

We wish you a peaceful holiday season!

The Staff and Board of CELP

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WATERWATCH

Washington WaterWatch
The official newsletter of the Center for Environmental Law & Policy

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Snowy Season's Greetings!

2005 has been a busy and fruitful year for CELP! We harnessed the talents of our two staff (Karen and Shirley), a dedicated Board of Directors, four fabulous summer interns (Sherry Bosse, Laura Fletcher, Sean Johnson, and Meredith Swinehart), and more than a dozen dedicated volunteers, to make great strides in protecting rivers and streams in Washington. Get a glimpse of some of our year's accomplishments inside.... As you'll see, we continue to build our visibility and reputation as water law and policy experts and Washington's only dedicated water watchdog group.

Our annual Wine by the Water event grew into our first-ever benefit auction—complete with a live auctioneer and musical entertainment from two fabulous bands. It was a smashing success and we're already planning to make next year's event bigger, better and even more fun!

CELP said good-bye to three retiring members of our Board of Directors (Joan Foley, Craighton Goeppele and Nancy Rust) and welcomed three new ones: Tom Fox, Michael Harrison and Wayne Ohlrich. The Board and staff completed a five-year strategic financial plan and three-year strategic operating plan that will guide our program work and our fundraising efforts for the next few years.

We created many opportunities to reach the public with our message—participating in local watershed planning efforts all over Washington, presenting at professional conferences, speaking to recreation and civic clubs, appearing on television and radio, and being quoted in local newspapers.

Our advocacy is more effective when echoed by informed citizens like you who weigh in on the important water issues facing our state. Your generosity energizes CELP's mission to protect Washington's heritage of beautiful, clean, flowing rivers!

Thank you for your support this year!

Thanks for Helping CELP Keep Watch on Washington Waters in 2005!

Columbia River Management: An Exercise in Patience & Persistence

Despite a frenzy of legislative and rule-making activity in early 2005, no new Columbia River rule or related legislation passed this year. CELP developed a list of principles for managing this mighty river, and all year we kept beating the same drum: Columbia River water rights should not be issued until basic water management data is gathered and a realistic water budget is developed. These principles guided our efforts to monitor and influence the legislative discussions about the fate of a management regime for the Columbia River. We coordinated and strategized with other “fish-friendly” groups and Indian Tribes to maximize our influence. We even met with representatives of the Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association (a not so fish-friendly group of agri-interests) to try to find common ground on a potential policy direction for river management. Governor Gregoire has appointed a “task force” of legislators to work with her office and the Department of Ecology to develop policy direction about water rights from the Columbia River and what that means for instream flows. Check out the just released “straw proposal” on our website. Stay tuned...



Columbia River

Keeping Watch over Washington Water Rights

In addition to reviewing over 1,200 water right decisions that permit new uses of public water, in 2005 CELP also vigilantly scrutinized 100 applications for emergency drought permits to make sure each one demonstrated a situation that merited this emergency remedy. We influenced state decisions on a number of dubious applications, including the rejection of a few that failed to pass basic legal requirements.

Collaborating with Ecology to Improve Water Decisions

Over the years, CELP has identified shortcomings in the way Ecology documents its water permit decisions. This year, CELP took a proactive approach and offered examples of how these decision documents could be improved. It worked! At the invitation of senior Ecology managers, Karen and Shirley traveled to each of Ecology’s regional offices (Spokane, Yakima, Bellevue, Olympia) and led training sessions of Ecology water permitting staff about how to improve water right documentation. Since then, Ecology has incorporated CELP’s suggestions into its own training and policy materials, and has also published several new policies and procedures — among them, one tightening the way Ecology will handle requests for water right permit extensions.

Fee Increa\$e Hits the Streets

Thanks to CELP’s WATER IS WORTH IT report

Our latest critical issue report resulted in legislation that increased water right application fees from \$10 to \$50, and substantially raised other fees relating to water right processing. In *WATER IS WORTH IT*, CELP made the case for requiring individual water right holders to pay more of the true cost of water management in Washington. These fee increases, the first significant changes since 1917, are an important step toward encouraging water conservation and funding an effective state water management program. Watch in 2006 as we advocate for even more ways to “level the paying field”!

