

Project title: Watershed Restoration & Enhancement Plan – WIRA 7 – Snohomish Watershed

Council Bill #

Agenda dates requested:

April 7, 2021

Briefing

Proposed action

Consent

Action

Ordinance

Public hearing

Yes No

Budget amendment:

Yes No

PowerPoint presentation:

Yes No

Attachments:

Resolution, Watershed Restoration & Enhancement Plan Executive Summary

Department(s) involved:

Public Works, Legal

Contact person:

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Initialed by:

RLS

Department head

Administration

Council President

Project: Watershed Restoration & Enhancement Plan – WIRA 7 – Snohomish Watershed (WREP)

Partner/Supplier:

Location: Throughout Snohomish County outside Everett City limits

Preceding action: None

Fund: N/A

Fiscal summary statement: N/A

Project summary statement:

In January 2018, the Washington State Legislature passed the Streamflow Restoration law (RCW 90.94). The law clarifies how local governments issue building permits for homes intending to use a permit-exempt well for their domestic water supply and requires local watershed planning in 15 water resource inventory areas (WRIAs), including the Snohomish River area (WRIA 7). The law directs the Department of Ecology to lead Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committees to develop Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Plans (watershed plans). Watershed plans must estimate the potential consumptive impacts of new permit-exempt domestic groundwater withdrawals on instream flows over 20 years (2018-2038), identify projects and actions to offset those impacts, and provide a net ecological benefit to the WRIA.

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) established the Snohomish (WRIA 7) Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committee in October 2018. Jim Miller (retired City Engineer) and Souheil Nasr represented the City on this Committee. The WRIA 7 Committee met for over two years to develop the watershed plan. Attached is the executive summary of the plan. Public Works has the entire plan and can make it available to Council upon request. **The watershed plan has no direct impact on the City of Everett as we do not allow exempt wells within the City limits.**

The final step to approve this document is for the Council to direct the City’s Committee representative to vote to approve this final watershed plan. If any Committee-represented entity does not approve this plan, it will be rejected and returned to Ecology for further action.

Recommendation (exact action requested of Council):

Adopt the Resolution Directing City of Everett Committee Representative to Vote to Approve the “Watershed Restoration Enhancement Plan – WRIA 7 – Snohomish Watershed”



RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION Directing City of Everett Committee Representative to Vote to Approve the
“Watershed Restoration Enhancement Plan – WRIA 7 – Snohomish Watershed”**

WHEREAS,

- A. The Washington State Legislature passed the Streamflow Restoration law (RCW 90.94) in January 2018.
- B. The Streamflow Restoration law directs the Department of Ecology to lead Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committees to develop Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Plans.
- C. City staff represented the City in the WRIA 7 Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committee.
- D. As part of the committee, City staff participated in the development of the “Watershed Restoration Enhancement Plan – WRIA 7 – Snohomish Watershed.”
- E. The City supports the “Watershed Restoration Enhancement Plan – WRIA 7 – Snohomish Watershed.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The City of Everett City Council directs the City’s WRIA 7 Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committee representative to approve the “Watershed Restoration Enhancement Plan – WRIA 7 – Snohomish Watershed” final draft plan dated January 2021.

Councilmember introducing resolution

Passed and approved this _____ day of _____, 2020.

Council President

Date: _____



Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Plan - WRIA 7 – Snohomish Watershed



**Final Draft Plan
January 2021**

Executive Summary

In January 2018, the Washington State Legislature passed the Streamflow Restoration law (RCW 90.94). The law clarifies how local governments issue building permits for homes intending to use a permit-exempt (PE) well for their domestic water supply and requires local watershed planning in 15 water resource inventory areas (WRIAs), including the Snohomish (WRIA 7).

The law directs the Department of Ecology to lead Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committees to develop Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Plans (watershed plans). Watershed plans must estimate the potential consumptive impacts of new permit-exempt domestic groundwater withdrawals on instream flows over 20 years (2018-2038), identify projects and actions to offset those impacts, and provide a net ecological benefit (NEB) to the WRIA. This Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Plan meets the requirements of the law.

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) established the Snohomish (WRIA 7) Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committee (Committee) in October 2018 and invited tribal governments, county governments, city governments, Department of Fish and Wildlife, the largest non-municipal water purveyor, and interest groups. The WRIA 7 Committee met for over two years to develop a watershed plan.

Ecology also issued Final Guidance on Determining Net Ecological Benefit (Final NEB Guidance) (Ecology 2019) to ensure consistency, conformity with state law, and transparency in implementing RCW 90.94. The Final NEB Guidance describes the minimum planning requirements: include clear and Systematic Logic, delineate Subbasins, estimate new consumptive water use, evaluate impacts of new consumptive water use, and describe and evaluate projects and actions for their offset potential.

The WRIA 7 Committee divided the watershed into 16 subbasins, as shown in Figure ES.1. The Committee projects that a total of 3,389 new PE wells will be installed within WRIA 7 during the 20-year planning horizon. The Committee used this 20-year PE well projection to estimate 797.4 acre-feet per year (AFY) (1.1 cubic feet per second) of new consumptive water use in WRIA 7 that this watershed plan must address and offset.

