



Focus

Island/Snohomish Water Cleanup Plan Priorities for Fiscal Year 2000

Purpose

This Focus sheet describes ongoing and proposed new Water Cleanup Plans for water bodies within Island County and the Snohomish River basin. The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) is asking for your comments on the proposed list of new Water Cleanup Plans.

Background

The federal Clean Water Act requires states to prepare a list of water bodies that do not meet water quality standards, which are designed to protect fish and other aquatic life, human health and recreational uses. Each water body on the list, known as the "303(d)" list, must have a Water Cleanup Plan, also known as a TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load).

Water Cleanup Plans have five main components:

- Identification of the type, amount, and sources of water pollution in a particular water body or segment;
- Determination of the capacity of the water body to assimilate pollution and still remain healthy;
- Allocation of how much pollution each source will be allowed to discharge;
- A strategy to attain the allocations; and
- A monitoring plan to assess effectiveness.

Each year Ecology evaluates the water bodies in approximately one-fifth of Washington's watersheds to determine which are the highest priorities for developing Water Cleanup Plans. Ecology's Northwest Regional Office is looking at the watersheds of Island County and the Snohomish River basin this year. In order for these plans to be a success, review and comment from local governments, tribes, environmental groups, landowners and concerned citizens is essential at each step in the process.

What's happening with existing Water Cleanup Plans?

There are no Island County water bodies on the 303(d) list. In the Snohomish basin, Water Cleanup Plans (TMDLs) have already been done on the Snoqualmie River and its tributaries and the lower Snohomish estuary.

The Snoqualmie River TMDL is being implemented through wastewater discharge permits, dairy inspections, ongoing monitoring and other activities. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is currently reviewing the Lower Snohomish Estuary TMDL.

Two additional Water Cleanup Plans are in progress in the Snohomish River basin. A Water Cleanup Plan for fecal coliform in the tributaries of the Snohomish River (Quilceda, Allen, French and Woods Creeks, Pilchuck River and Marshlands) is being developed, and a TMDL for temperature has been proposed for the entire Snohomish River watershed. Ecology will be sending additional Focus sheets and soliciting public comment on these Water Cleanup Plans early this year.

Proposed additional Water Cleanup Plans

Ecology needs to decide which of the remaining water bodies should have the next Water Cleanup Plans. We are proposing the following prioritized list, based on fish impacts, human health hazards, potential for improvement, current water quality, and existing Water Cleanup Plans.

Water Body	Pollutant(s)
1. Quilceda Creek and Allen Creek	Dissolved Oxygen, Copper, Lead, Zinc
2. French Creek	Dissolved Oxygen, Lead, Zinc
3. Woods Creek	Lead, Zinc
4. Wood Creek (Marshland)	Dissolved Oxygen
5. Skykomish River	Copper, Lead, Silver, Fecal Coliform

Ecology plans to meet with representatives of local governments, tribes and other interested parties in the area to solicit their input on this priority list and on water quality issues in general.

Beginning February 29, 2000, Ecology will develop a priority list of new Water Cleanup Plans for the entire state. A formal public comment period will be conducted in the spring of 2000.

For more information, please contact:

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