Lewis
Diane Oberquell - Thurston County
Doug Mah – City of Olympia
Fred Michelson - Nisqually River Council
Gary Armstrong – Town of Eatonville
Gayle Adams - Elbe Water District
George Walter - Nisqually Indian Tribe
Harry Bell - Graham Hill Mutual Water
Jerry Petersen – Washington Water
Jim Lowery - Lewis County
Julie Rector - City of Lacey
Ken Hooper - Wilcox Farms
Kevin O'Neill – Washington Water
Kim Eldridge- City of Roy
Marc Wicke - Tacoma Power
Mark Swartout - Thurston County
Mary Ausburn - Pierce County

Norman Rittenhouse - Graham Hill Mutual Water
Rich Hoey – City of Olympia
Robert Smith - Nisqually River Council
Shelly Badger - City of Yelm
Steve Craig - Department of Ecology
Susan Clark – (previously with) Pierce County
Virgil S. Clarkson - City of Lacey

SUB-BASIN COMMITTEES:

MASHEL/OHOP:

Representative – Agency
Mary Ausburn – Pierce County
Clark Halvorson – Nisqually Indian Tribe
Gary Armstrong – Town of Eatonville
George Walter – Nisqually Indian Tribe

MCALLISTER/YELM:

Representative – Agency
Clark Halvorson – Nisqually Indian Tribe
Rich Hoey – City of Olympia
Julie Rector – City of Lacey
Mark Swartout – Thurston County
George Walter – Nisqually Indian Tribe
Shelly Badger – City of Yelm

Kennedy-Goldsborough Watershed (WRIA 14)

Mason County (lead entity)
Thurston County
The Squaxin Island Tribe
City of Shelton
Mason County Public Utility District No. 1
Port of Shelton
State of Washington

Organizations within Thurston County that may be associated

Thurston County Shoreline Management Plan and Habitat Conservation Program
Chehalis Watershed Cooperative
Thurston Conservation District
Conservatives Futures Program
Nisqually Land Trust
People for Puget Sound/Earth Corps
Puget Sound partnership,