



ALPINE LAKES

protection society

March 5, 2015

Via email

Mike Kaputa, Director
Chelan County Natural Resources Department
411 Washington Street, Suite 201
Wenatchee, WA 98801

RE: **Icicle Work Group**

Dear Mike:

Alpine Lakes Protection Society (ALPS) thanks you and County Commissioner Keith Goehner for sponsoring the Icicle Work Group informational meeting held at the Good Shepherd Center in Seattle on February 17, along with the other Work Group members who attended. We appreciate your outreach to our organizations and the public, and the time and effort you put into preparing materials for our review. We ask that you share this letter with the Icicle Work Group at your March 6 meeting.

As advocates for the public lands and resources of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, including the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, ALPS is deeply interested in all activities that impact or affect the management of these lands. To that end, we are concerned about the various Icicle Work Group proposals to manipulate water levels and install structures at Eightmile, Klonaqu, Colchuck, Snow, Nada and any other lakes within the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. Our concerns extend, at a minimum, to the Alpine Lakes Automation-Optimization Project, the Eightmile Lake Storage Project, and the Upper Klonaqu Lake Storage Project.

We encourage the Icicle Work Group to become acquainted with the purposes of the Wilderness Act, which defines wilderness as follows:

“A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.”

By default the Alpine Lakes are here . . . by design they will remain.

We do not object to valid rights of the Icicle-Peshastin Irrigation District, and at the same time we intend to challenge assertions of rights we believe to be invalid. As we said in our February 19, 2014 letter (attached), there are many unanswered legal and factual questions about the extent and validity of Icicle-Peshastin Irrigation District's current water rights, and what expansion would entail. As you undoubtedly heard loud and clear at the February 17 meeting, there is an issue of relinquishment.

Furthermore, proposals regarding expansion of easements, encroachment on wilderness lands, new construction, and increased water diversions in the Wilderness Area are all facially objectionable given the purpose and goals of wilderness designation. Consistent with its mission to protect the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, ALPS reserves its rights to challenge any illegal developments in the Wilderness.

ALPS is not in agreement with the Work Group's conceptual approach toward project development, which appears to involve sacrificing public interests in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness to achieve other goals. Given the definition of wilderness set forth above, it is unclear why the several lakes in the Alpine Lakes have been targeted for automation and modification. These activities would involve substantial encroachment on and interference with wilderness character. While we appreciate the goal to improve instream flows in Icicle Creek, it is contradictory to exploit one natural area to enhance another. It also appears that other options are available for improving instream flows.

We remain interested in dialogue with the Icicle Work Group and ask that you include ALPS on your e-mail communications list and provide notice regarding new studies and SEPA, NEPA and other public input opportunities.

Thank you again for reaching out to the conservation community.

Sincerely,
ALPINE LAKES PROTECTION SOCIETY

Rick McGuire, President

Attachment

cc: Icicle Work Group members
ALPS Board members
other conservation nonprofits