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THE CENTRAL PUGET SOUND WATER SUPPLIERS' FORUM

The Central Puget Sound Regional Water Suppliers' Forum (Forum) is a voluntary organization comprised of representatives from public water systems and local governments from King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. The Forum was created in July 1998. The wide range of publicly and privately owned, large and small water utilities represented by the Forum provide public water to most of the three-county area population. Members of the Forum, and the public water supply utilities they represent, jointly recognize the need for collaborative efforts to address the region's water needs for both the growing population and aquatic habitat. Within the Forum's membership is the recognition that there are a variety of water utilities in the region: cities, special purpose districts, water associations, private utilities, etc. These types of utilities are diverse in nature and they differ in specific interests and levels of autonomy.

Members of the Forum initially began meeting to improve communications, develop a consistent methodology for individual utility planning efforts, and where possible, to coordinate their individual planning efforts. These early objectives evolved to include efforts to address current and future regional public water needs and the water quantity needs of fish as they relate to public water supply. However, the Forum is not a new regional governing body for public water supply. Rather, the membership believes that a voluntary collaborative effort will result in the most viable solutions to the region's water needs.

Who Participates in the Forum?

Table 2-1 provides a list of participating Forum members.

The Forum's members represent a very diverse group of public water utilities ranging from large publicly owned systems, including Seattle, Tacoma, and Everett, to Water and Sewer Districts and Regional Water Associations with their large and small, publicly and privately owned members, and counties. Each of these entities has its own reasons for participating in the Forum, but all share the common goal of increasing communication and coordination for water supply planning in the three-county area.

Because of this diversity it is essential to recognize the variation in responsibilities of Forum members. Although utilities are responsible for planning water supplies to meet the needs of forecast growth, some utilities (such as water districts) are removed from final land-use planning and regulatory decision-making processes.

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The Forum also has, and continues to seek, the active involvement of the area tribes, state agencies, conservation and environmental organizations, and other interested stakeholders.

Table 2-1: Members of The Central Puget Sound Water Suppliers' Forum

■ City of Tacoma Ken Merry, Forum Chair and Superintendent of Tacoma Water Alternate: John Kirner, Deputy Superintendent, Tacoma Water	■ Snohomish County Peter Hahn, Public Works Director Alternate: Tom Dickson, Council Administrator
■ City of Everett Clair Olivers, Everett Public Works Director Alternate: Jim Miller, Engineering Superintendent, Everett Public Works	■ Cascade Water Alliance Mike Gagliardo, Executive Director Alternates: Lloyd Warren, Director, Bellevue Utilities Dept., Gwenn Maxfield, Woodinville Water District Commissioner
■ City of Seattle Diana Gale, Managing Director, Seattle Public Utilities Alternate: Guillemette Regan, Regional Water Policy Manager, Seattle Public Utilities	■ Pierce County Regional Water Association Jeff Johnson, Manager, Spanaway Water
■ King County Rick Kirkby, Regional Water Resources Manager, Dept. of Natural Resources Alternate: Dave Monthie, Regional Water Policy Analyst, Dept. of Natural Resources	■ North Snohomish County Water Utility Coordinating Committee Currently vacant
■ Pierce County Tim Ramsaur, Water Programs Manager, Public Works Dept. Alternate: Susan Clark, Associate Planner, Public Works Dept.	■ Everett Water Utility Committee Arden Blackledge, Alderwood Water District
	■ East King County Regional Water Association Bob Pancoast, Executive Director
	■ South King County Regional Water Association Don Wright, Administrator
	■ Snohomish River Regional Water Authority Ken Goodwin, Woodinville Water District Commissioner
	■ Water Suppliers Association Ron Ricker, Commissioner, Shoreline Water District

What is the Purpose of the Forum?

