

## **2.0 WATERSHED CHARACTERIZATION**

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Watershed characterizations have been developed for each WRIA 18 subbasin. It is important to note that references to WRIA 18 in this document should be understood to refer to the actual entire planning area covered by this plan. Such references specifically include all of WRIA 18 as well as that westernmost portion of WRIA 17 that is, by mutual agreement of the two WRIsAs included in this plan. That portion is the entire subwatershed of Sequim Bay. Similarly, references to East WRIA 18 are inclusive of this Sequim Bay subwatershed from WRIA 17. References to West WRIA 18 refer to just the western “half” of WRIA 18, from Morse Creek west to the Elwha River. A broad overview of the WRIA 18 natural environment (e.g., climate, geology and soils, hydrology and geohydrology, biology) is provided in Section 2.1 and a similar overview of the human environment (e.g., land use and land cover, demographics, history) is given in Section 2.2. Population and buildout analysis has been conducted in Section 2.2 for each individual subbasin; however the subbasins are grouped for discussion in that overview section in order to provide a more meaningful and comprehensive view of context and trends.

Section 2.3 presents the mandatory water quantity analysis for WRIA 18, using the same approach. Again, analysis is primarily conducted at the subbasin level, but the subbasins are discussed together in this overview section because consideration of the WRIA as a whole provides a more meaningful and accurate view of the issues relating to water supply and water use.

Sections 2.4 through 2.11 discuss the subbasins of WRIA 18 from west to east, beginning with the Elwha River and its tributaries (Section 2.4) and including a portion of the WRIA 17 planning area in Sequim Bay and its drainages (Section 2.10) and the nearshore marine environment of WRIA 18 (Section 2.11). These sections focus on habitat and water quality issues that are subbasin-specific. In conducting watershed planning, the planning units made choices as to where to focus their attention. Greater attention has been given to the Dungeness River, Bell Creek, Siebert Creek, Morse Creek, Ennis Creek, Valley Creek, and the Elwha River and its lower tributaries. Watershed characterization for the other small creeks of WRIA 18 largely integrates the Limiting Factors Analysis (Haring 1999), supplemented by other regional plans, studies, and data that were available.

There is continuing study of water resource issues in WRIA 18. Results of currently active studies may become available shortly after completion of this Plan. Appendix 2-A provides the updates to these ongoing studies.

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