

IT'S TIME TO COLLABORATE

We need solutions **NOW** for our fish,
farms & community.

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three horizontal wavy lines in shades of blue (light blue, medium blue, and dark blue) and a large, stylized blue water drop on the right side.

<https://waterforwhatcom.org/>

WHO ARE WE?



Perry Eskridge
*Steering Committee
Government Affairs Director
WCAR & BIAWC
Resident of Ferndale



Fred Likkel
*Steering Committee
Whatcom Family Farmers
Resident of Lynden



Hank Kastner
*Steering Committee
Whatcom Public Citizen
Resident of Bellingham



Carl Weimer
*Steering Committee
Former Whatcom County Council
Laurel Resident



Meg Harris
*Facilitator
Triangle Associates



Rich Appel
Appel Farms CEO
Laurel Resident



Dorie Belisle
League of Women Voters of
Bellingham/Whatcom County
Retired Farmer, Bellewood Acres
Bellingham Resident



Greg Ebe
Ebe Farms & NuGen Seed
Owner/Manager
Custer Resident



Eric Hirst
Environmental
Retired Policy Analyst
Bellingham Resident



Dillon Honcoop
Whatcom Family Farmers
Lynden Resident



Jennifer Irwin
Swell Media Solutions
Bellingham Resident



Lauren Johnson
Industrial Credit Union
Custer Resident



Deanna Kangas
Whatcom Family Farmers
Lynden Resident



Scott Korthuis
City of Lynden Mayor
Lynden Resident



Brad Rader
Rader Farms GM
Lynden Resident



Allison Trimble
Business Owner
WCAR & WCFB
Ferndale Resident



Alexandra Williams
Deming Diking District Commissioner
Whatcom County Farm Bureau
President
Deming Resident



WHAT WE BELIEVE

Water is essential for all life, and we find our county's fresh water supply is at risk. We recognize our community is challenged by seasonally variable water supplies with extremes from flooding to drought. This raises concerns in particular for Farms (central to rural communities), Fish (central to Lummi Nation, Nooksack Indian Tribe, and the rest of us) and Communities (homes, jobs, food).

These are amplified by risks posed in:

- escalating climate change impacts;
- increasing impacts from seasonal weather extremes;
- statutory and regulatory constraints;
- continued watershed conversion for development.



OUR FACEBOOK MESSAGING



WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?



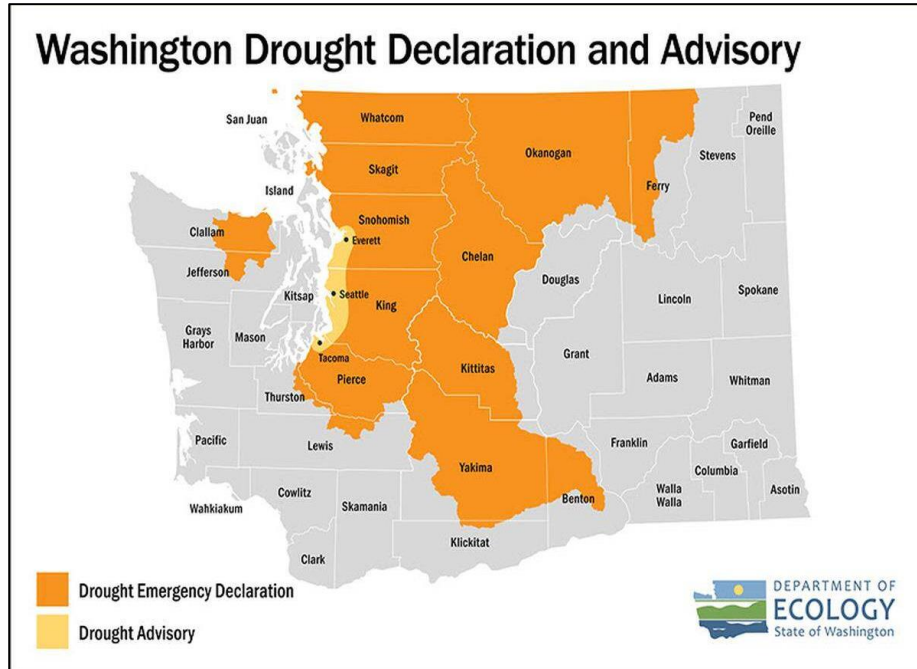
TOO MUCH
water in the
winter



MILLIONS OF
\$\$\$ of property
and infrastructure
damage

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Too little water in the summer

