

# Project Overview

Thurston Regional Planning Council

June 2016

## THURSTON CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN

### The Challenge & Opportunity

Storms. Wildfires. Droughts. Floods ... We face such natural hazards today, and climate change is projected to make them worse tomorrow. Human activities — such as burning fossil fuels to produce electricity — are changing the earth’s climate by increasing atmospheric concentrations carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases.

This process is known as the “greenhouse effect.” It increases air and water temperatures, shifts precipitation patterns, raises sea levels, and poses many risks for our human and natural systems — everything from our urban waterfronts and rural forestlands, to our salmon runs and shellfish beds.

Climate change is impacting our quality of life today and will continue to do so for generations to come. We have an opportunity and obligation to prepare today so that we’re more resilient tomorrow.

### Project Funding & Purpose

In late 2015, the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) received a National Estuary Program (NEP) grant to develop a watershed-based climate adaptation plan with steps that the Thurston County region could take to prepare for and cope with projected climate change impacts in the decades ahead. The state Department of Commerce is responsible for administering the NEP funding over the project period, which concludes at the end of 2017. TRPC is uniquely qualified for this important work, as the metropolitan planning organization’s mission is to assemble stakeholders, analyze data, build consent for regional plans, and support local action.

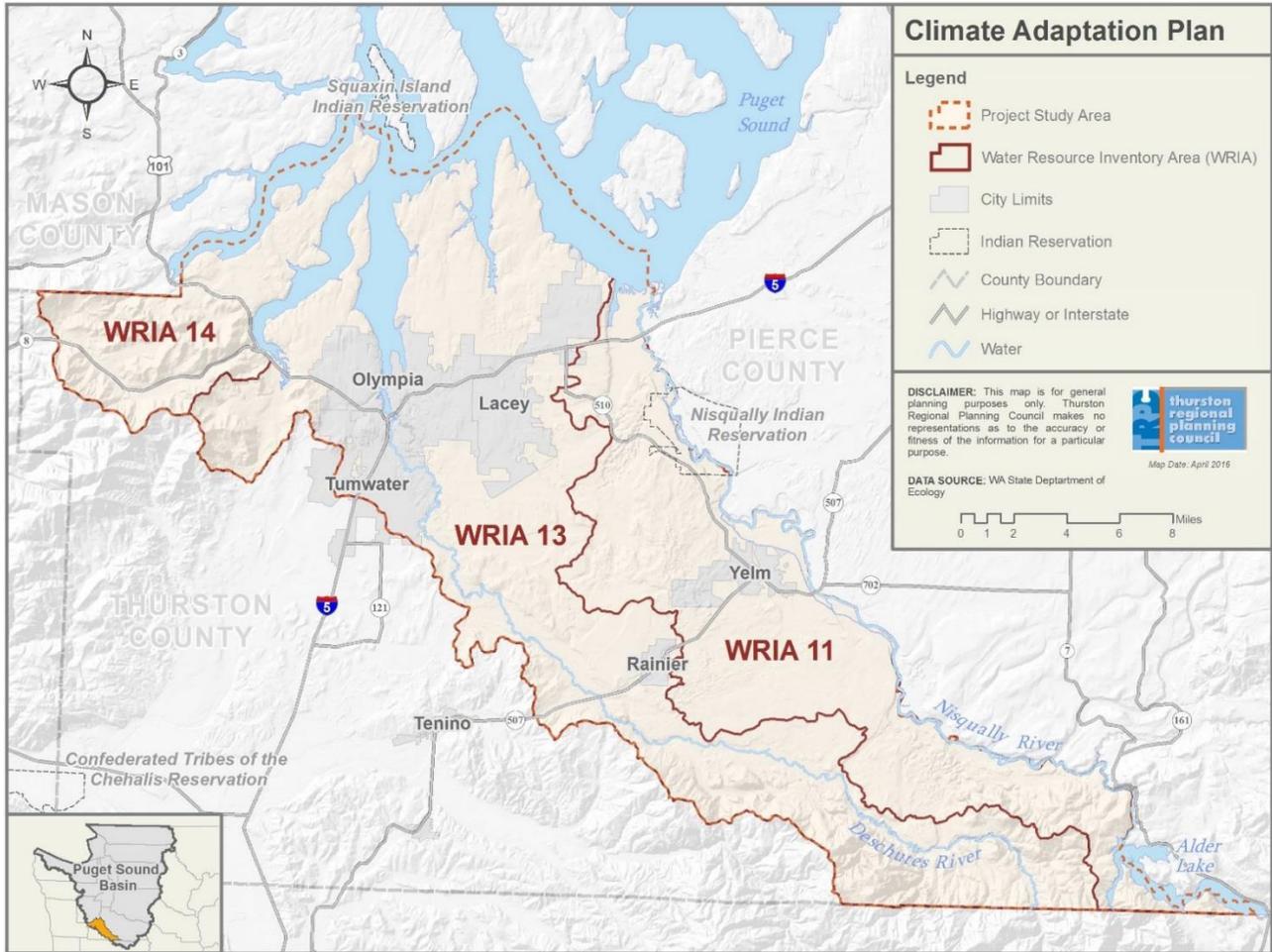
### Project Area

The planning area includes parts of three watersheds that overlay northern and eastern Thurston County and drain into Puget Sound [See map]; these watersheds — defined by the state Department of Ecology as Watershed Resource Inventory Areas (WRIAs) — include Nisqually (WRIA 11), Deschutes (WRIA 13), and Kennedy/Goldsborough (WRIA 14).

Southwestern Thurston County drains into Grays Harbor via the Chehalis River, so this area is not included in the NEP grant and Puget Sound spatial analysis of climate change impacts. That said, many of the recommendations developed for the project area will likely be applicable to all of Thurston County and neighboring communities.



*A bald cypress tree — brown and stressed following a bone-dry summer — rises from muddy water that spills over the southern shore of Capitol Lake following a record-breaking rainstorm in December 2015.*  