The watershed plan includes six water rights acquisitions projects, two lake level management projects, one streamflow augmentation project, one managed aquifer recharge project, and one surface water storage project to offset consumptive use. If implemented, these 11 water offset projects will provide an estimated offset of 1,373.4 AFY.

A total of 27 habitat projects are included in the plan. Ecological benefits associated with these projects vary and include floodplain restoration, wetland reconnection, availability of off-channel habitat for juvenile salmonids, reduction of peak flow during storm events, increase in groundwater levels and baseflow, and increase in channel complexity. The ecological and streamflow benefits from the project portfolio in this plan contribute to achieving NEB.

The WRIA 7 Committee also included what they have termed “policy and regulatory recommendations” in the plan to show support for programs, policies, and regulatory actions that would contribute to the goal of streamflow restoration.

The Committee recommended adaptive management measures in the plan for the purpose of addressing uncertainty in plan implementation. Adaptive management measures include funding for adaptive management, additional funding for project implementation, adding projects to the plan, implementing a process and program for tracking PE wells and project implementation, continuing monitoring of streamflow and groundwater levels, continuing studies that improve understanding of WRIA 7 hydrology, and monitoring projects for effectiveness. These measures, in addition to the project portfolio described above, provide reasonable assurance that the plan will adequately offset new consumptive use from PE wells anticipated during the planning horizon.

Based on the information and analyses summarized in this plan, the WRIA 7 Committee finds that this plan, if implemented, can achieve NEB, as required by RCW 90.94.030 and defined by the Final NEB Guidance (Ecology 2019).

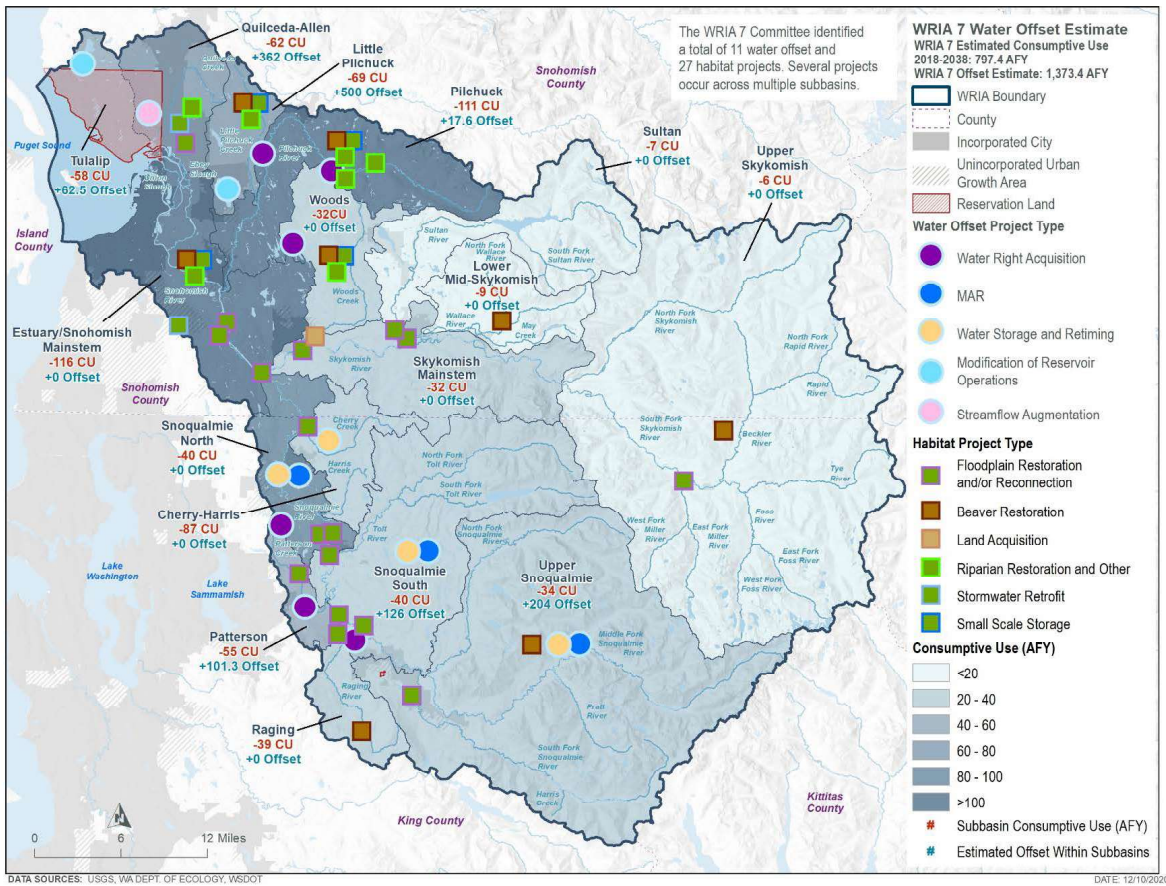


Figure E S1: WRIA 7 Estimated Consumptive Use and Projects by Subbasin