

17938

# Section 1

## Executive Summary

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### 1.1 Introduction

The 1999 Skagit County Coordinated Water System Plan (CWSP) represents the continued efforts of the Skagit County Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) representing the Skagit County agencies, the area's regional water supply utilities, City of Anacortes (City), and Public Utility District No. 1 of Skagit County (PUD); Indian Tribes; the individual water utilities; and the State Department of Health (DOH) and Department of Ecology (Ecology) to manage the County's potable water issues according to all applicable statutes and ordinances. During a one-year period, monthly meetings were held to review the existing 1993 CWSP and provide changes to reflect the current water system community in Skagit County (County) and to provide guidance for the future. These actions were conducted with the primary objective of meeting the public drinking water supply needs of the County and establishing a "functional water plan" as an element of the city and County Comprehensive Plans.

This 1999 CWSP provides a further refinement of process and strategy for the existing water utilities to define their role in a program to meet the County's Comprehensive Plan. The regional water supply, transmission, and storage plan represents the collective views of the WUCC and integrates the documented views of other State and local governments. The CWSP, when integrated with the Comprehensive Plans of the County, local governments, and the pending Skagit River Watershed Plan, represents a significant piece of the larger resource and growth management plan for municipalities and the County's future.

### 1.2 Recommendations

The WUCC recommends, and the CWSP provides for, the following:

#### 1.2.1 Management Area

The CWSP specifically provides plans for the provision of public water supply in the County. The area is divided into designated utility service areas and a satellite system area. The CWSP and the Public Water System Coordination Act assign responsibility for planning, designing, financing, constructing, and operating all public water systems in the designated areas. Each designated and expanding water system is required to prepare a Water System Plan (WSP) for their service area within one year of the effective date of this CWSP.

### **1.2.2 Supply Area**

The source of supply for the CWSP and the management area is a combination of sub-regional systems (City and PUD) serving the urban areas and other Group A and Group B public systems (see Exhibit 1-1) serving development in rural areas. The urban systems rely primarily upon surface water sources and the rural systems upon groundwater/wells.

### **1.2.3 Supply Area - Interties**

Interties between existing water utilities are designated to allow conjunctive use of surface and groundwater, emergency supply, and wholesale delivery of supply in accordance with the CWSP. The CWSP and associated water rights for the City and PUD authorizes the use of the two supply systems interchangeably.

### **1.2.4 Water Supply and Land Use**

The CWSP is consistent with the city and County Comprehensive Plans. As the functional water plan for the city and County Comprehensive Plans, the CWSP will continue to be amended as the land and resource management plans are further evaluated, considered, and adopted through annual amendments.

As the land use and WSPs for the rural area are further developed, the routing of water system distribution and transmission lines through previously unsewered areas should consider their potential impact on development patterns. Pipe sizing must also reflect long-term plans for public water service in rural areas and should not be based on speculative land uses.

### **1.2.5 Designated Service Area**

The designated water service areas represent the geographical area where the identified utility has accepted responsibility to provide a safe and adequate water supply in a timely and reasonable manner consistent with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), the State Growth Management Act (GMA), and the County-wide Planning Policies and Comprehensive Plans of local governments with land use authority. The expanding water system must update its WSP at least every six years and be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

### **1.2.6 Receivership and Satellite System Management**

Existing State law provides for the County to be the "receiver of last resort" of any of the existing 185 public water systems in the study area that are

unable to comply with the federal and State regulations and customer service requirements specifically outlined in federal, State, and local (CWSP) procedures.

The CWSP provides for those utilities with designated service areas to assume lead responsibility, in lieu of the County, for correcting the deficiencies of failing systems within their service area if receivership is invoked. If the designated system does not assume responsibility or the systems are not located within a designated service area, the goal of the CWSP is for the PUD to accept receivership responsibility.

The PUD is recognized as the Satellite Management Agency (SMA) for purposes of the CWSP. Under this program, the PUD will provide water service to new developments in the County outside of previously designated service areas, except as provided by this CWSP. Water systems for such new developments must be designed and constructed consistent with PUD minimum design standards. Ownership of the system is then to be transferred to the PUD.

#### **1.2.7 Water Conservation and Monitoring**

The Guidelines for Public Water Systems Regarding Water Use Reporting, Demand Forecasting Methodology, and Conservation Programs (see Appendix A) were used to guide the development of the demand forecast and related water conservation program for the CWSP.

A regional data management program will be developed as a part of the Skagit Basin Watershed Plan. This program will be implemented to document water use trends and evaluate successful implementation of the conservation program.

#### **1.2.8 Minimum Design Standards**

The Minimum Design Standards developed by the WUCC and discussed in Section 4, once adopted by local government ordinances, will be applied to water purveyors County-wide. The recommended Design Standards reference urban growth areas (UGAs) and non-UGAs. They are consistent with the city and County Comprehensive Plans and Planning Policies.

