

Olin Myers Jr

7 Sept 2023

To: Washington State Dept. of Ecology

Re: Cascade River ORW designation

I strongly support Outstanding Resource Waters Designation in Tier III(A) for the three proposed rivers under review. I have visited Soap Lake but do not know it well.

I grew up in Seattle and adolescent experiences in the early 1970's included hiking into the Napeequa River valley with my Boy Scout troop (158, Seattle). Our week in that watershed was an incredible and formative experience, standing out for its isolation and pristine quality, even compared to all our other 50-miler hikes. It meets criteria a) –water quality, wilderness. I don't know specifically but probably c) and e) also apply.

The Green River was important a little later when I was very active in the Washington Kayak Club, as a top-notch set of runs – I ran every section of whitewater, as well as knowing its very lowest reaches as the Duwamish. Its special features include its deep canyons, with special plant communities, high water quality, and exceptional recreation value.

Above all I know the Cascade River, and most strongly support its designation. I have fished and paddled it (the lower parts), and hiked in several of its tributary basins / high country areas. But most significantly have spent many days over the last 28 years camping on a private parcel a mile and a half above its mouth. This land carries a Conservation Easement with Skagit Land Trust and its title will eventually transfer to SLT. It has beaver ponds and side channels used by Coho fry, gravel bars, a steep bluff where it cuts through a pre-historic landside pile, three or 4 old river flood plain terraces, pools, riffles, etc.

Being so familiar with this property makes me aware of the quality of the river, and the dependence of that quality on the un-dammed and relative undeveloped upper reaches and watershed of the Cascade. Among recent risks on the lower Cascade have been proposed rock quarry just below the mouth, and decreased salmon runs (Pinks, Chum, Chinook particularly – my personal observation). Private logging and logging on DNR land, unregulated ORV use, over-fishing (people illegally keeping what they catch – sections of river now having few remaining fish), invasive plants, and building intensification on some private parcels are also concerns. Although these may not be relevant within the ORW boundaries proposed, their threats to the river water quality can be mitigated by further protection of the upstream areas.

Please use ORW designation to protect all these water bodies.

Sincerely,
Olin E Myers, Jr.