

3.8 WATERSHED MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

3.8.1 WRIA 18 Watershed Councils

Issue: The Dungeness-Quilcene Plan recommended that Watershed Councils be established to carry forward its work and achieve ongoing continuity of regional habitat management. The East WRIA 18 Watershed Council, the Dungeness River Management Team (DRMT), has become a model for the State in cooperative watershed management and planning. The 2514 Watershed Planning has extended to West WRIA 18 the attention originally given to East 18 watershed resources under the DQ Plan. The West WRIA 18 Planning Unit has considered whether a Watershed Council similar to DRMT should be established in West WRIA 18.

Existing Conditions and Current Actions

DRMT has served as the East WRIA 18 Planning Unit for this Watershed Plan and will continue to implement this plan within the framework of its ongoing watershed management program (encompassing the area from Sequim Bay to Bagley Creek). The Elwha-Morse Management Team (EMMT) was created to serve as the 2514 Planning Unit for West WRIA 18 (covering the area from the Elwha River to Morse Creek), but has no comparable ongoing management responsibility once the 2514 watershed plan is complete.

Desired Outcome

- Ongoing watershed management for WRIA 18 overseen through Watershed Councils advised by technical committees.
- Ongoing funding to support the work of the Watershed Councils for WRIA 18.

Recommendations

- A. The Dungeness River Management Team (DRMT) and the Dungeness River Restoration Work Group (DRRWG) should continue to function as the Watershed Council and Technical Committee, respectively, for East WRIA 18.
- B. Establish a West WRIA 18 Watershed Council: In order to provide for ongoing watershed management for West WRIA 18, a Watershed Council and an advisory technical committee should be established, as funding permits. The Elwha-Morse Management Team (EMMT) Executive Committee should be convened to initiate the implementation of this recommendation within three months of the adoption of the Watershed Plan.
- C. WRIA 18 Watershed Council Makeup: The WRIA 18 Watershed Councils should comprise a cross section of participants from Federal, Tribal, State, County, and City governments, special purpose districts, water purveyors, the business community, the public, nonprofit and citizen groups involved in the restoration or management of WRIA 18 streams, and other watershed stakeholders.
- D. West WRIA 18 Technical Committee Makeup: The Technical Committee should function as an advisory panel to the West WRIA 18 Watershed Council. It should be an ad hoc group of regional biologists and watershed scientists with primary concern for the Elwha River, Morse Creek and the Port Angeles area urban

independent drainages. Others with expertise in related technical matters should be included as needed. An open, self-selecting recruitment may be used to obtain the widest range and availability of qualified technical panelists. The role of technical panelists would include the following, with additional roles to be determined by the Watershed Council, as needed:

1. Review and interpret technical data as needed for Watershed Council.
 2. Provide independent analysis of options for Watershed Council watershed recommendations.
 3. Check the accuracy and quality of information in documents under Watershed Council review.
 4. When requested, propose projects or assessments responsive to needs identified by Watershed Council.
 5. Provide description of needed restoration and enhancement, comprehensive habitat inventories, and the potential benefits to each creek, river, and its associated nearshore and estuary systems as well as to their broader communities.
 6. Provide technical input on provision of adequate water supply for domestic and industrial needs.
 7. Provide technical input on monitoring and addressing water quality issues.
 8. Explain regulations and science related to matters before Watershed Council.
 9. Provide technical ranking of options or projects under consideration by Watershed Council.
 10. Assist Watershed Council in understanding current limiting factors in West WRIA 18 watersheds, nearshore, and estuaries.
 11. Coordinate with the Shared Strategy and the Puget Sound Nearshore Environment Restoration Program (PSNERP).
 12. Coordinate with the Elwha River restoration project.
- E. Geographic Areas: The boundaries for the West WRIA 18 Watershed Council should extend from the western boundary of East WRIA 18 (the Morse Creek eastern watershed boundary) to the eastern boundary of WRIA 19 (the Elwha River western watershed boundary). The boundaries of the East WRIA 18 Watershed Council (DRMT) extend from the western boundary of Bagley Creek watershed in the west, to the eastern boundary of the Sequim Bay tributaries watershed in the east (therefore including a portion of WRIA 17).
- F. Funding: The participants should pursue funding to coordinate and maintain this effort. Funding should be pursued for any projects or habitat improvements recommended in the course of watershed management.
- G. Advisory Status: The Watershed Councils and Technical Committees should be advisory in nature and should not have regulatory powers apart from those held by individual government/agency members, by written agreement. As part of this advisory function, the WRIA 18 councils and committees should maintain

