

To the San Juan County Council

Feb 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Olga Water Users initially opted out of participating in discussions of what we understood to be the formation of a large water district. When we were reassured that this was not the intent, we participated from first meeting on.

Olga Water Users Inc. supports the unanimous motion adopted at a meeting held in Olga attended by 40 people asking the commissioners not to act on the report before them today, until after there have been public meetings with notice in the Sounder. The turn out in Olga was **remarkable**, given the lack of publication of the meeting notice.

East Orcas Water Supply committee member Mark Sawyer was not present at the meeting in Olga. He called to say he was faxing in a statement to the council that he does not support the report with his name endorsing it. He did not support it before but felt it was futile to bring up objections at the meetings.

The most significant error in the report is the gross omission of the substantial negative impact of the proposed plan to divert water from Cascade Creek based on an old water right. It is beyond the scope of the committee to address the decisions on the rights, but recommendations are being made without taking into account the impact as described by Steve Boessow in the minority report.

These environmental impacts should be public meetings on Orcas Island with sufficient time for private citizens to publish their own opinions and hold meetings first, and perhaps even offer significant alternatives that the committee has not considered.

The environmental impact check list was not sent out to the committee, or to Fish and Wildlife. The check list is not available on the county web site, and was not received by the Orcas Library. I have provided a copy of the checklist to DFW, and they have indicated that there are serious errors and omissions, and they will ask for a delay on the determination of non significance. This should not be taken lightly. It would be hasty of the council to adopt a plan under such conditions. The modification of water rights here is well over the 1 CFS threshold considered critical, and even more significant when it may be all there is in the summer. Please refer to the letter from Barbara Ritche (ECY)

Jacque Klug sent a draft letter to the health dept. When I called her about some of her comments, she was under the impression that the meetings over the past 2 years were announced in the paper. She agrees this is a serious issue, and not the desired approach. She was also surprised that her **draft** letter was being distributed, and indicated that she would have worded it differently had she known about the lack of meeting notice publication for the meetings over the past 2 years.

This report affects only Orcas Island. There has not been one single meeting announced on Orcas Island since the committee was formed. The two hearings held in Friday Harbor were prior to the report being available to the public on the county web site (Feb. 1), and no copies have been received yet by the public library on Orcas.

The proposed plan of **protecting the habitat by first converting massive water rights to domestic use is fatally flawed** and should be addressed by the committee, not bragged about.

I urge the commissioners to respond to the public outcry for timely discussions on Orcas Island before adopting the report. **We know from past experience that once adopted, documents rarely get revised, despite our best intentions at the time.**

It would be prudent to wait for comments from Fish and Wildlife on the environmental impact before any action or premature adoption of the report.

Thank you,

Sandy Taylor  
Olga Water Users Inc.

The meeting announcement dates and Sounder publication deadlines are included:

Email Notice	Friday before paper	Paper	Meeting	In time?	
<a href="#">01/23/04</a>			<i>01/30/04</i>	<b>Yes</b>	to form committee
<a href="#">04/27/04</a>	04/23/04	04/28/04	05/04/04	<b>No</b>	
<a href="#">05/26/04</a>	05/21/04	05/26/04	06/01/04	<b>No</b>	
<a href="#">06/29/04</a>	06/25/04	06/30/04	07/06/04	<b>No</b>	
<a href="#">07/29/04</a>	07/23/04	07/28/04	08/03/04	<b>No</b>	
<a href="#">08/31/04</a>	08/27/04	08/31/04	09/07/04	<b>No</b>	
<a href="#">09/28/04</a>	08/24/04	08/29/04	10/05/04	<b>No</b>	
<a href="#">11/03/04</a>	10/29/04	11/03/04	11/09/04	<b>No</b>	
<a href="#">12/28/04</a>	12/24/04	12/29/04	01/04/04	<b>No</b>	
<a href="#">01/26/04</a>	01/21/04	01/26/04	02/01/04	<b>No</b>	
02/23/05			03/01/05	No	
03/30/05	03/25/05	03/30/05	04/05/05	No	
04/27/05			05/04/05	No	
05/26/05			06/01/05	No	
06/29/05	05/27/05	06/01/06	06/06/05	No	
07/29/05			08/03/05	No	

The "work sessions" at the BOCC meeting in Dec and Jan were announced, but the report was not available to the public on the web, or at the Orcas Library.