#### **1.2.9 Individual Wells and Groundwater Management**

Groundwater remains an available resource for additional water supply development. Quantity and quality considerations are variable throughout the County. In general, the potential for development of an adequate supply progressively increases in an up-gradient (easterly direction in the Skagit River Valley).

In the western and urban area, surface water supplies will be the predominant source. In the rural areas, groundwater development should continue, except where the Skagit River Watershed Plan recommends an alternative supply plan (see 1.2.10), provided individual wells meet County siting criteria and Ecology minimum well standards. However, where new development of individual/single family homes is proposed within the designated service area of existing utilities, the CWSP provides a process for the developer to consult with the utility for potential service before the building permit is issued. The decision for connection to the public water system or construction of a private supply rests with the developer, unless connection to a public water system is a condition of a land-use permit.

The County, cities, and tribes continue to support groundwater protection programs. Aquifer recharge areas are currently protected by ordinances adopted pursuant to the Critical Areas requirements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Skagit County Health Department should further address groundwater protection in its septic system enforcement program.

### **1.2.10 Regional Supply System**

The Joint Operating Agreement between the City of Anacortes and the PUD (see Appendix B) provides one segment and one phase of the regional supply plan. This regional supply system represents the framework to meet the growth management needs of the County for public water supply, and will require continuing evaluation to establish the most cost-effective program consistent with public policy.

The 50-year Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) serves as another segment of the regional supply plan. The MOA simplifies water rights issues and provides for minimum in-stream flows that will be integral to watershed planning efforts.

The third segment of regional supply planning and management will be developed through the watershed planning process (WPP). The WPP will evaluate all water issues and needs within the County. The plan will link potable water demands with other surface water, groundwater, in-stream, and out-of-stream demands.

The final segment of regional supply planning will be coordination of all water use with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The linkage of the ESA, MOA, WPP, and Joint Operating Agreements will provide the documentation for sound water supply management in Skagit County.

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### **1.2.11 Administrative Framework**

The CWSP requires participation by all members of the WUCC. The CWSP, after certification by the County and adoption by DOH, becomes the regional public water supply and functional plan, all related decisions by local or State government must be guided by the plan.

The Utility Service Review Procedure (USRP), Exhibit 5-1, represents how the County anticipates administering its responsibilities. The water utilities are responsible for updating their WSPs for their designated areas in accordance with DOH regulations.

The responsibility of satellite system program implementation on a regional basis within non-designated service areas has been assigned to the PUD. The program includes ownership, operation, and management of new systems as well as the responsibility for accepting receivership of existing systems through court proceedings on behalf of Skagit County.

### **1.2.12 Plan Updating**

The following identifies the primary requirements for ensuring that the CWSP remains a current functional plan of the city and County Comprehensive Plans and supports the County-wide Planning Policies. The program is designed to continue to be both responsive to existing needs and to place responsibility on designated agencies to maintain accountability. As a functional plan, the CWSP must be adopted by reference in utility water system plans or other appropriate documents. The acceptance of accountability should be verified by appropriate intergovernmental agreements or memorandums of understanding.

- (1) This CWSP has been reviewed to assure conformance with County-wide Planning Policies and applicable Comprehensive Plans pursuant to Chapter 70.116 RCW.
- (2) The WUCC will assist DOH, as requested, in the resolution of any questions or issues the State identifies in its review process.
- (3) Annual meetings of the WUCC should be scheduled to review the CWSP.
- (4) The minimum design standards presented in Section 4 will be reviewed annually by the WUCC. Recommended revisions will be submitted to the Skagit County Planning and Permit Center (SCPPC) for adoption.
- (5) The objectives and procedures outlined in the CWSP are considered to be reasonable and achievable by all properly operated water systems.

Repeated failure by a system to provide safe, reliable, and minimum levels of water service, as measured by the CWSP criteria, should serve as a basis to evaluate viability of the system. Non-viable systems should be candidates for receivership, voluntary transfer of ownership, or merger proceedings.

- (6) This CWSP should be revised and updated, as necessary, as prescribed by Chapter 70.116 RCW.

# Exhibit 1-1 Public Water System Definition

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## **Public Water Systems**

- All systems except those serving only one single family residence or less than five residences on the same farm

### **Group A**

System that regularly serves:

- 15 or more residential connections
- or*
- 25 or more people/day for 60 or more days/yr

### **Group B**

System that serves:

- Less than 15 residential connections
- and*
- Less than 25 people/day
- or*
- 25 or more people/day during fewer than 60 days/yr

### **Community**

- System that regularly serves 15 or more year-round residential connections, or 25 or more year-round residents (for 180 or more days/yr).

### **Noncommunity**

- Any system that is not a community system.

### **Nontransient (NTNC)**

- System that serves 25 or more of the same people/day for 180 or more days/yr.

### **Group B**

- System that serves:
- 25 or more different people/day during 60 or more days/yr
- or*
- 25 or more of the same people/day for less than 180 days/yr and during more than 59 days/yr
- or*
- 1,000 or more people for two or more consecutive days

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