

## Water Rights

Stevens County Commissioners

**Objectors contend Water quantity has not been adequately addressed.**

**Response:**

The objection refers to a “water quantity section of the plan”. It is unclear which section, specifically, the objectors are referring to. Water quantities are speckled throughout the documents (“The national forest contains approximately 500 miles of fish-bearing streams and about 100 lakes and ponds. “ Chpt 1, pg 3, “Estimated annual contribution from lands within the Colville National Forest ownership boundary is 51,500 million cubic feet per year.” Chpt 1, pg 25) There is a Water Resources section (Chpt 2, pg 43) which addresses watershed condition, aquatic and riparian systems, water quality, municipal supply watersheds and source water protection areas, and key watersheds. Desired Conditions mention Instream Flows, Floodplain Inundation, Water Production for Downstream Users.

Objector appears to want the forest to be managed in a way to increase flows in tributaries.

Sec. 219.23 Water and soil resource. (1982 Planning Rule)

*Forest planning shall provide for--*

*(a) General estimates of current water uses, both consumptive and non-consumptive, including instream flow requirements within the area of land covered by the forest plan;*

*(b) Identification of significant existing impoundments, transmission facilities, wells, and other man-made developments on the area of land covered by the forest plan;*

*(c) Estimation of the probable occurrence of various levels of water volumes, including extreme events which would have a major impact on the planning area;*

*(d) Compliance with requirements of the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and all substantive and procedural requirements of Federal, State, and local governmental bodies with respect to the provision of public water systems and the disposal of waste water;*

*(e) Evaluation of existing or potential watershed conditions that will influence soil productivity, water yield, water pollution, or hazardous events; and*

*(f) Adoption of measures, as directed in applicable Executive orders, to minimize risk of flood loss, to restore and preserve floodplain values, and to protect wetlands.*

**FEIS Chapter 3 - Water Resources Plan Components**

*FW-DC-WR-10. Water Production for Downstream Uses*

National Forest System lands produce high-quality water for downstream ecological communities (including human communities) dependent upon them. Watershed scale is used for both Forest and project planning.

**CONCLUSION:**

There is no guidance/direction that states the NFs should be managed in a way that maximized instream flows. While increased flows may result from improving the health of watersheds, this is secondary result from the restoration activities.