



Lake Tapps, for cities, fish and recreation

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Editorials

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The Cascade Water Alliance signed an agreement with Auburn, Bonney Lake, Buckley and Sumner to provide access to drinking water at Lake Tapps as those cities receive state water permits. The deal looks out 50 years.

WATER enough for the next 50 years. Those are unimaginable words in parts of the country, and even in the rainy Northwest they are cause for celebration.

Now the cities of Auburn, Bonney Lake, Buckley and Sumner can anticipate adequate water supplies out to 2060. Another landmark agreement has been reached on the future of Lake Tapps by the Cascade Water Alliance.

Lake Tapps, south of Auburn in Pierce County, was created nearly 100 years ago to power a hydroelectric dam. Cascade purchased the lake from Puget Sound Energy when it stopped generating electricity in 2004. The reservoir is a valuable long-term source of drinking water.

Management of the lake, fed by the White River, has been a constant topic of negotiations since Cascade, a consortium of five cities and three municipal water districts, and PSE sought to close a deal.

In the agreement signed on Friday, Cascade agreed to leave water in the White River that will be available to the four cities to use if they receive a water right from the state Department of Ecology. The cities would also be eligible for some of the existing water supply provided by Tacoma Public Utilities.

Cascade, which serves 370,000 residents and 22,000 businesses east and south of Lake Washington, has



Water diverted from the White River heads toward Lake Tapps

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and tomorrow



been working to maximize the benefit from “a wonderful regional asset,” in the words of Auburn Mayor Pete Lewis.

Cascade had previously worked out agreements in 2008 with the Puyallup and Muckleshoot tribes to protect salmon runs. In decades past, diversions from the White River had reduced its flow to a trickle. Last spring Cascade and the Lake Tapps Community Council ended years of tough negotiations about the dual use of the lake as a water supply and recreational amenity.

Dozens of city, state and federal dignitaries gathered to celebrate the moment on Friday because good news for Auburn, Bonney Lake, Buckley and Sumner extends to the region.

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