

Rule Supporting Document

Amendment to Chapter 173-501 WAC Instream Resources Protection Program - Nooksack Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 1

Preliminary Draft for Public Comment

Comments for preliminary draft,

First of all, I want to thank Ecology for allowing the opportunity for public document on this important issue. As we well know, water is becoming the great fight of our generation and for generations to come. Though water is considered a renewable resource, we are seeing more evidence that climate change is affecting the need for water during different times of the year. While increased storms bring rain and snow, hotter, drier summers are becoming the normal here in Whatcom County. The growing need for water for agriculture and for increased population is fueling the need for increased management of this resource.

The following are some suggestions that I would like to be considered for the public comments regarding this issue:

- Retain the 500 gal per day use limit for family water consumption and require metering to monitor. We need to get a true reading of how much water is being used so scientific based questions on consumption can be answered and monitored. I do not think our agricultural community which is such a big part of our county wants to run out of water because the aquifer/streams are being drained with new non-metered wells.
- Make Domestic Water Use Efficiency (Conservation) programs and projects the primary source of mitigation. Improve water storage during storms so that water can be conserved and used during the drier months as long as it does not negatively impact aquifer recharge.
- Use cost benefits analysis, funding availability and certainty of success criteria to rule out poorly conceived mitigation projects and those that rob streamflow to enhance recharge of groundwater or vice versa.

All things especially water is related. Streamflow relies on ground water during the dry months to pull cool water into the stream. High flows allow water to percolate out into the floodplain to recharge the ground water. When you interrupt either of these, it impacts the other. We need to be conservative with this resource and make sure the best projects are being considered, climate change is part of the reality in making decisions, and we know how much is being used. Who do we tell no to when a new subdivision, farm, single family home or business wants more water to develop? It is a limited resource especially if we don't use it wisely.

Thank you,

Christine Woodward

