

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Overview and Objectives

This report presents the Phase II Level 1 Technical Assessment for Water Resources Inventory Area (WRIA) 31, the Rock-Glade Watershed, which encompasses portions of Benton, Klickitat, and Yakima counties in Washington State. This Level 1 Assessment is the first step in Phase II of watershed planning – the assessment phase – under the Watershed Management Act (Chapter 90.82 RCW). The assessment phase provides the technical basis for preparation of a Watershed Management Plan in Phase III. In general terms, this Phase II Level 1 Assessment is intended to determine what is known regarding water and instream habitat resources in the watershed, determine what is not known about those resources, and thereby identify data gaps and make recommendations for Phase II Level 2 data collection and/or analyses as needed to fill those data gaps. Because there is a 4-year limit between receipt of the Phase II grant funding and submittal of the Phase III Management Plan, the Level 2 Assessment focuses on short-term studies critical for decision making in the Plan development. Additional longer-term data collection would likely be a component of Watershed Management Plan implementation (Phase IV).

In accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreement for WRIA 31 watershed planning, the WRIA 31 Technical Assessment will include a water quantity component under 90.82.070 RCW, a water quality component under 90.82.090 RCW, and a habitat component under 90.82.100 RCW.

This Level 1 Assessment was funded under Grant number G0200109 obtained by the WRIA 31 Planning Unit from the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) under the Watershed Management Act.

1.2 WRIA 31 Planning Unit

Pursuant to RCW 90.82.060(2) and (5), Klickitat County, Benton County, Yakima County, and the City of Kennewick concurred with initiating watershed planning in WRIA 31, and designated Klickitat County to be the Lead Agency. While supportive of watershed planning in WRIA 31, Yakima County chose not to participate in the process. Because there are no reservation lands within the management area, no tribe was invited to participate as an initiating government as provided in RCW 90.82.060(4).

Pursuant to RCW 90.82.060(6), the Initiating Governments determined the composition of the Planning Unit through an intergovernmental agreement. The Planning Unit is composed of people representing a wide range of water resource interests in WRIA 31.

ASPECT CONSULTING

The following water resources interests were identified and invited to participate:

- Klickitat County (Initiating Government and Lead Agency)
- Benton County (Initiating Government)
- City of Kennewick (Initiating Government)
- Port of Kennewick
- Benton County Water Conservancy Board
- Klickitat County Water Conservancy Board
- Washington State Department of Ecology
- Yakama Nation
- Central Klickitat County Conservation District
- Eastern Klickitat County Conservation District
- Benton Conservation District
- Umatilla Tribes
- Health Districts (Benton-Franklin Health District)
- USDA/Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Kennewick Irrigation District
- Columbia Irrigation District
- Klickitat County Public Utility District (PUD) No. 1
- Benton Rural Electric Association
- Recreation Representative
- Fishing/Hunting Representative
- Rock Creek Watershed Management Council
- Dryland Farming Representative
- Business/Industry Representative
- Solid Waste Management Industry Representative
- Irrigated Farming Representative
- Klickitat County Land and Natural Resource Advisory Committee
- Livestock Growers Representative
- Andrews Farms
- Timber Representative
- Education Representative
- Environmental Representative
- Citizen-At-Large
- Plymouth Water District

1.3 Document Organization

Following this introductory chapter, the subsequent chapters of this Level 1 Assessment are as follow:

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of the hydrologic framework for the watershed, including topography and subbasin delineation, geologic setting, soils, climate, and land use/land cover.
- Chapter 3 provides information on water quantity, including stream flows, groundwater occurrence, appropriated and applied for water rights, and water use.
- Chapter 4 summarizes water quality data.

- Chapter 5 summarizes fish habitat information.
- Chapter 6 presents identified gaps in the existing information and provides recommendations for additional watershed assessment and/or planning.

1.4 Limitations

Work for this project was performed and this report prepared in accordance with generally accepted professional practices for the nature and conditions of work completed in the same or similar localities, at the time the work was performed. This report does not represent a legal opinion. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made.