

## Chapter 173-539A WAC

### UPPER KITTITAS GROUND WATER RULE

#### NEW SECTION

**WAC 173-539A-010 Purpose.** The purpose of this rule is to withdraw from appropriation all unappropriated ground water within upper Kittitas County pending completion of a ground water study. New ground water withdrawals will be limited to those that are water budget neutral, as defined in this rule.

#### NEW SECTION

**WAC 173-539A-020 Authority.** RCW 90.54.050 provides that when lacking enough information to support sound decisions, ecology may withdraw waters of the state from new appropriations until sufficient information is available. Before withdrawing waters of the state, ecology must consult with standing committees of the legislature on water management. Further, RCW 90.44.050 authorizes ecology to establish metering requirements for permit-exempt wells where needed.

In 1999, ecology imposed an administrative moratorium on issuing any ground water permits for new consumptive uses in the Yakima basin, which includes Kittitas County. That moratorium did not apply to permit-exempt withdrawals. In 2007, ecology received a petition seeking unconditional withdrawal of all unappropriated ground water in Kittitas County until enough is known about potential effects from new permit-exempt wells on senior water rights and stream flows. Ecology consulted with standing committees of the Washington state legislature on the petition and proposed withdrawal. Ecology rejected the proposed unconditional withdrawal, and instead signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with Kittitas County. Ecology proposed a rule in January 2009 and Kittitas County questioned ecology's authority for the proposed rule. Ecology later invoked the dispute resolution process under the MOA and the MOA was later terminated.

NEW SECTION

**WAC 173-539A-025 Applicability.** This rule applies to new uses of ground water relying on the authority of the exemption from permitting found at RCW 90.44.050, as defined in WAC 173-539A-030, and to any new permit authorizing the withdrawal of public ground water within the upper Kittitas area boundaries issued on or after July 16, 2009.

NEW SECTION

**WAC 173-539A-027 Advisory.** All unmitigated withdrawals that began after May 10, 1905, may be subject to future curtailment due to conflicts with senior water rights. All unmitigated users are advised to obtain mitigation through senior trust water rights to avoid such curtailment.

NEW SECTION

**WAC 173-539A-030 Definitions.** The definitions provided below apply only to this chapter.

**"Applicant"** includes the owner(s) of parcels that are the subject of a land use application, a person making a request for water budget neutral determination, or a person requesting a permit to appropriate public ground water.

**"Common ownership"** means any type or degree of legal or equitable property interest held by an applicant in any proximate parcel. Common ownership also includes a joint development arrangement between an applicant and any owner of a proximate parcel. A joint development arrangement is defined as involving significant voluntary joint activity and cooperation between the applicant and the owner(s) of one or more proximate parcels with respect to the development of parcels in question. Joint activity and cooperation that is customary or required by land use or other legal requirements does not itself constitute a joint development arrangement. A joint development arrangement may be evidenced by, but is not limited to, agreements for coordinated development and shared use of services or materials for permitting, design, engineering, architecture, plat or legal documents, financing, marketing, environmental review, clearing or preparing land, or construction (including road construction); covenants; agreements for common use of building materials, equipment, structures, facilities, lands, water, sewer, or other infrastructure.

**"Consumptive use"** of a proposed withdrawal is the total

depletion that the withdrawal has on any affected surface water bodies.

**"Ecology"** means the department of ecology.

**"Exemption"** or **"ground water exemption"** means the exemption from the permit requirement for a withdrawal of ground water provided under RCW 90.44.050.

**"Existing use of the ground water exemption"** means a use of ground water under the authority of the exemption from permitting where water was:

(a) First regularly and beneficially used prior to July 16, 2009; and

(b) The water right is perfected within the five years following the first regular beneficial use for that purpose. Water to serve a parcel that is part of a group use begun within five years of the date water was first regularly and beneficially used on one or more parcels in the group is an existing use if the group use remains within the limit of the permit exemption.

**"Group use"** means use of the ground water exemption for two or more parcels. A group use includes use of the exemption for all parcels of a proposed development. It further includes use of the exemption for all parcels that are proximate and held in common ownership with a proposed new development. If a parcel that is part of a group use is later divided into multiple parcels more than five years following the first use, the new uses of the exemption on the resulting multiple parcels will be considered a separate group use distinct from the original group.

