

Snoqualmie and South Fork Skykomish 2026 Interlocal Agreement

Summary of Changes and Renewal Process, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum Interlocal Agreement for 2026-2035

The current Interlocal Agreement (ILA) that creates the partnership known as the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum (Forum) between King County, the cities of Carnation, Duvall, North Bend and Snoqualmie, the Snoqualmie Tribe, Tulalip Tribes, and the Town of Skykomish is set to expire on December 31, 2025. A new ILA for 2026-2035 was renegotiated in 2024 by the ILA signatory tribes and jurisdictions and approved by the Forum. The new ILA will govern the Forum's purpose, operations and cost share arrangements.

Beginning in July 2024, Forum staff at King County, as the service provider, worked with staff and elected representatives from each of the eight signatories to the agreement to identify primary contact people from each tribe and jurisdiction who were then responsible for coordinating review. The initial draft was circulated to the eight parties in July 2024 for review by staff and attorneys, and comments from Snoqualmie Tribe and City of Snoqualmie were subsequently incorporated. The second draft was distributed to the parties on August 15 and then discussed at a virtual meeting on September 9. The second draft was also reviewed and discussed at the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum meeting on September 18. The third draft was distributed by email on September 27 along with a survey on several provisions of the agreement where consensus had not yet been reached. Five of the eight parties then met with me on October 29 and arrived at consensus on the remaining provisions of the agreement. On November 6 the parties were sent the final draft ILA and offered an opportunity to meet individually or as a group with King County attorney Mike Graves, and all declined. The final November 6 draft was approved by the Forum on January 15, 2025. The Forum is now transmitting the ILA to each member jurisdiction for council approval.

The ILA's primary purpose remains to be coordinating salmon recovery and watershed health efforts in the Snoqualmie and South Fork Skykomish basins. The 2026 ILA is largely consistent with the current ILA, with a few minor changes made to streamline governance of the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum and make the document more consistent with the King County's ILAs for the Cedar-Lake Washington-Lake Sammamish Watershed Council (WRIA 8) and the Green/Duwamish Watershed Ecosystem Forum (WRIA 9). Following is a summary of the substantive changes between the current ILA and the 2026 ILA.

SECTION 1. Definitions

- Section 1.2 – The WRIA 7 ILA Parties definition was revised to specify these are the groups responsible for signing and implementing the agreement.
- Section 1.3 - The Snoqualmie Watershed Forum definition was revised to clarify that all members of the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum are responsible for its governance.
- Section 1.7 - Added state and local agencies and special purpose districts as eligible Stakeholder members to the Forum.
- Section 1.8 - New definition for Fiscal Agent, which performs accounting services on behalf of the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum.

SECTION 2. Purposes

- Section 2.6 – Changed the word “citizen” to “resident” since residents who participate as members of the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum are not required to be citizens of the United States.

- Specified that nothing in the ILA shall waive the sovereign immunity of the Tribal government Parties.

SECTION 3. Effective Date and Term

- Removed the date since the agreement will be executed when King County and at least two other Parties have filed their signatures with King County. Excluding the date allows flexibility – if the ILA should expire before the next one is executed, it could be extended as needed.
- Added references to RCW 39.34.040 and .200, which authorize this agreement.

SECTION 4. Organization and Membership of the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum

- Replaced “ex officio members,” an undefined term, with the defined term “Stakeholder representatives.”
- Section 4.1 - Removed the requirement that if a Party appoints a non-elected official, they must designate in writing whether their representative can vote on behalf of the Party.
- Section 4.2 - Changed the number of Stakeholder representatives from five to “at least five” to allow additional members to be added without having to change the language of the ILA.
- Removed the list of Stakeholder representatives and who is responsible for appointing them. This list will be moved to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which is signed by the Director of King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks and the Chair of the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum, and thus easier to change than the ILA. Parties agreed that at least one resident member should reside in unincorporated King County, and this will be stipulated in the MOU.
- Section 4.3 – Removed term limits for Party representatives. Term limits for Stakeholder representatives will be removed from the ILA and included in the MOU.
- Section 4.4 – Added the option for any subset of Parties to purchase additional cost share services from the service provider under this agreement with a new MOU.
- Section 4.8 – Changed the performance evaluation interval to every two years instead of every year.

SECTION 5. Voting

Section 5.1 – Deleted references to undefined terms such as “members” and replaced with defined terms.

SECTION 6. Obligations of Parties; Budget; Fiscal Agent; Rules

6.2 – Deleted a sentence about the primary obligations of the Parties because it was redundant with the statement in 6.1 with a slightly lesser set of obligations. Specified that staff from each of the Parties meet at least once per year to develop a proposed work program and other proposals for consideration by the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum.

SECTION 7. Latecomers

Removed any deadline for eligible governments to become Party to the ILA.

SECTION 8. Termination

Changed the annual deadline for an individual Party to provide written notice of its intent to terminate participation from 30 to 60 days prior to the first of the year to allow the other Parties to adjust their cost shares accordingly.

SECTION 18. Filing of Agreement

- Added this section to specify it shall be filed with King County in accordance with the provisions of RCW 39.34.040 and .200 and the terms of Section 3 of the ILA.