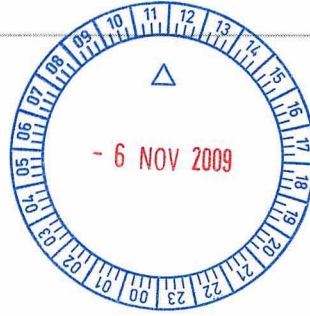


PUBLIC

Stephenson, Cassandra

From: Adams, David P
Sent: Friday, 6 November 2009 9:14 AM
To: Stephenson, Cassandra
Subject: Recreational access to public water supply



Good morning

I am a 57 year old that was born and raised in the Jarrah forest settlements that once housed many families in the south west and have had a lifelong passion for both marroning and fishing in the freshwater streams and dams. For many years now I have attended meetings and presented arguments to government authorities that access to rivers and dams in the catchment areas should be relaxed and managed rather than a locked gate approach.

The entire Darling Scarp from Mundaring to Collie is largely locked away from public access due to catchment areas, dieback and mining leases. This forest is a wonderful community asset that could be managed in so many better ways.

The current thinking in the water corporation is that recreational access in water supply dams poses a health risk, albeit a very small risk. This ignores the fact that all country water supply dams up until the last few years have allowed dual use of the drinking water dams. As an example Harvey dam and Stirling dam supplied both irrigation and drinking water to local towns and it was only when Stirling dam became part of the metropolitan integrated water supply that recreational access was banned. Oddly enough mining, logging and international car rally events were still permitted along with camping on the main feeder stream at Hoffman's mill.

Prior to making Stirling Dam a water supply dam and banning recreation the waters and rivers commission conducted water testing on Stirling dam. Their published findings showed that the water quality was exceptional and required only chlorination before being added to the metropolitan integrated supply. These findings prove that the unrestricted recreational access that was allowed on that dam for over fifty years had absolutely no effect on water quality.

This report is available at the website <http://www.water.wa.gov.au/firstdowPublic/resbyfield.jsp?term=Stirling+Dam&field=SUBJECT&searchtable=&displayFormat=BIBLIOGRAPHY>

If you open the PDF link it shows under sections 5 and 6 that the water quality in Stirling dam was very high and that it was used to top up Harvey dam from which public water supply was obtained.

I can fully understand that any relaxation of access requires management and that this comes at a cost. These costs can be contained by allowing only certain activities that have a low impact to water quality. I would suggest that activities such as water skiing and motor cycles that would pollute the water with hydrocarbons should not be allowed but fishing and marroning (pellet baits only) from the banks of the shore or stream and the use of canoes and electric powered boats be allowed. Canoes and electric powered boats provide a level of separation between the human body and the water body.

There is currently a major issue with recreational angling for oceanic species in WA and I believe that opening up recreational access to the freshwater will alleviate this problem to some extent. The economic benefits to south west towns is considerable and opens up a whole range of tourism opportunities. Pemberton for example counts freshwater fishing as a major attraction in the region.

I would also suggest that access be managed via an "access license" or such similar to national parks access license and revenues be used to provide additional rangers and facilities such as toilets. This works well in our national parks and see no reason why a similar arrangement cannot be used for water catchments.

Many of the water supply dams in the eastern states allow recreational access without issue and in fact these activities generate a large amount of income for surrounding communities.

As you can see I have had many years experience and knowledge in these areas and would welcome any opportunity to discuss this further with yourself or your committee.

Regards

David Adams