Water Availability & Streamflow Restoration Update for Thurston County Watersheds

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Kaitlynn Nelson, Thurston County
Amy Hatch-Winecka, TRPC
Overview

• Background
• Update on the status and progress of watershed planning groups set up by RCW 90.94 (i.e., “Hirst Fix Bill” or Streamflow Restoration Act)
• Project examples
• Grant opportunity
remove decision point
Amy Hatch-Winecka, 3/2/2020
• October 16, 2016: State Supreme Court Decision on *Whatcom County vs Hirst, Futurewise, et al* – known as the Hirst Decision
  - Counties required to make an independent determination of water availability under GMA, including for permit-exempt wells
• 2018: State Legislature passed ESSB 6091 (RCW 90.94)
  - Counties can rely on Ecology’s rules for water availability PROVIDED they charge a $500 fee and record new restrictions on water use
  - UNTIL watershed groups adopt new long-term plans
Remove final bullet
Amy Hatch-Winecka, 3/2/2020
Thurston County WRIA Boundaries

- **Upper Chehalis**
  - 23

- **Lower Chehalis**
  - 22

- **Kennedy-Goldsborough**
  - 14

- **Deschutes**
  - 13

- **Nisqually**
  - 11

**WRIA 13 & WRIA 14**
- Deadline: June 30, 2021
- Plan Completion Goal: December, 2020

**Chehalis – 22 & 23**
- Deadline: February 1, 2021
- Plan Completion Goal: September, 2020

**Nisqually – WRIA 11**
- Plan Addendum Completed: January, 2019
Watershed Groups

Determine:
• Subbasins
• Growth Projections
• Consumptive water use
• Projects
• Adaptive Management

Members:
• Cities, Counties, and Tribes
• Environmental Advocacy Orgs
• Reps from Water Purveyors, Farming, Business, Agriculture, and Advisory Committees
• WDWF and Ecology
• Others!

Develop plans that describe:
- Future water use
- Offset actions
- Net Ecological Benefit
Streamflow Restoration Act (90.94 RCW)
Implementation Targets

1. Stewardship of Taxpayer Funds.
2. 15 Plans by Statutory Deadlines.
3. By 2022: Several Rounds of Grant Funds Obligated to Projects that are Delivering Demonstrable* Stream Flows as Planned.
4. Update Instream Flow Rules as Necessary to Ensure Compliance with Relevant Law.
NEW PERMIT EXEMPT WELLS

1. QUANTIFY EXPECTED CONSUMPTIVE WATER USE OVER 20 YEARS

2. IDENTIFY WHERE IT IS POSSIBLE TO OFFSET

   - FIRST PRIORITY
     - FOR
     - IN
     - AND
   - SECOND PRIORITY
     - FOR
     - AND/OR
     - FOR
     - AND

3. ECOLOGY MUST EVALUATE: DOES THIS PLAN HAVE A NET ECOLOGICAL BENEFIT?

PROJECTS THAT ENHANCE
- AND/OR
Final Guidance for Determining Net Ecological Benefit
GUID-2094 Water Resources Program Guidance

NEB Guidance Published July 31, 2019

Program Policy Published July 31, 2019
Managed Aquifer Recharge Project Examples
90.94 Project Grants Next State-wide Round Due March 31st, 2020

Funding Priorities
1) 90.94 Planning WRIA
2) 90.94 Ecology Adopted Plan
3) Improves Streamflows
   • Benefits threatened or endangered salmonids.
   • Benefit other native fish or aquatic species of concern

Nisqually is the only WRIA that meets priorities 1 & 2 this round!
Thank you!