



Upper Skagit Indian Tribe
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November 3, 2023

Marla Koberstein
Rulemaking Lead
Washington State Department of Ecology
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Re: Designation of the Cascade River (Skagit County) as a Tier III(A) Outstanding Resource Waters under the Clean Water Act

Dear Ms. Koberstein:

I write today on behalf of the federal recognized Upper Skagit Indian Tribe in support of the proposed rulemaking to adopt the upper reaches of the Cascade River as a Tier III(A) Outstanding Resource Water pursuant to WAC 173-201A-330.

The Tribe, as signatory to the Treaty of Point Elliott with the United States (1855) reserved federally guaranteed treaty fishing, hunting, and gathering rights in the Tribes' Usual and Accustomed (U & A) Areas. The Tribe's adjudicated areas include; parts of the Salish Seas; Skagit, Samish, Padilla, & Chuckanut Bays and extending up the Skagit River watershed including its many tributaries such as the Cascade River. Upper Skagit's affiliation with the Cascade River watershed began over 9,000 years prior to contact with Europeans. Upper Skagit ancestors fished at Cascade falls, hunted, gathered and travelled up the valley and ridgelines to cross over the crest at Cascade Pass into Eastern Washington. The large village cluster of Sk̓əwix^w was located where the town of Marblemount and the confluence of the Cascade river is today. This historic connection continues to this day as Upper Skagit families still reside on the banks of the Cascade River on their historic tribal allotment properties.

The Tribe, in keeping with our tradition of stewardship of our ancestral lands and resources, in support of culture, and federally protected treaty rights, supports the designation of the Cascade River as an Outstanding Resource Water and respectfully urges Ecology to adopt the proposed rule, bestowing the highest level of protection for these pristine yet vulnerable waters.

Sincerely,

Marilyn M. Scott Chair
Upper Skagit Indian Tribe