awareness of the direction and activity of their counterparts in other WRIAs on the North Olympic Peninsula. All fish enhancement work and habitat review of major projects should be coordinated with the North Olympic Peninsula Lead Entity Group.

- H. Annual Report: An annual report should be prepared summarizing the Watershed Councils' activities and recommendations.
- I. Plan Amendment Process: Amendments to the Watershed Plan recommendations, or other portions of this Plan, may be proposed to each Watershed Council, which will provide 30-day public notice of the proposed amendment(s). Approval of an amendment shall be achieved if all government members and tribes on the Watershed Council unanimously vote to support the proposed amendment and all non-governmental members on the Watershed Council present for the recorded vote, by a majority, vote to support the proposed amendment. Amendments to the Watershed Plan may be acted upon once a year.
- J. Outreach: Public outreach and education should be considered a vital component of the watershed management effort.
- K. Information Sharing: The County and Tribes should facilitate the sharing of information on watershed conditions and watershed management between the East and West WRIA 18 Watershed Councils, and across WRIA boundaries on the North Olympic Peninsula (WRIA 17, 18, 19, 20). Data and databases maintained by the County, Tribes and other entities with resource management responsibilities should be shared and coordinated to the extent practicable.

3.8.2 Local Watershed Groups

Issue: Local watershed groups have come forward in several subbasins and have shown the potential to accomplish a great deal to restore streams and habitat, assist salmon recovery, and improve water quality in these smaller streams. Successful implementation of this Watershed Plan can be substantially furthered by locally committed and focused groups that actively work at a grass-roots level within the framework provided by the larger-scale Watershed Councils.

Existing Conditions and Current Actions

A very active subbasin group has been formed for Siebert Creek in East WRIA 18, and has approached DRMT to collaborate. In West WRIA 18, Valley and Ennis creeks have also attracted very active groups of local stakeholders who are pursuing restoration and protection of their resources. These groups have obtained funding, promoted understanding of their watersheds, and are working on a variety of watershed management and conservation goals.

Desired Outcomes

- Strengthened watershed management through subbasin volunteer groups.

- Ownership and responsibility for local watershed management by residents of subbasins.
- Increased local activity to protect and restore WRIA 18 subbasins.
- An increase in funding, technical, and organizational support and skills at the local subbasin level.

Recommendations

A. Initiation: The Watershed Councils should encourage local watershed groups for the subbasins of WRIA 18, such as the existing local watershed groups formed for Siebert, Valley, and Ennis Creeks.

B. Partnerships: Facilitate partnerships with existing groups such as Streamkeepers, local government, tribes, local and regional economic interests, school groups and other stakeholders to encourage and nurture active participation in the local watershed groups.

C. Volunteers: Develop and nurture a strong local volunteer base for local watershed groups.

D. Recognize Local Watershed Groups:

1. Local and State agencies should recognize local watershed groups as legitimate stakeholders in watershed planning.
2. The Watershed Councils should periodically facilitate workshops and/or other activities with local watershed groups, with the objective of providing support to new groups. (For example, how to start a group; how to build community support; how to attract and organize volunteers; how to identify, characterize and assess the importance of subbasin watershed management issues, including habitat restoration and salmon recovery; and sources of funding and how to apply for funding.)