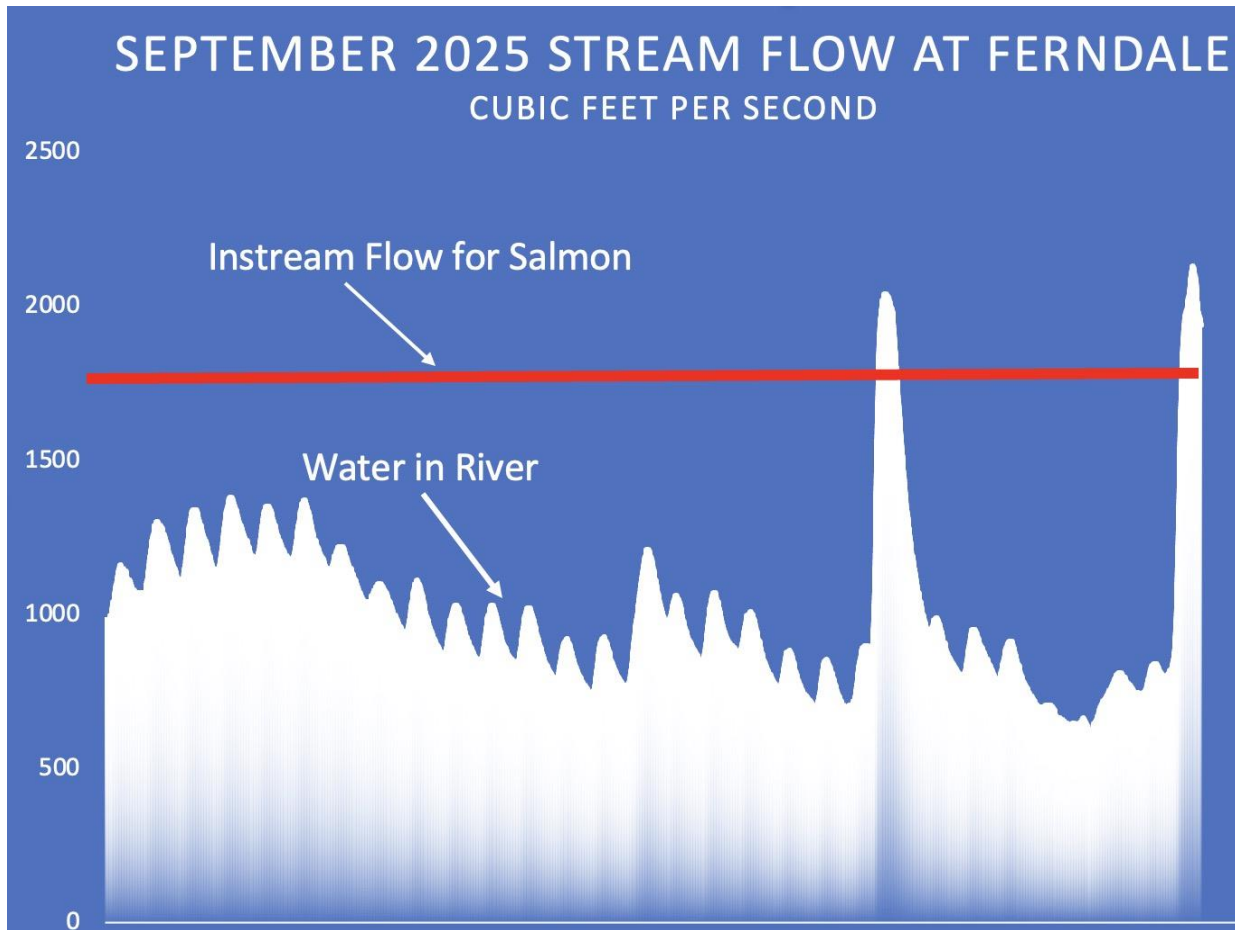


- Low water level and warming bad for salmon
- Increased risk of forest fires
- Not enough legal water for human uses

