



**Dungeness River Management Team**  
**Cooperative Management of Our Watershed's Resources**  
Coordinated by Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and Clallam County  
1033 Old Blyn Highway • Sequim, WA 98382 • (360) 683-1109

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August 20, 2010

Mr. Robert F. Cusimano  
Environmental Assessment Program  
Western Operations Section Manager  
Washington Department of Ecology  
P.O. Box 47710  
Olympia, Washington 98504-7710

**RE: Dungeness River Management Team Appeal for Continued WRIA 18 Stream and Ditch Gauges**

Dear Mr. Cusimano:

The Dungeness River Management Team (DRMT), the Watershed Council for East WRIA 18, is extremely troubled at recent news regarding removal of several essential telemetry gauges in the Dungeness Watershed. These gauges are all within the DRMT focus area and include outtakes from the Dungeness River for **Agnew, Sequim-Prairie, Highland** and **Independent** irrigation systems, **McDonald Creek and ditch**, and the **Jimmycomelately gauge** (WRIA 17). The Dungeness watershed supports four ESA-listed fish (Chinook, summer scum, bull trout and steelhead) and has been recognized as a leader in innovative water management. The gauges are very important for continued success in flow improvements and water management.

Stream gauging has always been a high priority of the DRMT, shown by our consistently ranking gauging as our highest priority in Ecology's budget-building processes. Although we commented on the stream gauges during the recent review, we did not know the removal of irrigation ditch gauges was at stake. Had we been aware, this letter would have been crafted much earlier and stream/ditch gauging would again have been our number one priority for the current agency budget discussions. The Jimmycomelately gauge in the Quilcene-Snow WRIA is also of great concern to us, as it also has flow-dependent ESA-listed salmon (chum and steelhead) and millions of dollars invested in habitat restoration. We strongly urge Ecology to continue all these gauge sites as they have been.

Ecology is in the final stages of developing its long-awaited Dungeness Instream Flow and Water Management Rule and water mitigation exchange, both of which will be highly dependent on tracking irrigation diversions. In addition, these gauges play a crucial role in tracking trust water rights on the Dungeness River. Ecology, local governments, the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and the Dungeness Water Users benefit from having these gauges in place. Their importance in the watershed cannot be over-emphasized.

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We understand the state's budget has posed significant constraints on Ecology. However, continuous monitoring of diversions and stream flows has been and will continue to be essential to both Ecology and local goals for water management and flow restoration efforts. We request the option of working with Ecology and others to address long-term support for the gauges. However, we will need more time than currently afforded by your October 2010 date to negotiate partnerships.

Water withdrawals from the Dungeness need to be monitored and to remain within legal limits under state law. The irrigation outtake gauges help fulfill that obligation. We ask you to continue your support of these gauges, as well as those on McDonald and Jimmycomelately Creeks.

Sincerely,



Steve Tharinger (for the Dungeness River Management Team, membership listed below)  
Chair, Dungeness River Management Team  
Commissioner, Clallam County

<i>Clallam Conservation District (Advisory)</i>	<i>North Olympic Land Trust</i>
<i>Clallam County</i>	<i>Protect the Peninsula's Future</i>
<i>Clallam PUD #1 (Advisory)</i>	<i>Riverside Property Owners</i>
<i>City of Sequim</i>	<i>Sequim-Dungeness Water Users Association</i>
<i>Dungeness Beach Association</i>	<i>Sports Fisheries</i>
<i>Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS) (Advisory)</i>	<i>US Forest Service (Advisory)</i>
<i>Dungeness-Quilcene Watershed Planning</i>	<i>WA Department of Fish and Wildlife</i>
<i>Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe</i>	<i>WA Department of Ecology</i>

- c: Representative Kevin VanDeWege  
Senator Jim Hargrove  
Brad Hopkins (Ecology)  
Cynthia Nelson (Ecology)  
Bob Caldwell (WUA)  
Gary Smith (WUA)