

Kittitas County Water Resources Program

Lower Kittitas County Water Budget Neutral Application Processing Proposal

In partnership with Ecology, Kittitas County is proposing to implement a new application process for Water Budget Neutral (WBN) Determinations in Lower Kittitas County, outside of the Upper Kittitas Groundwater Rule area ([WAC 173-539A](#)). The proposed process would enable private water bank customers to submit a Request for Determination of Water Budget Neutrality to Kittitas County. As needed Kittitas County could request technical assistance from Ecology to make these determinations. This proposed application process would reduce the WBN review and processing timeline and help address Ecology staff capacity issues.

Kittitas County Code requires all new exempt uses of groundwater in the Yakima River Basin, including those within lower Kittitas County, to receive a Water Budget Neutral Determination prior to submitting building plans ([KCC 13.35.027](#)). Unlike the Kittitas County Water Bank, private water banks do not have Over the Counter (OTC) service areas, so individual WBN applications are required for each proposed new use. Ecology has recognized that their authority to make Water Budget Neutral Determinations is specific to the Upper Kittitas Groundwater Rule area, but not having this process available for private water banks would restrict their ability to serve parcels in lower Kittitas County.

Applicants could request that Kittitas County, rather than Ecology, process new WBN applications for permit-exempt projects outside of the Upper Kittitas Groundwater Rule area in the green zone. For continuity, the application itself would be similar to Ecology's Request for Determination of Water Budget Neutrality. A portion of the application processing would include verifying the project is exempt, located in the green zone, and the water bank has water available to allocate. Ecology has developed a suitability map to reference for each water bank. Most applications are expected to be for single domestic use and lawn irrigation. For applications where other uses of groundwater are proposed (commercial uses, irrigation of crops, etc.) Kittitas County could request technical assistance from Ecology to verify the mitigation water provided is adequate.

Reporting:

Kittitas County currently sends reports to Ecology staff quarterly as part of the OTC program and provides biannual reports to the WTWG. For the new WBN application process, we are proposing to send Ecology an additional quarterly report for WBN applications issued and an extra page to the biannual reports for WTWG. The quarterly report would include the date received, date issued, location of the project (parcel number/map number), applicant information, water bank information, total CU allocated, type of water use, and unique well tag ID (if available).

Map of WAC 173-539A Area and Lower Kittitas County Green Zone

