

RONICA DEALY

The DOE Draft of new rules reduces the limit new well owners can use from the previous 3000 gallons a day to 500 gallons a day, an untenable amount. And previous to the 3,000 gallon limit it was 5,000 gallons. Available ecology data does not indicate that the severe 500 gallon restriction is necessary.

I do not believe that the DOE draft of rules governing new rural wells in Whatcom county is keeping with the spirit of the state legislature's intent, which was to ensure that there would be water for development for the next 20 years. In addition to being unclear in its wording, the draft places an inequitable burden on owners of new wells when no such restrictions are warranted by research, especially considering the very small amount of water under consideration.

I understand the theory is that many wells drawing from groundwater could lower the water level in a stream, but there is no data on if or where that is happening on any Nooksack tributary.

No study has ever been done to measure a stream before and after wells were drilled and find out how much water must be withdrawn before the stream shows depletion.

Ecology has been encouraging agriculture in our area to convert water right withdrawals from surface waters (streams, lakes) for irrigation purposes, to groundwater for those purposes. The result has been a POSITIVE increase in stream flows.