

Ecology's Camps and Cabin Owner's Program Fall 2019 Update

Hello Chinook Pass Cabin Owners – We continue to work closely with local and regional representatives of the U.S. Forest Service to permit the American River cabin communities. The Forest Service has signed a single water right application for all unpermitted cabins. What this means for us is we can permit all cabins with a single report. What this means for you is greater efficiency in permitting and reduced cost. In addition, Ecology has agreed that if proof of a water meter (i.e. picture) is submitted, Ecology will issue a certificate, avoiding the need for a permit or certified water right examination altogether.

We have already completed permitting and have issued mitigation to most of the larger cabin communities across Kittitas and Yakima Counties. Many these communities have a governing community association, share a common source of water supply, and are located in areas where impacts can be mitigated in-time and in-place, meaning they are on or downstream of one of the five large Yakima Basin reservoirs. These factors greatly expedite processing of applications and mitigation contracts.

Our primary focus is to issues mitigation to surface water users, but will also be addressing groundwater. Recall, existing small use of groundwater are legal under the State's permit-exempt statute (RCW 90.44.050), but not such exemption exists for surface water.

In addition, the 40-plus year Yakima River Basin surface water adjudication is nearing the end and Ecology will soon be issuing water right certificates to those cabins that participated in the process. If you receive an adjudicated certificate and your priority date is after May 10, 1905, we will soon be in contact to arrange a mitigation agreement. This agreement will mitigate for impacts during water short years, meaning that your junior water right will not be subject to curtailment.

Next Steps

We will be completing a single report for all American River Cabins in the next six to eight weeks following a few last site visits.

As always, if you have not yet been contacted by us or a designed community representative, please e-mail the project contacts (below) to express interest in the program. Identifying and making contact with individual cabin owners is the most time consuming and often limiting step in the permitting process. Please include your contact information, cabin location, and a brief description of your current water use, including whether it is surface water or groundwater supply, shared or community water system, or single domestic supply.

If there are any additional questions or concerns, please contact either Kelsey and/or Tyson by phone or e-mail:

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