



Cascade Water Alliance seals deal for future Issaquah water supply

Issaquah Press

By Warren Kagarise - December 16, 2010

The state Department of Ecology and Cascade Water Alliance sealed a deal Wednesday for a water-rights package to secure a future drinking water source for Issaquah residents.

The rights grant the alliance the authority to use Lake Tapps in Pierce County as a long-term drinking water source.

The rights allow the alliance to store water in the Lake Tapps Reservoir, divert water from the White River into the lake to supply water for the Water Supply Project and withdraw water from Lake Tapps for municipal water supply purposes. The project as proposed could take 50 years to develop.

Under the agreement, Cascade has the authority to use up to 48 million gallons of lake water per day for public use.

Department of Ecology officials presented the documents to alliance board members Wednesday.

"Acquiring this water right is a significant step for Cascade," Lloyd Warren, alliance board chairman and a Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer District commissioner, said in a statement. "It helps fulfill Cascade's mission to meet the long-term 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."

The agency and Cascade [announced the agreement](#) in September.

The decision represents years of negotiations among the alliance, the state, Pierce County, American Indian tribes, nearby cities and Lake Tapps community groups.

The alliance has asked Issaquah residents and other customers to complete a brief survey about Lake Tapps.

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In 1980, the state closed the White River to new water-right allocations, so Cascade had to demonstrate the possible environmental benefit and public need for the proposal.

Many homes and parks ring century-old Lake Tapps. The lake is a reservoir created in 1911 as part of a hydroelectric project. Nowadays, the lake offers many recreational opportunities, such as boating, water skiing, fishing and swimming.

Formed in 1999 and headquartered in Bellevue, the alliance supplies water to more than 370,000 county residents and 22,000 businesses — or nearly 50 percent of retail water sales in King County outside of Seattle. The regional group includes the Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District, Issaquah, Bellevue and other Eastside and South King County cities and water districts.

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