

Trout Unlimited Group Says No to Dams

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The Olympia chapter of Trout Unlimited is the latest voice to chime into the great dam debate and whether placing two earthen dams on the upper Chehalis River would be a feasible or viable option for flood control.

The fish advocacy group sent a letter to the state Legislature voicing its concerns of what dams would and couldn't do.

"Originally our biggest concern was the area of Pe Ell, which is the last big spawning point for steelhead," said Rick Abbett, chair of Chehalis Basin flood control for the Olympia chapter. "I think everybody needs to have a clear head on this, and at this time it doesn't seem like we're getting that. It seems like this is a really expensive proposal that will take a long time."

Abbett said the group's number one priority was protecting human life as quickly as possible and dams could be a decade or more away from construction. Trout Unlimited suggested the end of logging steep slopes, building in the floodplain and using resources used to restore the wetlands and use aquifer retention to "rebuild the natural chain of safety nets."

"Cities continue to have land use practices knowing full well the danger," Abbett said about continued construction in the floodplain.

The group held a forum on the topic of dams in January to get more information. Members from the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority and representatives from involved state departments discussed the issue.