

Introduction

The Chehalis Basin Partnership (the Partnership) was formally created through an intergovernmental agreement dated August 31, 1998; however, the group formed and began meeting in the fall of 1996 in response to water resource issues that had emerged in the Chehalis Basin. In 1998 the Partnership took advantage of the legislative enactment of the Watershed Management Act (Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2514, Revised Code of Washington 90.82), to begin a voluntary planning process for the Chehalis Basin.

The Chehalis Basin includes two state-designated Water Resource Inventory Areas or WRIAs: the Lower Chehalis Basin (WRIA 22) and the Upper Chehalis Basin (WRIA 23). Together, they comprise one of the largest watershed in western Washington.

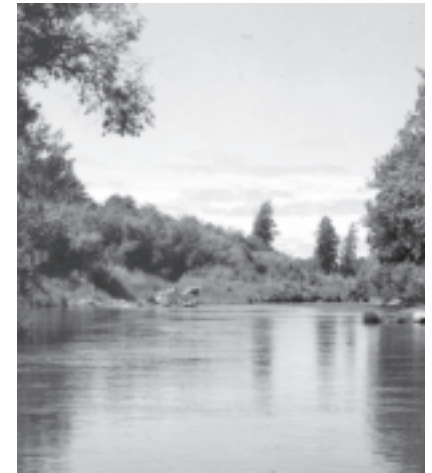
The state-authorized watershed planning process allows local governments and interested groups and citizens to assess and manage the water resources of a river basin and to develop strategies within the basin to address water quantity, water quality, fish habitat and in-stream flows. Watershed planning is intended to support economic growth and promote water availability and quality for the state.

The Partnership worked collaboratively, on a consensus basis, over a five-year period. The watershed planning process involved both policy-level discussions by the Partnership and a sustained work effort by a Steering/Technical Committee. Collectively, the Partnership agreed on a mission, goals and objectives for the plan. The group's stated mission that guided the development of the Plan was to:

develop a management plan that will result in effective, economical, and equitable management of the water in the Chehalis Basin to sustain viable and healthy communities and habitat conditions necessary for native fish.

To carry out its mission, goals and objectives, the Partnership reviewed a significant amount of information, much of it gathered through the watershed planning process, about conditions in the watershed as a whole and the many subbasins. Based on this information as well as the group's goals for watershed planning, the Partnership developed a solid set of recommendations for how best to manage water resources in the Chehalis Basin in the coming years.

This report and associated studies represents the findings of the Partnership's committees and contributed to the development of the Chehalis Basin Watershed Management Plan. The Partnership considered the work contained



Satsop River at river mile 2.5

in this report when developing recommended actions to best promote water resource management in the Basin. The Partnership recognizes and appreciates the opinions contained in this report; however, the Partnership is comprised of policy, technical, and legal level interests. With best intentions or responding to a wide range of interest groups, the Partnership selected the actions that most closely met, or began to address, the needs of the entire group. It is designed to be easy for you to find the information, and the level of detail, you desire. In general, brief summaries of technical reports and studies are included in the Report.

The Report is organized as follows:

- **Chapter II – Why Does This Plan Exist?** Describes the legal framework for the watershed planning process and indicates how the Chehalis Basin Partnership carried out planning for the Chehalis Basin. A matrix in this chapter lists all the issues that citizens and the Partnership raised and indicates how the watershed plan responds to those issues and concerns. It also indicates where the reader should go in the Plan to learn more about the issue.
- **Chapter III – Information Base** presents brief summaries of the technical information that the Partnership considered in developing its recommendations for the Chehalis Basin. In each case, the summaries directs the reader to the section where you can find in-depth information and full reports.
- **Chapter IV – Issues/Recommendations** presents the Issue Papers that were developed, by a committee working with an author, to describe a wide range of issues of concern in the Basin as well as options for addressing them. The Partnership reviewed these Issue Papers before developing the final recommendations contained in the Watershed Management Plan.
- **Chapter V – Implementation** suggests next steps the Partnership could undertake to realize the vision outlined in the Watershed Management. Contained in this section are suggestions for a responsible party to oversee water resource management, and potential funding sources for making this plan an active and effective document. After all of its work, the Partnership very much wanted to make this a document that is implemented, not a plan that sits on the shelf.

- **Chapter VI – Approval Process** describes the steps laid out in the legislation that authorized watershed planning for local governments to follow in reviewing and approving watershed plans. It also describes how review processes for watershed plans will respond to the State Environmental Policy Act, including how the Chehalis Basin Watershed Management Plan will comply with SEPA, and, certainly not least, the important role for citizens to play in the approval process.
- **Chapter VII – Appendices**

