

Carolyn Gastellum

I strongly support the designation of the upper portion of the Cascade River as an Outstanding Resource Water. Because the Cascade River is a major tributary of the Skagit River protecting its exceptional water quality is an essentially smart choice. It is more cost effective to preserve "relatively pristine" water quality in the Cascade River now rather than allow degradation in the future that could lead to costly cleanup efforts. I agree with all the reasons for designation in your nicely written "Focus on: ORW Cascade River". In addition protecting high quality waters in a major tributary of the Skagit River also protects important ecosystem habitats for forests, salmon and various wildlife and plant species. Degradation of our waterways is most commonly the result of human activities so your proposed Tier III(A) level of protection is the right thing to do, especially when climate change impacts are taken into consideration. Thank you for your work and for the opportunity to comment.