

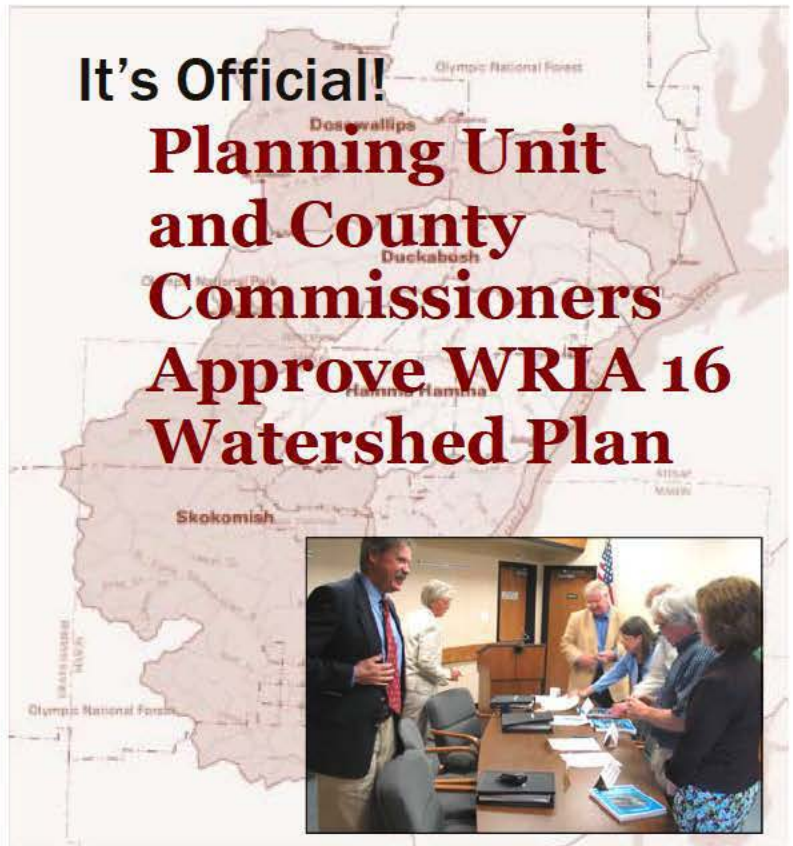


# Rivers for Life

A Quarterly Newsletter of the WRIA 16 Planning Unit



**Above:** Mason and Jefferson County Commissioners (left to right) Jayni Kamin, David Sullivan, Phil Johnson, Linda Ring Erickson, Tim Sheldon, and Pat Rogers after approving the Watershed Management Plan for the Skokomish-Dosewallips Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA 16) on July 11 in Shelton. **Right:** Signing the resolution to approve the plan.



**Right:** Planning Unit members and citizens gather at the Skokomish Tribal Center on May 11 after recommending the plan for adoption to the Mason and Jefferson County Commissioners.

Standing (left to right): Jack Turner, Pam Bennett-Cumming, Norm MacLeod, Fred Miller, Guy Miller, Ron Gold, Tom Longshore, Delbert Miller, Frank Benavente, Phil Wiatrak, Susan Gulick, Wayne King, Constance Ibsen, George Sickel, Keith Dublanica, Bill Graham, Bob Burkle, Frances Arnold, David Sullivan, Warren Dawes. Kneeling: Marty Ereth, Tami Pokorny.







Traditional arts displayed at the Skokomish Tribal Center.

## WRIA 16 Plan Passes *Unanimously*

By Jack Turner

This article is excerpted from the June 2006 Issue of *The Sounder*, a publication of the Skokomish Indian Nation.

Say what? WRIA (pronounced Why-Rah), which actually means Watershed Resource Inventory Area, #16 was passed by a unanimous vote last month. After 127 meetings that began more than 5 years ago, the Skokomish Tribe, Mason County, Jefferson County, Mason County PUD #1, and the State of Washington voted by consensus to adopt the plan. Jefferson County PUD #1, Port of Hoodspout, and citizen groups from Brinnon, Union, and Hood Canal also voted and the plan passed unanimously and was adopted. The plan provides recommendations in guiding “future water resource management” for the south and west shores of Hood Canal and respective up-

**And after the last vote was cast, excitement buzzed through the air...**

lands as well as Hood Canal itself.

The occasion was momentous as representatives came to the Tribal Center to cast their vote. Guy Miller cast the Tribe’s vote and was joined by Fred Miller and Thomas Longshore. Delbert Miller offered songs and stories and for the closing sang a song that told the story of a prophecy from the 1700’s. According to Delbert, the prophecy said that all the cultures would come together to take care of the earth.

The watershed planning process was actually opposed by many of the Tribes in Washington State, including the Skokomish Tribe. The Tribes preferred discussions at the government level when making decisions about the resources and still do. With the passing of this legislation and codification into the state revised code, the Skokomish

Tribe said it would participate under certain conditions. Those conditions were honored and the Tribe found themselves as one of the government entities at the table and with veto power. This meant the Tribe had the ability to influence what was and wasn’t in the plan. If the Tribe didn’t like something, it could veto it. This

made it all the more important to work together and come up with a plan everyone could live with and agree on.

Doing that though, was no easy matter. It was challenging and tense at times. The Tribe felt discouraged and frustrated because the wording in the plan wasn’t thought to be enforceable. Others felt the opposite and that the wording was too strong. Coming up with wording the all could live with proved to be challenging at best. And the key was coming up with something everyone could live with.

In the end, what turned out to be more important was to realize that it was possible to work together. Jefferson County and Jefferson and Mason County PUDs #1 approached the Tribe in want-



The Planning Unit prepares to vote on the WRIA 16 Plan.

ing to have stronger relations and a desire to work together on other issues. Mason County and the Tribe already are partnering on various projects and it was important to continue that atmosphere of cooperation for the other projects to be successful too.

