

Donald Watt

As a retired Hydrogeologist with the Washington Department of Ecology, and as a resident of the Boistfort Valley during the catastrophic 2007 flood, I have deep concerns about the value and safety of the proposed dam on the upper Chehalis River, near Pe Ell.

Much of my concern involves the incredibly large amount of logs and woody debris that was brought into the river by landslides during the 2007 flood. That mass of debris caused defacto choke-points to the flood-flow as the flood wave moved down through the basin.

My fear is that a similar mass of debris could render the control structures of the proposed dam unmanageable during a future flood event. Likewise, the threat of large landslides into a full reservoir during a major flood event could send surges of water over the dam and even threaten the integrity of the dam, itself. Such an occurrence could magnify, rather than reduce the extent of damage downstream.

As a long-term resident of the upper Chehalis Basin, and having witnessed a number of flood events over the years, I have very little confidence that a dam in the upper basin would make this valley a safer place to live in the event of another major flood.