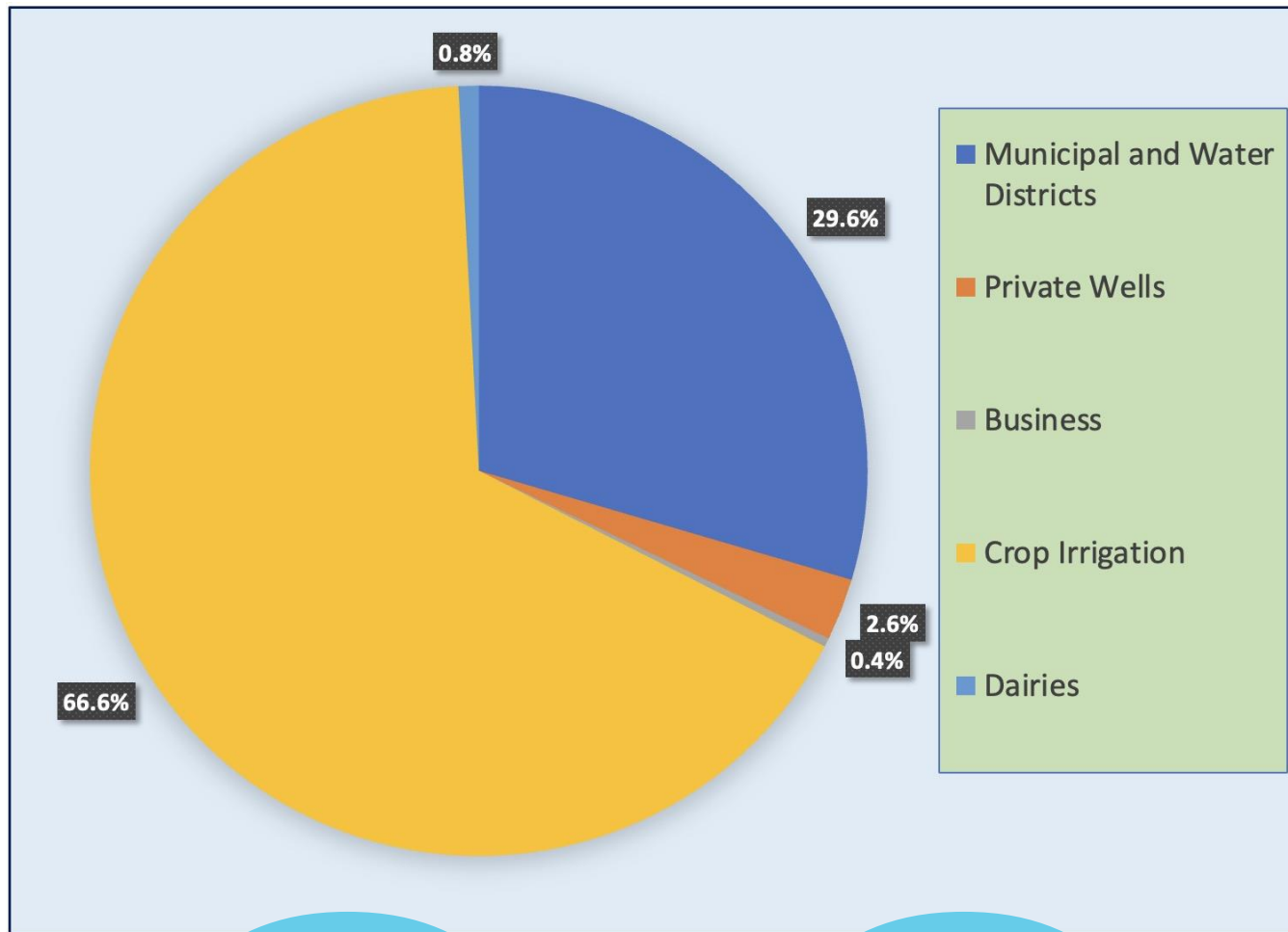


LESS PRECIPITATION AND MORE WATER USE THAN IS SUSTAINABLE

Minimum Instream Flows to protect salmon are often not met



CURRENT WATER USE IN WHATCOM COUNTY



WHAT IS THE WRIA 1 ADJUDICATION?

- Adjudication is a legal process initiated by the Dept. of Ecology and run through the Whatcom County Superior Court to determine who has valid water rights, what quantity of water the right includes and for what purpose, and in what order the water rights were filed.
- Up to 30,000 water rights holders may be included
- Claims for water rights must be submitted to the court by **June 1, 2027**
- The Department of Ecology estimates this whole legal process will take 10-20 years
- Adjudication is based on the western water law foundation of “first in time, first in right.”



