

## Esther Kronenberg Comments on behalf of Citizens for a Clean Black Lake

August 31, 2021

I am here as Co-Chair of Citizens for a Clean Black Lake to submit a petition signed by 255 Thurston County citizens in support of the Black Lake District residents' petition to dissolve the Black Lake Flood Control District which was improperly created by the County on a lake that does not flood.

We also request the Board of County Commissioners to create a Lakes Management District in accordance with RCW 36.61, which is the law that the State Legislature expressly enacted to address the problems of water quality present in lakes like Black Lake and others around the State.

The current 3 member Black Lake Board has kept the lake clear of noxious weeds and algae for the purposes of recreational boating. However, because it only represents a special interest group of boat-owning lakefront property owners, it does not and never will have the vision, expertise, or legal authority to manage an increasingly challenged complex lake ecosystem of such vital significance to the entire County.

Black Lake isn't a small land-locked lake with a few houses on the shore. It's the largest lake in the County. The Black Lake Basin comprises 5000 acres. It overlies 16 Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas and the drinking water supply of Tumwater and Olympia. It connects to federally protected waters in Budd Inlet and Puget Sound, home to endangered Orcas and Salmon. It overlies the State's Strategic Groundwater Reservation established by the State legislature in 1986.

Because the groundwater of our area is all hydrologically connected, whatever goes into Black Lake will find its way into all these vital water supplies and into waters and habitat protected by the Endangered Species Act. What happens at Black Lake does not stay at Black Lake. It affects us all.

## Esther Kronenberg Comments on behalf of Citizens for a Clean Black Lake

No site specific environmental review has been done for any of the actions taken at Black Lake by the Flood Control District, even though state environmental law requires an environmental impact statement for projects which may adversely affect environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, endangered species or their habitat, all of which exist at Black Lake.

We are talking about the Strategic Groundwater Reservation for the State Capital. According to WAC 173-591, the Department of Ecology in cooperation with local government agencies "shall" monitor the reservation to maintain accurate information on the quality and quantity of groundwater reserved in WAC 173-591-070. Further "local governments with land use authority are urged to exercise their authorities to protect the quality of the public groundwaters reserved for future public water supply..."

RCW 90.54.140 states that "protection of groundwater aquifers which are the sole drinking water source ...shall be of the uppermost priority of the department of ecology, department of social and health services, and all local government agencies with jurisdiction over such areas, and...shall explore all possible measures for the protection of the aquifer..."

To give a sense of the urgency of our present situation, please consider the 1986 law which created the strategic groundwater reservation predicted a capacity intended to serve an estimated population of 288,000 in 2033. We have already exceeded that and development continues unabated without knowing if we actually have enough water to support it.

How can the County legally or morally justify delegating the enormous responsibility it has to protect the groundwater supply and to responsibly steward its largest lake, its environmentally sensitive area overlying 16 critical aquifers and the outflow which connects to federally protected waters with endangered species to 3 lakefront property owners with no expertise? It doesn't make any sense.

## Esther Kronenberg Comments on behalf of Citizens for a Clean Black Lake

A Lakes Management District, which clearly states its purpose in its name, would require actions be reviewed by Ecology, DFW and DNR. It is more democratic with 12 citizens acting as advisers where all projects are pre-approved by the voters in the District instead of the current system where 3 people make unilateral decisions indefinitely. A Lakes Management District has obligations to enhance fish and wildlife. It would be eligible for matching grant funds, especially if presented to agencies as a project to protect the groundwater of the State Capital. It is the intended method designed by the legislature for dealing with water quality in lakes.

Ultimately, we ask the Board to widen its perspective on water resources and recognize and respect the interconnectedness of not only our groundwater supply, but of all the flora, fauna and human elements of the Black Lake ecosystem that depend on each other. ALL these voices have the right to be heard and we all have the responsibility to protect and restore Black Lake to the gem that it is. We urge you to once again assume that responsibility.

Thank you.

Esther Kronenberg, Co-Chair  
Citizens for a Clean Black Lake  
Olympia, WA

