

James Wesley

I am a landowner within the Indian Creek drainage of the Elwha Watershed. None of the streams on my property bear fish, yet their shorelines do support native trees. I have never cut any of them for the past 50 years given the difficulty of their establishment in such an environment where mountain beavers who inhabit this same area due to their outsized dependency upon stream water (1/2 their body weight in water per day), routinely destroy new seedlings up to 6' in height. Reforesting these stream banks has often taken 7-8 replantings since they were clearcut of their old growth some 75 years ago.

I have read the testimonial letter on this new setback rule for non-fish bearing streams as submitted to Ecology by Olympic Climate Action and couldn't agree more or think of any additional input to offer in support of this proposal. I attended the public hearing held at Vern Burton in Port Angeles a couple of weeks ago as a silent observer and was not in the least bit surprised by the local speakers who were against this proposal simply from financial threats to the timber industry, with NO accompanying mention from them of the immediate climate changes threatening our entire way of life or the water quality issues associated with clearcutting stream banks, fish bearing or not. Water tables are rapidly dropping in our area due to extreme glacier/snow melt. That threat is exacerbated by reduced holding or carrying capacity of our streams as their riparian zones are logged. It is time for us all to wake up to the damage caused by clearcutting riparian zones.