

PUBLIC UTILITY
DISTRICT No. 1
— of *Whatcom County*

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT No. 1 *of Whatcom County*

May 21, 2019

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

The PUD applied for a grant through the United States Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) “Water Smart Program”

- **Original project request was for \$200,000:**
 - \$100,000 – BOR**
 - \$100,000 – Local Match**
- **Grant of \$100,000 from BOR approved but the PUD had to come up with 100% local match.**
- **Grant Cost Revised to \$100,00 total**
 - PUD - \$50,000
 - BOR - \$50,000

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

- **There are two sides to Drought Planning:**
 1. Preparing for; and,
 2. Responding to
- **Purpose of the Plan**
 - Guide local preparations for droughts (*mitigation measures*)
 - Guide local responses to droughts (response actions)
- **Definition of a Drought – set by Washington State**
 - 75% or less of normal water supply; AND,
 - Expectation of undue hardship

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

- **Required Elements of the Drought Contingency Plan**
(per U.S. Bureau of Reclamation)
 - Drought Monitoring – Locally/Stage
 - Vulnerability Assessment – How vulnerable are local resources by use
 - Mitigation Actions – What can/should we do to prepare *before* drought occurs
 - Response Actions – What we do if drought occurs
 - Operation and Administrative Framework
 - Plan Update Process
 - Communications and Outreach

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

- **Need to coordinate with the State's monitoring efforts**
 - Water Supply Availability Committee (WSAC)
 - Ecology, State Climatologist, USGS, NWS, NRCW, USBR, USCOE, BPA
 - Public Meetings
 - Meets every 4 – 6 weeks in winter, periodically other times
 - PUD/Task Force to identify local representative to WSAC
 - If forecast is for all or part of state 75% or less of normal supply
 - WSAC may recommend convening of Executive Water Emergency Committee (EWEC)

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

- **Governor's Executive Water Emergency Committee**

- Request participation where Whatcom County is involved
- Assist in determination of undue hardship per definition

Committee Members:

Governor's Office (chair)

Washington State

Conservation Commission

Department of Agriculture

Commerce

Ecology

Fish and Wildlife

Health

Natural Resources

Military Department

Emergency Management Division

May 20, 2019 *The Seattle Times*

- **Governor Inslee declares drought for nearly half of Washington State...**
"...Drought emergency to include Nooksack Basin..."

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

- **Hydrologic Setting**

- Summarizes local hydrology – Surface Water/Ground Water
- Glaciers, snowmelt, rainfall, runoff patterns – glacier/snowmelt versus groundwater
- Drought-like conditions likely to become more common
- Short-term/Long-term effects on local systems are different

- **Droughts in Whatcom County**

- General information about past droughts, focus on 2015

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

- **Water Use in Whatcom County**

- Water Use by Sector
 - Public water systems
 - Agricultural irrigation
 - Industrial
 - Fisheries and instream flows

- **Tribal Involvement**

- **Drought Contingency Plan Task Force**

- Membership invited from a diversified group of stakeholders

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

- **Plan** is for local Whatcom County participation in the Executive Water Emergency Committee when a drought declaration for all or part of Whatcom County is being considered
- **Washington State** is moving to two stages:
 - Advisory
 - Emergency

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

- **Climate Change**
 - Discusses the likelihood of increased frequency of drought conditions
- **Vulnerability Assessment**
 - Discussed by Sector
 - State DOH provided information on local public water systems susceptible to droughts
 - Cities provided assessments
 - Lummi Nation
 - Nooksack Tribe

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

- **Fisheries and Instream Flow Vulnerabilities**
 - Extensive information from Nooksack Tribe and Lummi Nation
- **Agriculture**
- **Terrestrial Wildlife**
- **Forests**
 - Extensive information from forestry caucus, Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Forest Service
- **Energy**
- **Recreation**

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

• **Mitigation Measures**

- Integrated Water Management
- Pre-Agreements
- Public Water Systems
 - Systems with projected water surplus at buildout
- Fish and Wildlife
- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Recreation
- Water Bank/Water Exchange
 - Introduction and discussion

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

- **Response Actions**

- Agriculture
- Fish and Wildlife
- Terrestrial Wildlife
- Recreation
- Forestry
- Public Water Systems

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

- **Operational and Administrative Framework**
 - Task Force will continue to exist
 - Will identify member for the Water Supply Availability Committee (WSAC) and request participation in the Executive Water Emergency Committee when Whatcom County is affected
 - Watershed Management Board

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

- **Task Force/PUD will coordinate with the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management**
 - ✓ Division seeks *local proclamation of emergency* by the County Executive
 - ✓ Division requests *resources* from State and Federal Authorities
 - ✓ Division may assist with *water rationing and water transport*
 - ✓ Division may forward drought emergency proclamation to Washington State Military Department Emergency Management Division where the State *may request assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)*

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

- **Task Force and Plan Update Process**

- Task Force will continue to exist as a standing committee.
- May be convened by the PUD manager or at request of three or more Task Force members or Watershed Management Board members.
- The PUD manager will poll the Task Force at least once per calendar year to assess the need to convene the Task Force.

DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION FLOW CHART

Task Force notifies Ecology of local Task Force representative to serve on the Department of Ecology's Water Supply Availability Committee

Task Force requests membership on the Governor's EWEC to assist in the undue hardship determination when all or part of Whatcom County is included in a State Drought Declaration

DROUGHT YEAR

State Drought Declaration made or appears imminent

Task Force convened by PUD manager, three TF members, or three Watershed Management Board members

If State considers a drought declaration affecting Whatcom County, TF representative to EWEC will consult with TF and provide recommendation to Governor's EWEC re: drought declaration in Whatcom County

Task Force updated on drought conditions by WSAC representative

If drought declaration is made for all or part of Whatcom County, PUD manager will convene the TF to identify appropriate drought response actions and appropriate implementation entities.

NON-DROUGHT YEAR

Task Force convened as needed

Review plan and identify mitigation actions (projects/actions) to reduce the drought vulnerabilities identified in the plan

Identify funding needs and opportunities and assign Task Force members the appropriate implementation entities

Task Force members report back to the TF and PUD on the status of the actions identified above and the need for any additional efforts

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

• **Next Steps**

- ✓ Task Force approved the draft Drought Contingency Plan
- ✓ PUD submitted the plan to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for their review and approval. Currently the PUD/BOR is in the second round of review and changes
- ✓ Once approved the PUD has the lead in notifying Ecology on Water Supply Advisory Committee (WSAC) involvement and request membership on the Executive Water Emergency Committee (EWEC)
- ✓ Begins process with Task Force of identifying mitigation actions and developing a work plan on how to implement those recommendations and including the procurement of funding. Within 30 days of final approval of the plan by the BOR, the Task Force will be called to meet
- ✓ Changes to the plan can occur over time as the need arises and improvements are identified and approved

WHATCOM COUNTY DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

Questions?

Thank you,
Steve Jilk
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