

Mike McAuley

Please spend the money on resilience strategies, removing non-essential structures from the flood plain and restorations, not a small impoundment in Pe Ell.

Having grown up and with all of my family still in the Chehalis River basin, we have either been flooded or helped with flooded homes and businesses my entire life, I am 55 years old. It's abundantly clear after watching the basin respond to rainfall events that it's impossible to capture and impound enough water to make a meaningful difference with flood related issues.

At the last huge flood, my family in the Boistfort Valley on the south fork of the Chehalis River was spared but most of their neighbors were not, some seeing floodwaters to the eaves of their homes, with business losses immeasurable. The proposed project is just upstream from this area and, while I'm sure the math might look good, there isn't enough space for an upstream impoundment to collect and hold the amount of water that was over 7 feet deep at the Boistfort store, where the valley is widest. And that's just one part of the basin.

That year, I watched as the same old places that flood in Chehalis, Centralia and the surrounding valleys flood just like always. Up the Skook, up the Newaukum, the basin is huge and a small impoundment in Pe Ell won't solve the downstream problem from such an enormous basin.

I live near Everson, WA now and we are seeing the exact same issue up here.

The problem is that we've got too much of our built environment in the flood zone. The solutions should be removing and restoring as much of that as possible. Just as we see the ACOE build out restorations across the country, that should be the goal in the Chehalis Basin as well.

If climate models are correct, Western Washington is to become wetter in the winter months and drier in the summer. That translates to rain in the Chehalis Basin, the second largest basin in the state and the largest fed exclusively by rainfall. Extreme rain events will come more often and it's impossible to collect enough rainfall in an impoundment when the rain we already get is flooding hundreds of square miles.

Please spend the money on resilience strategies, removing non-essential structures from the flood plain and restorations, not a small impoundment in Pe Ell.

Thank you,

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