

Richard Curtis

I support the proposed designation of the Green River and its tributaries as Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) and strongly urge the Department of Ecology to adopt the new rule for the river. As a fly fisherman I support designation of the Green River system as an ORW due to its outstanding natural resources as the river basin survived the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens largely unchanged and meets the ORW regulatory criteria. The Green River is a tributary of the North Fork of the Toutle River in the Cowlitz River Basin and is currently serving as a research laboratory for landscape recovery and ecosystem resilience adjacent to the Mt St Helens volcanic eruption. In fact several miles of the river flow through the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument and much of the surrounding area lies in the inventoried roadless areas within the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Of significance is that the Green River is a state-designated gene bank for wild winter steelhead. In addition chinook and coho salmon, summer steelhead and sea-run cutthroat also rely on the excellent and critical spawning habitat remaining in the Green River. Importantly, the Green River plays a crucial role in the North Fork of the Toutle River Steelhead Recovery Plan.

The Green River must be designated as an ORW to recognize and preserve the important ecosystem and the high quality riparian and fishery values. The Green River provides numerous benefits for humans including clean water as well as for fish and wildlife. As climate change adverse impacts increase, protecting our remaining high-quality rivers and streams is an essential ecological investment for our future. We must protect the Green River, the associated riparian zone and the fishery from future degradation due to the adverse impacts of climate change including drought and rising temperatures as well as pollution and development.

Thank you for your interest in protecting the Green River as well as the Cascade and Napeequa rivers as Washington State's first Outstanding Resource Waters.