

Rebecca Post

I am an avid whitewater enthusiast and have chosen to live in Washington state to be close to year round blue ribbon recreational rivers. I support the designation of the three rivers, the Green, the Cascade, and the Napeequa, as Outstanding Resource Waters. Protecting the headwaters from degradation helps ensure better water quality throughout the watersheds and ultimately the rivers I personally run, the Toutle, the Skagit, and the Wenatchee. I have friends that run the Cascade and it is a joy to hear their stories of the beauty and quality of that whitewater run. The rivers being considered, the first for Washington State, represent outstanding state resources due to their extraordinary water quality, ecological, and recreational values.

I am also an ecologist and know that these waterways provide a multitude of ecosystem services including clean drinking water for communities, habitat that is critical to health and abundance of fish and wildlife species, scenic beauty that is a defining attribute of our quality of life, and numerous recreational opportunities for residents and visitors including fishing, boating, hiking and camping.

I am the current President of a Whitewater boating club. We have around 150 members. Our equipment and travel for recreational purposes is not cheap. Outdoor recreation supports \$26.5 billion in annual expenditures and 264,000 jobs throughout Washington State and clean water is critical to this economic sector.

Protecting unimpaired headwaters is critical to the health of our rivers and everything downstream. The Clean Water Act recognizes the unique value of waterways of exceptional water quality and provides an opportunity for states to identify waterways as Outstanding Resource Waters.

Although Washington has an abundance of high-quality waters that are important to protect, to date Ecology has not designated any Outstanding Resource Waters. Other western states, including Oregon, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona have taken advantage of this opportunity under the Clean Water Act to protect priority rivers. It is time for Washington to step up and help protect some of our rivers for the long run. As impacts from climate change become increasingly more evident, protecting our high-quality rivers and streams is an essential investment for our future.

The Cascade, Green, and Napeequa rivers in Washington State all meet multiple regulatory criteria for Outstanding Resource Waters designation and are deserving of protection as Outstanding Resource Waters. All three of the river systems are pristine and located in protected areas; have both excellent water quality and regionally unique recreational value; and have statewide ecological significance.

Designation of these river systems would benefit the state's people, its economy, its wildlife, and its salmon. It is essential that the state take steps now to protect some of its remaining high-quality rivers that provide numerous benefits to Washingtonians.

I appreciate this opportunity to have my voice heard as a supporter of this legislation.