

March 20, 2009

TO: WRIA 29A Planning Unit
Skamania County, Local lead agency

FROM: Scott McKinney
Watershed Lead, Department of Ecology

**SUBJECT: AGENCY INSTREAM FLOW RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR WRIA 29A**

The following recommendations are the joint response from the Department of Ecology (Ecology) and the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to the planning unit's request to reconsider some proposed reserves for sub-basins in the Wind River watershed (WRIA 29A) in light of growth needs. We have made some modifications in specific areas where we believe the additional allocation of water for future use is reasonable. In general we have attempted to meet the year 2030 projected growth need, but not "build-out". There are still areas where the stream flows do not support any additional allocation of water. We intend to discuss these proposed reserves and closures with the planning unit at the upcoming meetings in May and June of 2009. Note that reserves could be increased in some areas, and some closures could be lifted during the high flow season, if additional data shows sufficient flows to support them. These decisions could be made prior to rule-making in the future.

Dog Creek

There does not appear to be a need for a reserve based on the 2030 growth projections, so the recommendation remains as proposed.

Kanaka and Nelson Creeks

The 2030 demand projections indicate that there is a need for .111 cfs from the Kanaka Creek subbasin, and .008 cfs from the Nelson Creek subbasin. However, existing data indicates that flows are already too low for any further withdrawals without further compromising public resources. There is clearly a need for both a short and long-term water supply strategy for these basins. WDFW and Ecology would consider negotiating a reserve within the context of a water supply management strategy that offsets short and long-term instream flow impacts. Potential water supply management strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Over the long-term, extend the City of Stevenson’s service system further into these subbasins. Consider a small reserve as an interim measure, to be offset over the long-term.
- Provide City water to existing lots within or immediately adjacent to the service area, and decommission existing wells to offset impacts from new wells more distant from the service area.
- Identify water sources that are not in connectivity with surface flows (e.g., deeper aquifers).
- Require additional conservation measures to offset impacts from new wells.
- Explore in-house use of water only.
- Mitigation measures for any new water rights, including purchasing existing water rights for placement into Trust, water-for-water mitigation, habitat improvements, and other mitigation measures.

Carson Creek

The 2030 demand for this subbasin is .15 cfs. Similar to Kanaka and Nelson creeks, Carson Creek has extremely low flows during the dry months, and future withdrawals could not occur without further compromising public resources. There is clearly a need for both a short and long-term water supply strategy for this subbasin. WDFW and Ecology would consider negotiating a reserve within the context of a water supply management strategy that offsets short and long-term instream flow impacts, as described above for Kanaka and Nelson Creeks. We also recommend that the Skamania Public Utility District explore developing regional water supply from near the mouth of the Wind River to service this area over the long-term.

Collins Creek

There does not appear to be a need for a reserve, therefore the recommendation remains as proposed.

Smith Creek

There does not appear to be a need for a reserve, therefore the recommendation remains as proposed.

Unnamed Tributary from Blue Lake

The proposed reserve appears to be adequate to support projected growth out to the year 2030.

Unnamed Tributary from Bowles Lake

The proposed reserve appears to be adequate to support projected growth out to the year 2030.

Rock Creek

The proposed reserve appears to be adequate to support projected growth out to the year 2030.

Le Bong Creek

The proposed reserve appears to be adequate to support projected growth out to the year 2030.

Foster Creek

There does not appear to be a need for a reserve since the area is entirely within the City of Stevenson and is supplied by City water. The recommendation therefore remains as proposed.

Little White Salmon River

The proposed reserve is adequate to support projected growth out to the year 2030. Although distant from higher growth areas, over the long-term the Little White Salmon River could possibly serve as a regional water source. In fact there is a very large amount of water that could be made available, recognizing the conveyance costs. It is important to consider the benefits of such a large supply.

Wind River above Trout Creek

The proposed reserve appears to be adequate to support projected growth out to the year 2030. Note that this reserve is part of the lower Wind River reserve and the two are not cumulative.

Wind River near Carson

The proposed reserve appears to be adequate to support projected growth out to the year 2030. WDFW and Ecology encourage Skamania County and the PUD to investigate development of a regional water supply near the mouth of the Wind River (e.g., Columbia River backwater area).

Panther Creek

As described in the record, Panther Creek has been identified as important cold water refugia and is critical for steelhead rearing in the Wind River Basin. WDFW and Ecology recommend a year-round closure with a .01 cfs reserve to meet the needs for growth out to the year 2030.

Bear Creek

The proposed reserve appears adequate to meet the projected needs for wells and Group B systems out to the year 2030. However, the Skamania PUD will need additional water by the

year 2030. Additional management strategies will need to be considered and should include development of a regional water supply near the mouth of the Wind River to meet long-term, growth needs for the Carson area.

Trout Creek

The proposed reserve appears to be adequate to support projected growth out to the year 2030. It is uncertain how transfer of the former USFS nursery water right may affect the need for a reserve. This should be discussed.

Martha Creek

There is a need for .002 cfs water from Martha Creek to meet projected growth out to the year 2030. However this stream nearly goes dry during the late summer months and is too low to support additional withdrawal. Consideration should be given to identification of deeper water sources that are in continuity with Trout Creek. No reserve is proposed.

Little Wind River

The proposed reserve appears to be adequate to support projected growth out to the year 2030.

Cold Creek

The proposed reserve appears to be adequate to support projected growth out to the year 2030.