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MEMO

9/12/2007

To: County Commissioner Columbia River Management Forum

From: Mark Nielson, Manager, Franklin and Benton Conservation Districts

Subject: Definition of “net water savings achieved through conservation” as it relates to RCW 90.90.010

The ability of conservation measures funded under the Columbia River Management Program to deliver new water supplies for in-stream or out-of-stream uses is largely dependant on Ecology’s definition of “net water savings achieved through conservation”.

It appears that Ecology’s preferred definition is based on their current policy document 1210. If allowed to proceed with this definition and policy, conservation measures would provide insignificant amounts of new water supplies. To deliver significant amounts of water within policy 1210, existing water rights would need to be “dried-up” and allocated or moved to new permits or users.

Recommendations:

- Net water savings should be defined as the reduction in diversion/withdrawal from a tributary, river, or groundwater source achieved through conservation.
- The focus of conservation measures should be shaping the flow of rivers (just like storage projects) and not on the concept of consumptive vs. non-consumptive water use contained in policy 1210.