

Janice Marlega, P.E.
Project Manager
Skagit County Public Works Department
1111 Cleveland Avenue
Mt. Vernon, WA 98273

4 May 2003

Dear Janice,

On behalf of the membership of American Whitewater and our local affiliates the Washington Kayak Club and University Kayak Club I'd like to thank you for your commitment and interest in the project to remove debris resulting from the failure of the Lookout Creek Bridge. This debris now lies within the Cascade River in a rapid known as Bridge Drop. As you are aware this is a hazard to recreational opportunities on the river and an aesthetic blight within our state's most extensive Wild and Scenic river network which encompasses more than 150 miles of the Skagit River system and it's tributaries the Suiattle, Sauk, and Cascade.

In establishing the Wild and Scenic Rivers program President Johnson highlighted the importance of "preserving free-flowing stretches of our great rivers before growth and development make the beauty of these unspoiled waterways a memory." Section 10(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Pub. L. 90-542 as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1271-1287) which provides general management principles states that the *national wild and scenic rivers system shall be administered in such a manner as to protect and enhance the values which caused it to be included in said system without, insofar as is consistent therewith, limiting other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values. In such administration primary emphasis shall be given to protecting its aesthetic, scenic, historic, archaeological, and scientific features.* This is generally interpreted as a non-degradation and enhancement policy for designated rivers with management designed to protect and enhance the values for which the river was designated, while providing for public recreation and resource uses which do not adversely impact or degrade those values. Clearly removing many tons of bridge debris from the river will be consistent with the language and spirit of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and if it can be safely accomplished it is our obligation to do so. This action will enhance aesthetic and scenic attributes of the river and improve safety for those members of the public who use and enjoy this river for recreation. Currently the Cascade River is the only section of advanced/expert whitewater in the state protected as a Wild and Scenic River and it is known among whitewater paddlers from across the country.

Should you require additional input from the paddling community as planning for this project takes place please do not hesitate to contact volunteers Chris Joosse, Nick Newhall, or myself. Chris and Nick have spent significant time documenting the hazard on site visits at low and high water. During periods of high water this is an extremely hazardous section of river for those without training and knowledge of swiftwater hazards. While we fully support this project we feel it is important for the County to proceed carefully and safely. Additional information on whitewater recreational opportunities on this river can be found on our website at <<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2077/>>

Sincerely,



cc:

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