

## Larry Helm

Whatcom Water Debate-A conservative view point!

Over the last twenty years of attending many WRIA meetings I have heard meeting participants state that the Whatcom county has a shortage of water. Some say it's the whole County and others say the shortage is at certain times of the year in certain places. The 2002 (\$600,000) plus Utah State water of the Whatcom County Aquifers was designed to determine the amount of water shortage in our County; however, there was never a decisive report issued to end the debate. Then around 2005 I stated hearing that the rural wells were using so much water that the rivers and creek levels were negatively impacted by the well water withdrawals. Several studies were initiated to determine the size of the well water withdrawal impact. One of these studies involved pumping water from the Bertrand Creek aquifer and putting it back into the Nooksack river. I have never seen a conclusive scientific report quantifying this problem, but there has sure been a lot of expensive consultant opinions written to support the idea that wells might negatively impact rivers and streams. The rural well users in this county consume less than 1% of the total water used in the County because the rural well users recycle almost all of their pumped water through an efficient septic system back into the aquifer for reuse. Around 2017 I learned that there is a very large untapped reservoir of fresh water basically under Blaine, WA which could be used for future populations. Future population projections show that mitigation needed for increased population rural well use in the next twenty years is not very significant. In spite of a basic lack of science to prove any shortage of water, Ecology insists on introducing Rules to dramatically reduce well water rights. If successful, Ecology will expand government and assume control of a basic human requirement for life at their determined monetary cost. Current scientific data concerning well water withdrawals doesn't support Ecology's new proposed Rules!

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