



State DOE Grants Lake Tapps Water Rights to Cascade Water Alliance

Kirkland Views

by Rob Butcher on December 16, 2010

On December 15, 2010, the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) officially granted Cascade a water rights package which will allow Cascade to eventually use Lake Tapps for municipal drinking water. The rights allow Cascade to store water in the Lake Tapps Reservoir, divert water from the White River into Lake Tapps to supply water for the Water Supply Project, and withdraw water from Lake Tapps for municipal water supply purposes.

It also guarantees summer recreation levels for Lake Tapps and ensures robust flows in the White River that will support a healthy habitat and salmon runs while improving the river's water quality. This assures Cascade the first new municipal water supply in the region in decades.

The documents were officially presented to Cascade at its December Board meeting. "It is my pleasure to present, on behalf of the State Department of Ecology, four water rights to Cascade," said Tom Loranger, DOE. "The documents are tremendously technical, but really represent trust between all parties and a cooperative, collaborative effort to provide water for the region's future," he added.

"Acquiring this water right is a significant step for Cascade. It helps fulfill Cascade's mission to meet the long-term



Members of the Cascade Water Alliance Board of Directors and Tom Loranger, Department of Ecology (DEO), as DOE officially grants Cascade the water right package. Back row (left to right): Jon Ault, Skyway Water & Sewer District; David Knight, Covington Water District; Lloyd Warren, Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer District; John Marchione, City of Redmond; John Traeger, City of Issaquah; Tom Loranger, DOE. Front row: Grant Degginger, City of Bellevue; Penny Sweet, City of Kirkland.

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water needs of our members, and it supports a regional water supply system designed to meet the needs of Central Puget Sound well into the future,” said Lloyd Warren, Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Commissioner and Chair of the Cascade Board.

As currently proposed, the project will take 50 years to fully develop and gives Cascade the authority to take an average of 48 million gallons of lake water a day for public use.

In 1980, DOE adopted a rule that closed the White River to new water-right allocations, so Cascade had to demonstrate that the water right package would significantly benefit the environment and the public. Additionally, Cascade needed to demonstrate that the water right would provide a new regional water supply; protect and maintain Lake Tapps; increase the minimum instream flows in the White River to improve water quality and enhance salmon habitat; and place conservation restrictions on streamside and adjacent lands in the White River watershed to support salmon and other wildlife.

Cascade worked closely with the Tribes, Lake Tapps community, Pierce County, nearby cities and other agencies to develop the necessary mitigation strategies and agreements to ensure White River flows and lake levels are protected and enhanced.

Lake Tapps Reservoir, originally created in 1911, is located in Pierce County. It is now owned and operated by Cascade. Currently, private residences and public and private parks surround most of the reservoir, with many boat launch facilities and docks. Lake Tapps Reservoir offers many recreational opportunities for both residents and the public, such as boating, water skiing, fishing, and swimming.

Cascade Water Alliance is a non-profit corporation, comprised of the cities of Bellevue, Redmond, Kirkland, Issaquah, Tukwila, the Covington Water District and the Sammamish Plateau and Skyway Water and Sewer Districts to provide safe, clean and reliable water to its 370,000 residents and 22,000 businesses.

For more information on Cascade Water Alliance visit www.cascadewater.org.

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