



A watershed links people with one another and with the natural landscape.

Our purpose is to develop a plan to manage this shared resource
to benefit both people and the environment.

We will listen to every individual in our watershed community who
voices their needs, concerns, and ideas.

Our vision is to develop a plan that achieves a broad consensus within this unique community.

Water Rights & Instream Flow*

What is a water right? The waters of Washington State collectively belong to the public, they cannot be owned by any one individual or group. Instead, individuals and groups may be granted *rights* to use the water. A *water right* is a *legal authorization* to use a *predefined quantity* of public water for a designated purpose. This purpose must qualify as a *beneficial use*. *Beneficial use* involves the application of a reasonable quantity of water to a non-wasteful use, such as irrigation, domestic water supply, or power generation. An average household uses about 300 gallons of water per day.

Any use of surface water (lakes, ponds, rivers, streams or springs) which began after the state water code was enacted in 1917 requires a water right permit or certificate. Also, ground-water withdrawals initiated after 1945, when the state ground-water code was enacted, require a water-right permit or certificate. Withdrawals that do not require a water-right (*exempt withdrawals*) include the use of 5000 gallons or less per day for:

- Livestock watering
- Domestic use (Single-family, or multi-family)
- Industrial purposes
- Watering a lawn/non-commercial garden < .5 acre

Water use of any kind is subject to "first-in-time, first-in-right"—a principle established in historical Western U.S. water law and now part of Washington State law. This means a senior (older) right cannot be impaired by a junior (more recent) right.

Washington State's rivers serve as a source of community water supply and support production of over 80 billion kilowatt hours of electricity per year, with wholesale value exceeding \$1 billion. Sport anglers spend more than half a billion dollars each year. The State's commercial fisheries are valued at \$159 million. More than 1.6 million acres of croplands in Washington are irrigated

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and provide in excess of \$2 billion dollars of crop value. Industrial development, recreation and providing beauty are also important uses of water. With these diverse and growing demands for Washington's water supply, water rights play a crucial role in managing and allocating this finite resource.

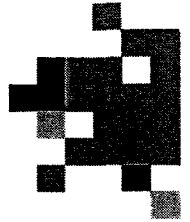
A minimum *instream flow* is used by the Department of Ecology to decide whether there is enough water in the stream so that they can issue new water rights that would take water out of the stream.

Instream flow is a water right for fish. Minimum instream flows were adopted in 19 basins from 1976-1986 and in 2001. Since these are recent dates,

fish have the most junior water right almost everywhere in the state and are the last in line to receive water.

Healthy habitat for fish and other wildlife, and the preservation of the natural beauty of our State's waters have value to individuals whose lives are enriched by the natural resources, and to sport and commercial fishers, shellfish growers, realtors, developers, and many other businesses in our state.

*This information was adapted from information on Water Rights and Instream Flow published by the Washington State Department of Ecology. <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/watershed/index.html>



WATER CONSERVANCY BOARD TO BE ESTABLISHED IN MASON COUNTY

A Water Conservancy Board is a local government entity that processes water rights transfers and change applications. The decisions of the Board are reviewed and affirmed, reversed or modified by the State Department of Ecology. Each Conservancy Board consists of three to five members who must all receive training from Ecology before participating in any decision. More information on Water Conservancy Boards is available at:

http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/conservancy_boards/cb-home.html

**A public hearing on Mason County's proposed Water Conservancy Board will be held:
July 16, 2002 at 9:45 a.m. Commissioner's Chambers, County Courthouse Building 1 in Shelton**

Citizens Want To Know...

"What is the problem WRIA 16 is trying to solve? Why is this a good way to solve the problem?"

The legislative intent of RCW 90.82, the Watershed Management Act of 1998, is to enable citizens to participate at the local level to address the water resources issues of their communities and river basins. The Department of Ecology provides up to \$500,000 to a WRIA to support this bottoms-up, locally-based planning process. It is a good way to solve "the problem" because the priorities for watershed problems are decided locally. The situation can differ even within a WRIA. For example, the situation and issues for the Skokomish Basin are different from those of the Duckabush and Dosewallips.

"How long does it take to get a new water right issued?"

The circumstances vary dramatically by location and by application type. Because the Department of Ecology (DOE) doesn't have the resources to work everywhere simultaneously, they concentrate on areas with the biggest backlog, areas where they can make the most progress. Also, DOE is mandated to give priority for health/emergency applications, aquifer storage applications, substantial environment benefit applications, applications coming to the Department via local Conservancy Boards or cost reimbursement agreements, etc.

