

WATERSHED PLANNING

February, 2002



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"I see the WRIA as a great opportunity to be at the table with the Tribes, Save the Lakes, the County, Simpson Timber. We won't come to a watershed planning solution until we have a community solution..." Kerry Holm, Port of Hoodspout

THE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT ACT

PURPOSE: In 1998, the Washington State Legislature passed the Watershed Management Act (Chapter 90.82 RCW) "...to develop a more thorough and cooperative method of determining the current water situation in each water resource inventory area (WRIA) of the state and to provide local citizens with the maximum possible input concerning their goals and objectives." Each WRIA will define its preferred future for water management.

The Act enables, but does not require, local "planning units" to form for the purpose of conducting assessment and planning. The bill also requires that the governments declare a lead agency, and that all native American Tribes in and adjacent to the WRIA be invited to participate in the planning process. A Planning Unit for WRIA 16 was formed by Mason County (lead agency), Jefferson County, Gray's Harbor County, PUD #1, and the Skokomish Tribe for the Dosewallips-Skokomish watersheds. These groups represent the Steering Committee.

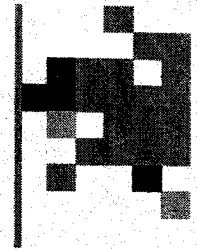
GOALS: Under law, citizens, local governments, tribes, and other members of a planning unit must assess water resources and needs, then they recommend management strategies. Beyond that, the planning unit has quite a bit of flexibility to determine the planning process, and to focus on areas or elements of particular importance to local citizens. WRIA 16 intends to address water quantity, water quality, habitat and instream flows. It is interested in input from citizens and stakeholders in the WRIA 16 watershed region.

CONSTRAINTS: The law also includes constraints on the activities of planning units. For example, the planning unit does not have the authority to change existing laws, alter water rights or treaty rights, or require an implementing agency to take an action which it has not agreed to during development of the plan.

WHAT WE'VE DONE

Planning Unit Formed August, 2000

Watershed Assessment Begins March, 2002



WHAT'S NEXT?

Community input into process

Citizens who live in the watersheds contribute local knowledge to augment technical assessment

Gather information on water quantity and water quality to fill in the gaps.

Collaborate to develop watershed plan.

PARTICIPATING CITIZENS

Warren Dawes, SW Puget Sound Watershed Council

Chuck Finella, Mgr., Pleasant Harbor Marina

George Fisher, Save the Lakes

James Helena, Citizen-at-large

Kerry Holm, Port of Hoodspout

Diane Jones, Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Grp.

Barbara LaVette, Citizen-at-large

Jay Watson, Hood Canal Coordinating Council

WHAT PARTICIPATING CITIZENS SAY

"The watershed is a system, everything's tied to each other. The objective of the WRIA is to look at all the pieces of the system... How do you live with a river that floods a lot and that's made 12-15 major channel jumps?"

Keith Dublinicz, Mgr. Natural Resources, Skokanish Tribe

"We need to examine all aspects of the aquifer and watershed—the biological requirements of species, stream flows, urban demand on ground and surface water. We've a river that floods and picks up septic and cattle waste. We've got a plugged up river that used to be unplugged. We need to think outside-the-box."

Chuck Finella, Mgr. Pleasant Harbor Marina

"If we don't do watershed management planning, someone else will, and we may not like the outcome."

Jay Watson, Hood Canal Coordinating Council

"I see the WRIA as a great opportunity to be at the table with the Tribe, Save the Lakes, the County, Simpson Timber. We won't come to a watershed planning solution until we have a community solution; if it goes to litigation, then the community is at odds with itself, and we just can't make progress that way."

Kerry Holm, Port of Hoodspout

**WE'D LIKE TO HEAR
WHAT YOU HAVE TO
SAY—
PLEASE JOIN US AT OUR
NEXT MEETING**

Thursday, March 14, 2002
3:00-5:00 p.m.
PUD #1 Board Room
Potlatch, WA

Upcoming Agenda Items

- Initial Basin Assessment
- Instream Flow Application Process

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