**"Land use application"** means an application to Kittitas County requesting a:

- Subdivision;
- Short subdivision;
- Large lot subdivision;
- Administrative or exempt segregation;
- Binding site plan; or
- Performance based cluster plat.

**"New use of the ground water exemption"** means a valid permit-exempt use of ground water begun on or after July 16, 2009. When an existing group use is expanded to serve a parcel in the future, the expanded use is a new use if it begins more than five years after the date water was first regularly and beneficially used for that purpose on any parcel in the group.

**"Parcel"** means any parcel, land, lot, tract or other unit of land.

**"Proximate"** means all parcels that have at least one of the following attributes:

- Share any common boundary; or
- Are separated only by roads, easements, or parcels in common ownership; or
- Are within five hundred feet of each other at the nearest point.

**"Proximate shortplat"** means a shortplat that would be considered a group use with another subdivision or shortplat.

**"Regular beneficial use"** means a use of water under the ground

water permit exemption that is recurring or functioning at fixed, uniform, or normal intervals and is done in conformity with established usages, rules, or discipline.

**"Total water supply available"** means the amount of water available in any year from natural flow of the Yakima River, and its tributaries, from storage in the various government reservoirs on the Yakima watershed and from other sources, to supply the contract obligations of the United States to deliver water and to supply claimed rights to the use of water on the Yakima River, and its tributaries, heretofore recognized by the United States.

**"Upper Kittitas County"** is the area of Kittitas County delineated in WAC 173-539A-990.

**"Water budget neutral project"** means an appropriation or project where withdrawals of public ground water are proposed in exchange for placement of other water rights into the trust water right program that are at least equivalent to the amount of consumptive use.

#### NEW SECTION

**WAC 173-539A-040 Withdrawal of unappropriated water in upper Kittitas County.** (1) Beginning on the effective date of this rule, all public ground waters within the upper Kittitas County are withdrawn from appropriation. No new appropriation or withdrawal of ground water may occur, including those exempt from permitting, except:

(a) Uses of ground water for a structure for which a building permit is granted and the building permit application vested prior to July 16, 2009; and

(b) Uses determined to be water budget neutral under WAC 173-539A-050.

(2) The exception for water used at structures provided in subsection (1)(a) of this section shall not apply or shall cease to apply if the structure is not completed and a water system that uses the new appropriation is not operable within the time allowed under the building permit. This shall not in any case exceed three years from the date the permit application vested. The exception is to avoid potential hardship and does not reflect ecology's view on when the priority date for a permit-exempt water right is established.

(3) Water to serve a parcel that is part of an existing group use is not a new appropriation or withdrawal if the water use to serve such parcel began within five years of the date water was first beneficially used on any parcel in the group, if the first use was prior to July 16, 2009, and the group use remains within the limit of the permit exemption.

NEW SECTION

**WAC 173-539A-050 Water budget neutral projects.** (1) Persons proposing a new use of ground water shall apply to ecology for a permit to appropriate public ground water or, if seeking to rely on the ground water permit-exemption, shall submit to ecology a request for determination that the proposed permit-exempt use would be water budget neutral.

(2) As part of a permit application to appropriate public ground water or a request for a determination of water budget neutrality, applicants or requestors shall include the following information:

(a) Identification of one or more water rights that would be placed into the trust water right program to offset the consumptive use (as calculated pursuant to subsection (3) of this section) associated with the proposed new use of ground water;

(b) A site map;

(c) The area to be irrigated (in acres);

(d) A soil report, if proposed discharge is to a septic system and the applicant or requestor proposes to deviate from the values in subsection (3) of this section;

(e) A property covenant that prohibits trees or shrubs over the septic drain field; and

(f) A copy of the sewer utility agreement, if the proposed wastewater discharge is to a sanitary sewer system.

(3) Consumptive use will be calculated using the following assumptions: Thirty percent of domestic in-house use on a septic system is consumptively used; ninety percent of outdoor use is consumptively used; twenty percent of domestic in-house use treated through a wastewater treatment plant which discharges to surface water is consumptively used.

(4) Applications for public ground water or requests for a determination of water budget neutrality will be processed concurrent with trust water right applications necessary to achieve water budget neutrality, unless:

(a) A suitable trust water right is already held by the state in the trust water right program; and

(b) The applicant or requestor has executed an agreement to designate a portion of the trust water right for mitigation of the applicant's proposed use.