So after all those meetings, telephone calls, and emails the plan came down to a vote. And after the last vote was cast, excitement buzzed through the air and some couldn’t even speak. And many will remember for a life-

*(Unanimously continued on page 3)*



time. Although the plan may be insignificant in the scheme of things, what was significant was that maybe for the first time, cultures came together to begin to take care of the earth.



## Next Step: Preparing for Implementation

Now that the WRIA 16 watershed plan is complete, the Planning Unit has turned its attention to developing a detailed implementation plan. This plan will result in a road-map for making watershed plan recommendations a reality. The implementation plan is tentatively scheduled for completion by the end of 2007.

### Instream Flows

Early on, the Planning Unit agreed not to include instream flows in the WRIA 16 watershed plan. Instream flows are basically water rights for fish and river habitat. Ecology is currently setting flows for "critical basins" and the Skokomish-Dosewallips is in the next tier; setting of instream flows (ISF) will begin in here in 2007.

The Skokomish Tribe has expressed concerns over technical elements of the ISF process and Ecology will work with the Tribe on a government to government basis on those issues. Once progress is made, Ecology will approach the Planning Unit for input. In the meantime, the Planning Unit can speak to any concerns it may have about the ISF process and the technical parameters for setting ISFs.

### New Planning Unit Member

The **Hood Canal Environmental Council** (HCEC) will be represented by Donna Simmons of Hoodspout. HCEC is the environmental representative to the Planning Unit. Ms. Simmons has been involved in water quality and related natural resource issues in the Hood Canal watershed since the mid '70s. She was a longtime administrative assistant for the Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) and served two terms on the Washington State Ecological Commission.

As for WRIA 16, she says, "I believe that with the unprecedented interest and resources now going toward solving the water quality problems in lower Hood Canal, the watershed plan produced by the WRIA 16 Planning Unit has a good chance of being fully implemented. I look forward to working with the Planning Unit and doing whatever I can to ensure that it does."

## Planning Unit Members Comment at the May 11 Vote:

**Constance Ibsen**, representing the Lower Hood Canal Watershed Coalition, described the sense of honesty and trust within the Planning Unit "that has from the beginning made us work better together and made this group more successful. I treasure this product and the whole process." **Bob Burkle** of WDFW said that he's been involved with four other WRIA plans. "The fifth time is the charm!" he said. Senior planner for Mason County, **Pam Bennett-Cumming** commented, "It has been an honor to work so positively with this dedicated group. There was always a sense that we could work through the process together to reach the right outcome."

**Wayne King** of Jefferson County PUD #1 remarked that he had attended the very first pilot watershed planning process for the Dungeness-Quilcene in 1994, "Who would have thought we'd be here now. This group can get things done!" He complimented biologists Jack Turner and Marty Erth in particular for their contributions to the process. **Ron Gold** of Mason County PUD #1 said that he looked forward to working with the Skokomish Tribe to protect the environment.

**George Sickel**, representing Citizen Interests of Jefferson County, remarked that he was glad that his area of Jefferson County was a part of WRIA 16. **Commissioner David Sullivan** said that Jefferson County is glad to be part of this effort. "Hopefully the lessons learned in WRIA 17 (Quilcene-Snow) will help here." He also stressed the importance of understanding the hydrology of the watershed prior to rule-making. **Bill Graham**, of the Jefferson County PUD #1, said that "things really started to gel when Susan Gulick came on board [as facilitator]. The friendships that have developed have helped keep this process together."

**Phil Wiatrak**, representing Ecology, said this is the 127<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Planning Unit. Since the beginning there have been a lot changes – new tribal chair, new county commissioners. "There has been a willingness to discuss issues from different perspectives and to listen to each other." He congratulated the initiating governments for putting together an exemplary Planning Unit of diverse interests. He particularly thanked the un-paid volunteers, many of whom had been involved since the beginning. "It makes my job much more exciting when I see so much passion and devotion to the place where you live. I'm looking forward to the work of implementing the plan."

**Guy Miller**, on behalf of the Tribal Director, said the Skokomish Tribe looks forward to working with the Planning Unit on implementation.

## You're invited to participate

The Planning Unit generally meets on the first and third Thursday of each month.  
Please call to confirm dates, times and locations.

**For more information**  
and to correspond with the  
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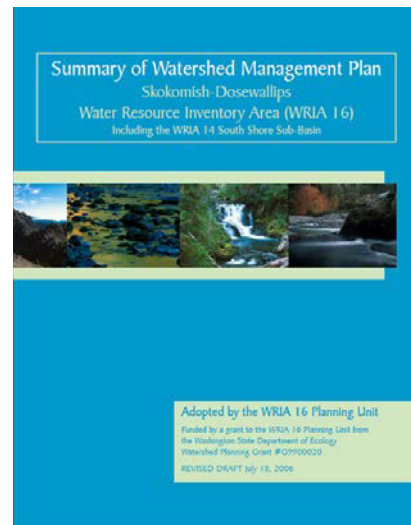
The newsletter is designed and written by Tami Pokorny, Jefferson County Natural Resources Division. Send comments or ideas for future issues to tpokorny@co.jefferson.wa.us or (360) 379-4498.



## **RIVERS FOR LIFE**

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## **Executive Summary of the WRIA 16 Plan Now Available!**



**Read the WRIA 16 Watershed Plan,  
the Executive Summary, and background  
information on-line!**

[www.ecy.wa.gov/apps/watersheds/  
planning/16.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/apps/watersheds/planning/16.html)

**Or, contact Susan Gulick for more info.  
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