

Brenda Cunningham

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal to designate the Cascade River an Outstanding Water Resource. As a long-time resident of Mount Vernon and consumer of water from the Skagit River I am very concerned about water quality and availability in the future. I strongly urge you to adopt this rule and add a layer of protection on the watershed that provides a significant portion of the water to the Skagit River system. Not only does Mount Vernon depend upon the waters of the Skagit, but so does Anacortes and Oak Harbor. Of course farmers and residents up and down the watershed also depend on the water for their livelihoods. There is universal recognition that as our climate changes we will need to be more conservative with water use as less will be stored in the form of glaciers. Protecting what we have, rather than having to acquire more elsewhere or repair a damaged watershed just makes fiscal sense.

The Forest Service has been monitoring the watershed for decades now and there is sufficient baseline information regarding the condition of the water at this time. Please do not delay the implementation of this ruling.