(5) Applications to appropriate public ground water or requests for determination of water budget neutrality that do not include the information listed in subsection (2) of this section will be rejected and returned to the applicant.

(6) To the extent that ecology determines that the mitigation offered would not reliably mitigate to be water budget neutral, ecology may deny the request or limit its approval to a lesser amount.

NEW SECTION

**WAC 173-539A-060 Expedited processing of trust water applications, and new water right applications or requests for a determination of water budget neutrality associated with trust water rights.**

(1) RCW 90.42.100 authorizes ecology to use the trust water right program for water banking purposes within the Yakima River Basin.

(2) Ecology may expedite the processing of an application for a new water right or a request for a determination of water budget neutrality under Water Resources Program Procedures PRO-1000, Chapter One, including any amendments thereof, if the following requirements are met:

(a) The application or request must identify an existing trust water right or pending application to place a water right in trust, and such trust water right would have an equal or greater contribution to flow during the irrigation season, as measured on the Yakima River at Parker that would serve to mitigate the proposed use. This trust water right must have priority earlier than May 10, 1905, and be eligible to be used for instream flow protection and mitigation of out-of-priority uses.

(b) The proposed use on the new application or request must be for domestic, group domestic, lawn or noncommercial garden, municipal water supply, stock watering, or industrial purposes within the Yakima River Basin. The proposed use must be consistent with any agreement governing the use of the trust water right.

(3) If an application for a new water right or a request for a determination of water budget neutrality is eligible for expedited processing under subsection (2) of this section and is based upon one or more pending applications to place one or more water rights in trust, processing of the pending trust water right application(s) shall also be expedited.

(4) Upon determining that the application or request is eligible for expedited processing, ecology will do the following:

(a) Review the application or request to withdraw ground water to ensure that ground water is available from the aquifer without detriment or injury to existing rights, considering the mitigation offered.

(b) Condition the permit or determination to ensure that existing water rights, including instream flow water rights, are not impaired if the trust water right is from a different source or located downstream of the proposed diversion or withdrawal. The applicant or requestor also has the option to change their application to prevent the impairment. If impairment cannot be prevented, ecology must deny the permit or determination.

(c) Condition each permit or determination to ensure that the tie to the trust water right is clear, and to accurately reflect any limitations or constraints in the trust water right.

(d) Condition or otherwise require that the trust water right will serve as mitigation for impacts to "total water supply available."

NEW SECTION

**WAC 173-539A-070 Measuring and reporting water use.** (1) For residential uses (domestic use and irrigation of not more than 1/2 acre of noncommercial lawn and garden) of ground water within upper Kittitas County that begin after July 8, 2008, a meter must be installed for each residential connection or each source well that serves multiple residential connections in compliance with the requirements of WAC 173-173-100.

(2) For all other uses within upper Kittitas County that begin after November 25, 2009, including permit-exempt uses, a meter must be installed for each source well in compliance with such requirements as prescribed in WAC 173-173-100.

(3) Water users must collect and report metering data to ecology within thirty days of the end of each recording period. The following table shows the recording periods and the due dates for each metering report:

<b>Recording Period</b>	<b>Report Due No Later Than:</b>
October 1 - March 31	April 30
April - June 30	July 30
July 1 - July 31	August 30
August 1 - August 31	September 30
September 1 - September 30	October 30

NEW SECTION

**WAC 173-539A-080 Educational information, technical assistance and enforcement.** (1) To help the public comply with this chapter, ecology may prepare and distribute technical and educational information on the scope and requirements of this chapter.

(2) When ecology finds that a violation of this rule has occurred, we shall first attempt to achieve voluntary compliance. One approach is to offer information and technical assistance to the person, in writing, identifying one or more means to legally carry out the person's purposes.

(3) To obtain compliance and enforce this chapter, ecology may impose such sanctions as suitable, including, but not limited to, issuing regulatory orders under RCW 43.27A.190 and imposing civil penalties under RCW 90.03.600.

NEW SECTION

**WAC 173-539A-090 Appeals.** All of ecology's final written decisions pertaining to permits, regulatory orders, and other related decisions made under this chapter are subject to review by the pollution control hearings board in accordance with chapter 43.21B RCW.

NEW SECTION

**WAC 173-539A-990 Appendix 1--Map of upper Kittitas County boundaries.**

**BOUNDARY MAP:  
UPPER & LOWER KITITAS COUNTY**