Watershed Stewardship

Joe & Joy Baisch,
Elk Meadow Nursery
& Elk Meadow B&B,
Dosewallips River



BB: What have you done as stewards for the watershed?

J&JB: In our nursery we only use organic fertilizer—alfalfa pellets and weed control with corn gluten and vinegar so that we don't contaminate the ground water or river. We've planted over 1000 trees, deciduous and evergreen and have planted hundreds of shrubs, bushes and plants. This has created amazing habitat for wildlife, especially birds. We have hundreds and hundreds of birds—goldfinches, the State bird, grosbeaks, juncos, and a whole air force of hummingbirds. We share our field with elk and deer and constantly seed it and fertilize it with lime.

We've cabled woody debris to the bank of the Dose to create fish habitat, we've seen mostly Coho and steelhead. We dug a huge settling pond at the top of our property, right next to the road so that the sediment in the storm water that runs down from the road gets settled out. The water runs from the pond through a grassy ditch that we keep reseeding. The ditch is a grass filter and filters out more debris. By the time the water's been through the settling pond and grassy ditch, all the sediment's gone, it doesn't get dumped in the river.

BB: Why are you willing to spend your own time and money on preserving and improving our common resources.

J&JB: "Stewardship," that's the best word to describe it. Stewardship is our responsibility as humans on this planet. We believe in doing whatever we do with the Seventh Generation in mind. We believe each person has a fiduciary responsibility to the planet.

Jeff Heinis, Vance Creek,
tributary of Upper Skokomish River



BB: What have you done that has been good stewardship for the watershed?

JH: My place is 5 acres that used to be a dairy farm. I have a small stream that makes an "S-curve" through my property. When I first moved, I put spawning gravel in the creek for the salmon. I don't fish the creek, but I love watching the salmon spawn. Mainly there are Coho, also a few cutthroat and some steelhead.

I put smolt traps in the stream so I can keep track of what's in the stream. I check the traps daily and release whatever's in them. I've caught and released over 1000 smolt. Most were Coho salmon, there were some steelhead and some cutthroat. I catch lamprey eels, crayfish, among other things. This little stream seems to be very productive.

I have been putting in fences and planting trees with the help of Shannon Kirby and her group at the Mason County Conservation District. Shannon has done a lot for the watershed, she's a true steward. We put in several hundred trees. Mostly Doug fir and cedar, alder and cottonwood come in naturally. I paid for materials and the Conservation District paid for the labor. I got 2001 Best Conservation Farm award.

BB: Why are you willing to spend your own time and resources to preserve and improve streams and the water which is our common resource?

JH: It just seems to be the right thing to do, to be dedicated to protecting the resources we hold in common. It's a family value I was brought up with.

Tom Schreiber, Skokomish River



BB: What have you done that has been good stewardship for the watershed?

T.S. One thing that's helped the watershed is something I *haven't* done—I haven't logged the gravel bars. Old growth timber gets carried downstream in floods and ends up on the gravel bar. For years that timber was my firewood, but I stopped taking it 5 years ago. Now I won't touch the woody debris, there isn't enough large wood in the system—those logs are important for the river habitat—the fish, and overall ecology of the river. I'm more interested in the health of the entire system.

BB: Why are you willing to spend your own time and resources to improve the river habitat, when the river is a common resource?

T.S. I do restoration work on my property because I think it's the right thing to do. Maybe it's because I grew up back east, in wall-to-wall suburbia and realize how lucky we are to live here in this watershed with the Olympic National Forest in our backyard. I want to preserve these incredible resources.

If you have a stewardship story you'd like to share with your neighbors in the watershed, please contact:

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RIVERS FOR LIFE—
 WRIA 16 WATERSHED PLANNING
 411 N. Fifth , PO Box 279
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 STANDARD
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
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 PERMIT NO. 45

For more information, contact:
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FUTURE PLANNING UNIT MEETINGS
 Thursday, July 11, 2002
 Thursday, August 8, 2002
 Thursday, September 12, 2002
 3:00-5:00 p.m.
 PUD #1 Board Room
 Potlatch, WA

UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS
 Goals & Objectives of the Plan

WE'D LIKE TO MEET YOU & LISTEN TO YOUR IDEAS
 —PLEASE JOIN US