



October 14, 2010

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Chuck Clarke

Kathy Hamel, Water Quality Program
Department of Ecology
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600
AquaticPermitComments@ecy.wa.gov

Re: Cascade Water Alliance Comments

Dear Kathy:

Thank you for opportunity to comment on the DRAFT AQUATIC PLANT AND ALGAE MANAGEMENT NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM STATE WASTE DISCHARGE GENERAL PERMIT, dated September 1, 2010 ("the NPDES Permit").

Cascade Water Alliance has just completed the first year of a multi-year project to control the noxious weed Milfoil in Lake Tapps in Pierce County through the application of herbicides. Cascade became the owner of Lake Tapps during the last year and has been advised that continuance of the control program during the next few years is important to the effective long-term control of Milfoil at Lake Tapps.

Cascade engaged in an extensive public process and engaged with all state and local governmental agencies to assure compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act, and state and local permitting requirements. We engaged the services of the scientists at Tetra Tech and of the expert applicators at AquaTechnex. Washington State Department of Ecology staff has been extremely helpful in the achievement of the control program implemented this year, as well as responding to Cascade's questions about future years. The materials regarding the new NPDES permit are well written. These comments are intended to support a new NPDES Permit that allows an uninterrupted control program at Lake Tapps.

1. Continuity in coverage under current and new permits

The Ecology Publication Number 10-10-056 states: "The draft permit requires a Discharge Management Plan (DMP) for all permit coverages. Existing permittees have one year to prepare their plans. Existing plans are acceptable as long as they contain all the elements outlined in the DMP." To ensure there is no gap in existing permits and plans, Ecology should consider automatically extending the current permits under NPDES Permit No. WAG 994000 until the new permit is issued and under the new permit after it is issued.

2. Continuity between plans

For cost efficiencies for existing permittees who have prepared Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plans (IAVMP), Ecology should consider specifying that the DMP template be satisfied by referencing, where appropriate, the provisions of an existing IAVMP.

3. SEPA

The Ecology Fact Sheet for Draft Aquatic Plan and Algae Management General Permit (page 26) discusses compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Cascade is its own SEPA lead agency and could adopt Ecology's FEIS using the site-specific project information in the DMP as supplemental information to the programmatic FEIS. Is Ecology suggesting that only Ecology can do this? Please clarify.

4. Other permits

Ecology should use this opportunity to clarify in its Fact Sheet any other federal, state, or local permits required for activities under the Aquatic Plan and Algae Management General Permit. Specifically, Ecology should clarify in the Fact Sheet whether, if only activities covered by the Aquatic Plan and Algae Management General Permit will be engaged in, an applicant needs to apply for the following for a specific project:

- A WDFW Hydraulic Project Approval
- Local land use or shoreline permits
- Any federal permits

Again, thank you for your assistance during the last year. Cascade looks forward to continuing to work with Ecology on the Milfoil control program at Lake Tapps.

Sincerely



Chuck Clarke
Chief Executive Officer