POSSIBLE DROUGHT SOLUTIONS

Water Use Efficiency and Conservation

- Agricultural efficiency improvements
- Residential conservation programs
- Industrial water efficiency

Habitat Improvements and Watershed Management

- Tree planting to increase stream shading
- Levee setbacks to slow flows and expand side-channel refuges
- Engineered woody debris to increase pools and salmon refuges
- Forest management practices that may enhance watershed hydrology

Water Storage, Banking, Sharing

- Water banking, sharing, and voluntary transfers
- Surface water storage opportunities
- Groundwater storage and recharge (ASR and MAR)

Development of New Water Sources

- Untapped aquifers
- Inter and intra basin transfers and transport
- Water reuse

Land use, zoning and enforcement



DROUGHT SOLUTION COST ESTIMATES

Project	Cost estimate	Ranking
South Fork Nooksack Natural Storage	\$122,795,000	1
Musto Marsh Storage Reservoir	\$9,400,000	2
Springsteen Lake Enlargement	\$3,832,000	3
North Fork Dam	\$2,566,720,000	4
Bertrand Drainage Natural Storage	\$6,716,000	5
Bertrand Drainage Reservoirs	\$1,936,000	6
Maple Creek Dam	\$91,541,000	7
Off-Channel Reservoir with Pump Station	\$34,340,000	8
Sumas Basin Floodplain Diversion	\$52,500,000	9
Total Costs	\$2,889,780,000	

From Water Storage Alternatives Report, Anchor QEA, July 2024



LEARNING FROM OTHER'S SUCCESS



**Office of
Chehalis Basin**

Reducing flood damage and restoring aquatic life.



**DESCHUTES RIVER
CONSERVANCY**



YAKIMA BASIN INTEGRATED PLAN



WHAT WE CAN LEARN



The Parking Lot Breakthrough

Pretty soon, over time, all of us who were very suspicious of each other would talk, and that turned into friendship, trust and respect,” he said.

Mr. Rigdon of the Yakama Nation said “We’ve understood what the other side needs. And they’re no longer the other side.”

The fruits of those relationships can be seen throughout the basin, in projects that usually serve more than one purpose and benefit more than one group of stakeholders.



HOW DO WE MAKE REAL PROGRESS?

Moving Beyond Planning and Studies



- Quit believing the adjudication will solve our problems
- Push local leaders to form a functioning group that can make decisions to bring solutions forward
- Bring the tribes and stakeholder groups together to better understand, collaborate, and agree on solutions
- Jointly go to the state and federal governments with agreed upon shared solutions for funding

WASHINGTON'S WATER FUTURE

A new statewide initiative led by Governor Bob Ferguson and the Department of Ecology to help Washington prepare for growing water challenges.

Some of the topics they will explore to solve this include:

- Aquifer recharge
- Reclaimed water
- Water storage
- Conservation and efficiency
- Wetland restoration
- Floodplain restoration
- Region-specific strategies to build resilience

<https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/washington-water-future>



WHERE TO START?

Water for Whatcom's idea for the roundtable is to stay pretty high level and just make clear that relatively new good collaborative work is already happening, and we need Ecology to become more involved locally to help draw attention to our issues by providing local staffing to help:

- Provide support and funding for continuation and expansion of growing collaborative efforts that have independently started here.
- Work with local tribes to create the structure to properly recognize and empower their treaty rights and co-manager status
- Create or reinvigorate a **local** decision-making Board focused on water solutions, and provide infrastructure, coordination, organization, and facilitation of the local Board
- Provide staff and funding to coordinate and finalize scientific, engineering and legal research, analysis and feasibility of agreed upon solutions
- Provide staff and funding to coordinate any needed efforts with the state legislature or federal partners, and spearhead grant writing, and other fundraising activities for implementation of solutions



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Stay Informed
 - ✓ Check out our website – <https://waterforwhatcom.org/>
 - ✓ Sign up for our newsletter
 - ✓ Follow our Facebook page - www.facebook.com/waterforwhatcom
- The County is one of the prime movers of policies and implementation efforts. Work to ensure movement toward a “solutions” implementation focus.
- Let county staff and other agencies know the time is NOW for water solutions
- Join our efforts to collaborate on solutions so state and federal funding becomes more available



QUESTIONS?



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