

(Editors note: *The following is an email sent on May 15, 2008 from Kelsey Collins of the Washington State Department of Ecology to persons who signed up for updates on DOE's efforts to secure water rights for cabin owners and group camps. Reproduced by permission.*)

Hello all,

I am writing to you because you have expressed an interest in the Washington State Department of Ecology's efforts to find water for camps and cabins in the east Cascades. In June of 2007 the Legislature provided money to purchase water rights to offset the domestic water use of camps and cabins that by court order may be shut off in low water years. Since then Ecology has been working with contractors and directly bidding on water right purchases.

To date, we have been unable to attract a seller of a valid water right that meets our needs. At this point, we would like to try a new direction and would appreciate your input and involvement. We still have the Legislature's money to purchase water and pay for staff to work on the project.

An informational meeting is scheduled for **6 p.m. on Wednesday, May 28 at Ecology's Yakima office, 15 W. Yakima Ave., Suite 200**, to explain where we've been and what we still need to do.

At this meeting I would like to discuss launching a new appeal from camp staff and cabin owners directly to the public. It's no surprise that a plea for water coming directly from those who need it will be more effective than Ecology's requests. Since the weather is getting warmer, and the news is talking about water levels (high ones, thank goodness), its a good time to get the word out that we're still in the water buying market.

We are considering a letter, news release and advertisement campaign that features the plight of camps and cabins need for water, but want to hear from you before we proceed. In truth, it will take a very small amount of water to provide you with the assurance that your water needs are legally met now and in the future.

The ideal water rights, or portion of rights, we're looking for:

- Adjudicated surface water rights (single ownership preferred over districts and companies)
- Priority date before May 10, 1905
- At least 5 acres of irrigation per right
- Located above Parker Dam (the dam is just south of Yakima)
- The water has been used in the last 5 years

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. For those of you that cannot attend this meeting, I would be happy to speak with you individually. Following the meeting, I will send a summary of our discussion. I hope to see you on the 28th.

Thank you for your time,

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