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**DEPARTMENT OF RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP
WATER RESOURCES UNIT**

Cliff Moore
Director

October 14, 2010

Kathy Hamel
Water Quality Program - Comments
Washington Department of Ecology
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Subject: Comments on Draft Aquatic Plant & Algae Management Permit

Dear Ms. Hamel:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft Fact Sheet and Aquatic Plant and Algae Permit for 2011-2015. The workshop Ecology conducted on October 4, 2010, provided excellent information and clarified the majority of the questions we had following our initial reading of the documents. We have several areas of general concern in the documents.

1. We support the expansion of the initial Business and Residential notification window to a 10-42 day period (pg. 25). Spring weather is difficult to predict in the Puget Sound region, and this will allow us to wait for the safest and most effective time to apply herbicides.
2. The proposed elements of the new Discharge Management Plan (DMP) and SEPA Addendum are consistent with the Thurston LMD's Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plans (IAVMPs) and SEPA checklists, but differ in organization and terminology. Will we need to revise our IAVMPs to comply with the DMP format? One component of the DMP addresses Equipment Calibration and Maintenance, which is the responsibility of contracted aquatic herbicide applicators hired by the County. What is Ecology's suggestion for addressing this element?
3. We were informed at the workshop that the DMPs will be submitted to Ecology, but not reviewed for accuracy, completeness or appropriate management choices by Ecology. If it is true that some lakes have been over-treated or somehow mishandled in the past, how will Ecology avoid the same circumstances if permittees are allowed to merely certify that their plans are accurate without some technical and expert review at the state level? This is not to suggest that DMPs would deliberately misrepresent conditions, only that mistakes could be made in detail and analysis. Thurston County looks to Ecology as the experts in this situation, and strongly urge Ecology to reinstate a technical review of each application, DMP and SEPA document.

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4. We are concerned that the issue of competing groups and/or permits on one water body is not more clearly addressed. If a homeowner's group holds a permit for only a portion of the lake, how will Ecology handle a second permit application for the same lake? We understand that only 50% of the lake may be treated under the permit, but are concerned about equity for property owners as well as preventing entire lakes from being treated by different groups and permittees.
5. We encourage Ecology to identify those few lakes that have had problems with habitat loss, herbicide drift, and unauthorized applications and work with them specifically to address problems, rather than apply additional corrections and limitations to all parties.
6. LMDs in Thurston County are operating at great expense and the highest levels of public involvement, planning, visibility, and integrated vegetation management programs. LMDs already adhere to stringent requirements since they function as a public governing body answerable for the results of herbicide applications and with considerable public participation in the decision making process. We would like the Permit to acknowledge this reality and reduce posting and notification conditions (page 26) for the LMDs in recognition of their extensive work in community involvement and balancing recreational uses with ecological needs of lakes.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review the drafts of the Fact Sheet and Permit and for considering comments intended to strengthen its effectiveness. We look forward to working with you as the new Permit is finalized.

Sincerely,



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