Washington's Water Future Kitsap Regional Roundtable Synthesis of Key Discussion Themes

Thursday, July 15, 1:00-5:00 pm | Poulsbo Sons of Norway Lodge (18991 Front St NE, Poulsbo, WA 98370)

About the roundtable

This meeting convened approx. 15 individuals from across a range of diverse interests, including local governments, utilities, Tribes, environmental interests, and others. Meeting objectives were to:

- Discuss what a resilient water future looks like for the region, and what local priorities drive that vision
- Identify barriers that are in the way of achieving that vision and addressing local needs.
- Explore solutions that will move the region towards a resilient water future, and how Washington can help

Participants' experiences of water trends in the region

- Decreased winter snow and low summer streamflows with effects on small streams, wetlands, soil moisture
- Concerns about salmon health, timing of runs, and impacts on hatchery and salmon recovery efforts
- Decrease in culturally important plants; drought-stressed forests; increased frequency of wildfire and smoke
- Increased contaminants such as 6PPD; concerns about wasting potable water at unsustainable rates
- Conflict and tougher decision-making

Regional vision of a resilient water future

- Healthy aquatic habitats, aquifers, and forested uplands streams, thriving salmon, retimed instream flows
- Thriving communities, growth based on robust water availability data, mitigation for development impacts, and maintained open space and agriculture
- Recognition of Tribal treaty rights and cultural and natural resources
- Regional infrastructure (e.g., for drinking water, water reuse, and aquifer recharge)
- Improved water quality (incl. temperature), eliminate wastewater/stormwater outfalls, increase aquifer recharge
- Equitable access to water, affordable water rates, and accountability

	Barriers to a resilient water future	Solutions for a resilient water future
Physical/ technological	• Lack of hydrologic data. • Lack of support for water system O&M. • Development impacts on water availability. • Difficulty installing small advanced wastewater technology (membrane bioreactors). • Navy's disposal of saltwater in the wastewater system.	• Invest in aquifer recharge, e.g., install permeable lining in stormwater ponds to enable aquifer recharge, ID recharge areas and restore and protect wetlands. • Establish local water treatment systems to hydrate local natural systems. • Install solar panels over rivers, streams, ditches to reduce temps (statewide). • Consider solutions such as cloud seeding.
Legal/ regulatory	• Antiquated, complicated water law. • Inadequate, unenforced existing instream flow rules. • Regulatory barriers to recycled water usage. • Lack of quantified Tribal Treaty Rights and time immemorial rights.	• Establish/refine regulatory expectations for land use to preserve hydrologic function. • Update critical areas ordinances to protect small streams, wetlands, old growth forests. • Regulate water use to environmental streamflow needs (statewide).
Institutional/ Governance	• Planning and regulatory systems based on the assumption that growth is good. • Lack of capacity and clarity on Streamflow Act plans following Hirst decision.	• Prevent future development in floodplains, relocate existing infrastructure. • Lean on natural solutions e.g., beavers. • Revisit the DNR mine reclamation plans to support aquifer recharge.

	• Siloing of agencies, jurisdictions, districts, land use planners, and disconnect between local experience and resource availability. • Challenging state mandates (ex. housing).	• Mobilize and train the next generation of water resources professionals. • Establish countywide water reclamation and recharge infrastructure and requirements; incentivize using recycled water
Financial	• Limited funding for streamflow efforts, incl. upland forest protection/restoration • Lack of incentives for collaborative infrastructure improvements with big financial impact on residents. • Unknown financial benefits of recycled water.	• Redesign Streamflow Act Restoration Funding Program to an allocation-based model (rather than competitive); provide incentives to streamflow projects (statewide) • Put a progressive user fee on all water use (statewide), consider tiered rate structure • Ensure growth & development pays for itself
Social/ political	• Lack of ability to use existing authority. • Residents' sense of entitlement to resources counter to conservation mindset. • Challenge to get buy-in for efforts to reclaim, to recharge, and reuse water.	• Establish regional and collaborative messaging for water conservation

Moving towards implementation

This table reflects outcomes from small-group discussions that explored what is needed, what Washington can offer, and how to foster collaboration for four water solutions identified for the Kitsap region. Many responses apply both to regional and state scales.

Promote water reuse, recycling, and reclamation (regulatory and coordination) 1) Establish dedicated funding streams. 2) Support regional collaboration to build infrastructure.
Incentivize aquifer recharge for new development (includes MAR, critical areas, GMA, and local ordinance) 1) Establish recharge targets for each basin and invest in facilities. 2) Establish impact fees. 3) Streamline permitting for technologies. 4) Identify groundwater supply areas as ongoing supply sources, not just for pollution prevention. 5) Establish regional aquifer recharge facilities with interlocal agreements.
Modernize water code to meet today's challenges (local and statewide) 1) Create flexible mitigation standards (both an opportunity and a challenge), consider lessons from Colorado. 2) Ensure protection of streamflows. 3) Create a new and dedicated fund source to fund integrated water resource plans. 4) Amend RCW 90.54 to make instream flows senior with funding. 5) Amend the Foster legal standard. 6) Enable Ecology to account for and protect new water created through ecosystem restoration and protection.
Incentivize utility scale coordination and long-term planning (governance and data) 1) Develop guidance and rules for consistency and buy-in. 2) Develop incentives, funding, grants, and low interest bonds. 3) Simplify the process for applications to assuage capacity issues. 4) Establish clear goals for water infrastructure planning. 5) Create a forum or workgroup to address integrated water issues, including but not limited to supply issues. 6) Reinforce PUD and local government collaborations.