

Water Bank Summary Proposal

We are reviewing the water bank grant application under the 2023-2025 Water Banking Pilot Grants funding opportunity. This summary is posted for a 30-day public comment period. To provide comments on this proposal, use the comment form linked below and include the application number.

Application #: WRWBP-2325-ChCoNR-00037

Accepting comments: 1/29/2025 – 2/28/2025

Summary:

Chelan County Natural Resources Department (County) has applied for a second grant to purchase additional water rights for their water bank.

The County operates a water bank under its Water Code (chapter 13.30), designed to comply with requirements to mitigate for impacts of new rural water use to instream flows and senior water right holders. The County's water bank is tied to the building permit process, collecting fees and issuing water mitigation certificates for rural domestic water supply consistent with water reserves established for the Wenatchee (WRIA 45), Entiat (WRIA 46), and Lake Chelan (WRIA 47) basins. The County's goal throughout all of its closed basins and subbasins is to secure enough legal water authority to meet the demands for a 50-year growth projection.

Under a previous Ecology grant, the County is expanding their water bank to include the entire geographic area of Chelan County. The expanded geographic area would include WRIAs 40A-Alkaki-Squilchuck, 45, 46, and 47; other tributaries to the Columbia River; and the mainstem Columbia River. The expanded water bank will serve multiple new purposes of use including irrigation, commercial, industrial and municipal.

Mission Creek, a subbasin of the Wenatchee Basin, has long been the focus of intensive habitat restoration efforts for steelhead to improve instream flows, fish passage, instream habitat, water quality and riparian vegetation. During late summer Mission Creek itself can reach critically low flows, even going dry in places, largely due to upstream irrigation diversions. At the same time, residential growth in Mission Creek subbasin, and new water demands, is continuing. The County's current reserve quantity in Mission Creek has approximately 1-2 years left based on recent growth patterns.

The County proposes to buy additional water rights within the Mission Creek Basin. The water right acquisition will help the county meet near-term and future water supply demands within the subbasin and one-third of the water rights will be permanently dedicated to instream flow to offset environmental concerns within the basin. The proposal will fund the following:

- Due diligence and acquisition costs for Mission Creek water rights, which are:
 - Senior surface water rights not subject to instream flows.
 - Irrigation (May 1-Oct 1) appropriate for offsetting rural residential demands (lawn irrigation) within the basin
 - Estimated between 43.1 and 86.3 acre-feet each year
 - Located upstream of most anticipated future development in the basin .
- One-third of the acquired water right will be permanently dedicated to instream flows to meet the funding requirements set by the Legislature.

[Online Comment Form](#)

Read more about [Water Banking Pilot Grants Program](#)