The Forum's purpose is to address the region's water supply issues and problems, facilitate the resolution of these regional issues, and coordinate communication and information on these issues in King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties. The Forum's long-term goal is to help meet the water resource needs of the growing Central Puget Sound area: taking us from the challenges and conflicts we face today in water resources management and working collaboratively with state agencies, tribes, environmental organizations, businesses, and other interested stakeholders to develop a sustainable water resources management program for the region over the next 10 years. As a first step toward meeting that goal, the Forum has accepted responsibility for developing this Regional Water Supply Outlook.

Key objectives of the Forum include:

- To coordinate public water supply planning among water supply agencies;
- To identify municipal water supply needs defined by locally- and state-mandated Comprehensive Land Use Plans consistent with the Growth Management Act;
- To use water efficiently and seek new and better ways to conserve water;
- To work collaboratively with local, state, and tribal governments and other stakeholders to ensure that water-based recovery portions of Endangered Species Act responses can be met in a timely and efficient manner.
- To actively support a healthy fisheries program to be identified collaboratively by state, tribal, and local governments as well as other groups;
- To aggressively pursue environmental and other public benefits when developing public water supplies;
- To actively pursue opportunities to implement these objectives on a regional basis; and
- To communicate with all groups that have an interest in water supply issues (including a quarterly newsletter, *Water Link*)

Why Did the Forum Prepare the Outlook?

Prior to the Outlook, assessments of municipal water supply and demand had been performed by local utilities and wholesale purveyors, but never at a three-county regional level. The region is now at a point where most utilities are working with neighboring utilities to develop coordinated water supply solutions, rather than implement solutions on an individual utility basis. The Forum recognized the need for increased coordination in public water supply planning, and accepted the responsibility for developing the Outlook, which presents information on regional public water supplies, regional municipal water needs, preliminary potential streamflow issues, and future supply options for the entire three-county area that water suppliers and others can use in future decision making. The Outlook was developed with participation from non-utility stakeholders to ensure regional water resource planning can better integrate the water resource needs of both fish and people.

Will this Effort Continue?

With the completion of the Outlook, the Forum has prepared the first regional assessment of existing and forecasted municipal water demands, identified new supply opportunities, and described some potential instream flow issues, as reported by watershed planning groups, that may affect existing and future municipal supply options. This information begins to provide direction and a foundation for future water resource decision making.

Planning for the future is not a static, one-time activity, and the Forum intends to periodically update the Outlook with information from utilities, planning agencies and other stakeholders. A key piece of information that will help ensure the accuracy of population and demand forecasts is the 2000 census results, which will be incorporated into future Outlook updates.

The Outlook process is adaptive and will continue. Section 13 discusses future Outlook-related work.

In addition to preparing the Outlook, the Forum will continue to assist water suppliers, local governments, and others in developing and implementing a sustainable water resource management program that embraces the objectives of the Growth Management Act and instream resource and habitat management initiatives within the Central Puget Sound region.

What is the Relationship of the Forum to the Tri-County ESA and Watershed Planning Groups?

Several related regional planning activities are occurring concurrently with the Forum's work in the public water supply arena. Two significant and related efforts are:

- Preparation of a coordinated plan for Puget Sound salmon recovery, being developed by the Tri-County ESA Executive Committee in their response effort.
- Preparation of watershed plans for each Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA), or watershed, across the state, including seven WRIs in King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties.

Many of the organizations that are represented on the Forum are also represented in the Tri-County ESA and the watershed planning efforts. Forum members are communicating with both of these groups to ensure that the Forum's work complements and does not duplicate other regional efforts. As part of the data gathering effort for the Outlook, the Forum has begun building relationships with watershed planning groups who provided the information included in Section 5 of this report. In addition, the Forum's newsletter, *Water Link*, is sent to the Tri-County ESA Executive Committee members and many of the individuals involved in watershed planning in the Central Puget Sound area. The Forum also created an ESA Liaison Committee, in part to facilitate communications between the Forum and the Tri-County ESA group. The Forum's ongoing coordination with ESA and watershed planning efforts will support the objectives identified above, and provides the first step in a holistic assessment of the region's water supply needs.