**Source:** TRPC



### Project Process

The project entails: researching and summarizing climate change projections for the region; assessing climate change vulnerabilities, risks and impacts; developing adaptation strategies and actions; conducting benefit-cost analyses of select strategies; and, drafting a climate adaptation plan for TRPC policymaker adoption. Like TRPC’s [Sustainable Thurston](#) plan, the [Thurston Climate Adaptation Plan](#) will include a menu of strategies and actions for human and natural systems, as well as identify leads and partners.

	2016				2017			
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Deliverables	Summary of Climate Projections	Vulnerability of Assets	Risk Assessment Table	Draft Table of Strategies & Actions	Final Actions Table, Benefit-Cost Analysis	Draft Climate Adaptation Plan	Final Plan	
Reviewer	Scientific Advisory Committee			Stakeholder Advisory Committee				TRPC Policymakers & General Public

## Project Roles

The project team — composed of local government staff— will assess climate change vulnerabilities, risks and impacts as well as develop adaptation strategies and actions for inclusion in a draft plan for TRPC policymaker consideration in late 2017. The project team will work with two advisory committees throughout the planning process:

- A **Scientific Advisory Committee** — composed of scientists from local tribes and universities — will review project materials, as needed, to ensure technical accuracy.
- A **Stakeholder Advisory Committee** — whose members were selected based on their technical and policy expertise and influence — will help the project team refine and select adaptation strategies and actions, as well as recommend a draft plan for TRPC policymaker adoption. This committee will meet monthly at TRPC, from mid-2016 through mid-2017.

## Committee Goals & Responsibilities

Stakeholder Advisory Committee members are asked to perform the following:

- Attend monthly meetings or select an alternative when unable to attend
  - Meetings will begin and end at the scheduled times.
  - Meetings will include an opportunity for members of the general public to attend and speak.
  - Meetings will be documented in summary notes.
- Read and discuss materials prepared by the project team
- Bring broader community perspective to discussions
- Attend broader public-engagement activities (e.g., public forum, local government presentations)
- Honor fellow project participants by communicating honestly and respectfully; everyone will have an opportunity to speak.
- Share objective observations of input from members of the general public

## Project Communication

- Project information will be maintained by TRPC on the project’s website:
  - [www.trpc.org/580/Thurston-Climate-Adaptation-Plan](http://www.trpc.org/580/Thurston-Climate-Adaptation-Plan)
- Project inquiries should be directed to TRPC:
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