

Amy Carlson

I am writing to urge you to protect the Green, Cascade, and Napeequa river systems as Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW).

As a resident of Pacific Northwest, and a person who cares about our region's ecosystem health, our water quality, and our recreational assets, I want to see Washington's precious freshwater resources safeguarded.

I know personally that the Green River is deserving of one of Washington's first ORW designations. It's not just because I am aware that it is an eligible Wild and Scenic River, it is a designated gene bank for winter steelhead populations, it provides excellent spawning habitat for endangered salmon, its forests contain some of the last remaining stands of old-growth in the area to survive the Mount St. Helens eruption thereby supplying critical habitat for old-growth dependent species, and it offers mountain bikers, hikers, horse riders, and anglers wonderful recreational opportunities. It's also because I've spent time enjoying nearby trails and benefiting emotionally, physically, and spiritually by spending time in the natural ecosystem.

We all know Washington's rivers, streams, and wetlands supply drinking water to residents across the state, sustain wildlife habitat, and provide an economic boost to local communities. Yet they are under increasing stress as the climate warms and the population grows, placing greater demand on freshwater resources. Protecting some of the state's most outstanding waters and preventing degradation of stretches of rivers, streams, wetlands and other freshwater bodies with high water quality or other unique characteristics, is the right thing to do.

There is no more precious resource than our waters and the ecosystems that sustain them. Every living being now and future generations are dependent on high quality water. It's up to us to make the right choices today.

I urge the Department of Ecology to designate the Cascade, Green, and Napeequa river systems as the state's first Outstanding Resource Waters. Thank you for your serious consideration.

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