

Paul Gottlieb, Editor
Peninsula Daily News
PO Box 1330
305 West First St.
Port Angeles, WA 98362

July 18, 2009

Dear Sir,

I would like to offer some corrections to Jeff Chew's July 16 article *Kessler seeks answers from Ecology*. I was very pleased to see that Mr. Chew reported on the Planning Unit's work to develop a groundwater model of the Chimacum Basin and the grant award for a feasibility study of Peterson Lake. Those two projects, along with the Aquifer Storage and Recovery study currently underway, will provide information that can lead to real solutions for water supply problems, particularly in the Chimacum Basin. The Planning Unit has heard from the public that solutions need to be found for the Chimacum Basin, and that is where it has focused its efforts. Please note that the Department of Ecology is funding all three of these important projects.

However, there are several important corrections to the article that I would like to see made visibly apparent in your newspaper:

1. There were no Ecology officials running that meeting. I run all meetings of the WRIA 17 Planning Unit and its committees, following the Planning Unit's operating procedures. I am an independent consultant retained by the Planning Unit, not an Ecology official. The two gentlemen who made presentations that evening were Scott Brewer of the Hood Canal Coordinating Council, and John Cambalik of the Puget Sound Partnership.
2. Ecology officials, therefore, had nothing to do with the decision not to answer questions at the July 14 meeting. That decision was mine, and was related to the limited time on the agenda and the large number of citizens in attendance. If questions had been answered, they would have been answered by representatives of the Hood Canal Coordinating Council, the Puget Sound Partnership, and the Planning Unit, not Ecology.
3. The 2005 meeting at Fort Worden mentioned by Representative Kessler was a public hearing on the draft instream flow rule, not a WRIA 17 Planning Unit meeting.
4. The Department of Ecology has developed the instream flow rule, not the WRIA 17 Planning Unit. These two processes are separate, albeit related. Comments on the instream flow rule should have been directed to the Department of Ecology by the close of their public comment period on July 10.

The WRIA 17 Planning Unit values public input – that is why the meetings of the full Planning Unit are in the evening. However, it is clear that we need to review our procedures for addressing public comments and questions, and we plan to put that topic on the agenda of our next Steering Committee meeting. That meeting will be Tuesday, August 25, from 10am-12pm at the Spruce Room of WSU Port Hadlock. All of our meetings are open to the public, and we invite public comment after each agenda item and at the close of the meeting.

Sincerely,



Laura Blackmore
WRIA 17 Planning Unit Facilitator and Project Manager