

**(Letter “talking points” suggested by “EAT”, the Environmental Action Team of Orcas Women’s Coalition)**

**THE SITUATION:**

*Cascade Creek is the last wild salmon stream in San Juan County. The creek requires enough cool, clean water flows for adult salmon to spawn and for their young to grow quickly. When young salmon grow quickly, they have a better chance to survive their journey to the open ocean, where they can grow adult salmon (then in turn nourish our endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales). Water is currently being diverted by Orcas Water Holdings (whose principals also own Rosario Resort) away from Cascade Creek to power their hydro-electric generator. At times, such diversions cause low stream flows in Cascade Creek that threaten the salmon.*

*During times when the salmon have needed more water, the current owners of Rosario Resort have voluntarily diverted less water from the creek in order to help the salmon and other fish survive. The Land Bank has secured grant money to lease or buy outright a portion of the water rights to the creek. But Rosario Resort (and the accompanying water rights to Cascade Creek) are currently up for sale. We don’t know who any of the prospective buyers are or whether any of them may have intentions of leaving additional water in Cascade Creek so that the salmonids and other fish can survive.*

*We are asking you to write letters to the legislators listed below, to local media and send emails to your friends alerting them all to the opportunity we have now to either make a public purchase of the resort and its water rights or, alternatively, to make the new buyer aware of the Cascade Creek’s situation and its fight for survival.*

*Thank you very much for your help in passing the word!*

**THE ACTION: A WRITING CAMPAIGN**

Please write letters to ensure sufficient water for Cascade Creek salmon.

- Write to the legislators and officials listed below to let them know that you care.
- Write letters to our local media to attract others to the cause.

**CASCADE CREEK LETTER bullet points you might refer to when writing:**

- Cascade Creek is the last natural Coho salmon spawning stream in San Juan County, and probably supports more salmonid biomass than all the other watersheds in the San Juan Islands combined, likely much of that biomass upstream of the Rosario outtake (Rot, De Groot, et al 2019).

- Reduced stream flows have limited or in some years completely depleted the Coho salmon run which Chinook juveniles and adult Chum also use. Despite public expenditures to improve salmon habitat in Cascade Creek, the lower creek has recently failed to support salmonids due to consumptive water diversions that degrade instream flow year-round (Rot, De Groot, et al 2019).
- The vitality of the creek has dwindled under a succession of private owners of Rosario Resort. A perennial change of ownership impacts the immediate natural environment. Simply allowing another speculative purchase for private economic gain ignores the ill health of the stream, the surrounding state park and our entire island.
- After last 18 months of a public health crisis and in face of climate change, the critical need is paramount for caring for one another's well-being including our fellow creatures and our physical environment. The recent death of "Cappuccino" (this year) and the situation of "Tahlequah" exhausting herself by carrying her dead calf for 17 days (2018) are reminders of an eco-system completely out of balance. These are only two dire reminders of the immediate need for salmon recovery and protection throughout the Salish Sea.
- What could become of Rosario, to further our goals of stewardship and sustainability? Possibilities might include:
  - A cross border (US/Canada) cross cultural (Coast Salish Tribes and First Nations/nonindigenous) Salish Sea environmental learning center
  - Publicly-owned eco-tourist center modeled after the Mt Rainier Park facilities
  - School for the study and showcasing of careful resource management.
- Possibilities:
  - Public ownership of the resort could be a critical turning point in actually undertaking what we find important. Washington State could purchase Rosario Resort, and WA State Parks could manage it. Ownership by Washington State Parks would further celebrate Robert Moran who, in 1921, generously donated the more than 2,700 forested acres that are now Moran State Park.
  - The University of Victoria and Western Washington University or other public consortium could convene conferences and courses at Rosario that center about critical topics such as fostering sustainability and international cooperation in this time of climate instability.
  - There could be an international contest to design small, but truly wonderful, "net-zero" lodging for visitors to Rosario. The winning designs could inspire visitors (students, conference attendees, eco-tourists) who experience living in smaller, thoughtfully designed spaces that use fewer resources.

- If private buyers are the future owners, they could be swayed to help if they learn that people are passionate about saving the only salmon stream left in our county. Those potential buyers need the facts. They need to know what you know, you who live here, all who cherish the Salish Sea.
- There is currently grant money to lease or buy a portion of the water that the owners of Rosario Resort divert from the creek to generate hydroelectricity. Instead of hydro, fossil fuel-free electricity could be generated by solar panels for example. Conservation of energy would be a push from the other end, of course.
- Public players include: Rep Lekanoff, Coast Salish Tribes, WA State Parks, SJC Land Bank.
- Your own ideas in restoring our creek and park...be bold! Be sincere!

**PLEASE SPEAK FROM YOUR HEART TO SAVE THE LAST WILD SALMON RUN IN SAN JUAN COUNTY.**

**PLEASE WRITE TO:**

Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002  
<https://www.governor.wa.gov/contact/contact/send-gov-inslee-e-message>

State Representative Debra Lekanoff – 40<sup>th</sup> District  
[Debra.lekanoff@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Debra.lekanoff@leg.wa.gov)  
[Kaylee.galloway@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Kaylee.galloway@leg.wa.gov)  
JLOB 422  
P O Box 40600, Olympia, WA. 98504-0600

State Senator Liz Lovelett  
[liz.lovelett@leg.wa.gov](mailto:liz.lovelett@leg.wa.gov)  
215 John Cherberg Bldg, PO Box 40440, Olympia, WA 98504  
Vice Chair, Environment, Energy and Technology

State Senator Christine Rolfes  
[christine.rolfes@leg.wa.gov](mailto:christine.rolfes@leg.wa.gov)  
303 John Cherberg Bldg, PO Box 40423, Olympia, Wa 98504  
Chair, Ways and Means

State Senator Marco Liias  
[marko.liias@leg.wa.gov](mailto:marko.liias@leg.wa.gov)  
PO Box 40421, Olympia, WA 98504  
Senate Majority Floor Lead

State Representative Steve Tharinger  
[steve.tharinger@leg.wa.gov](mailto:steve.tharinger@leg.wa.gov)  
JLOB 314, PO Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504  
Chair, Capital Budget

State Representative Timm Ormsby  
[tim.ormsby@leg.wa.gov](mailto:tim.ormsby@leg.wa.gov)  
JLOB 315, PO Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504  
Chair, Appropriations

State Representative Joe Fitzgibbon  
[joe.fitzgibbon@leg.wa.gov](mailto:joe.fitzgibbon@leg.wa.gov)  
JLOB 320, PO Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504  
Chair, House Environment & Energy Committee

Jeff Davis  
[jeffrey.davis@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:jeffrey.davis@dfw.wa.gov)  
WDFW, PO Box 43200, Olympia, WA 98504  
Director, Conservation Policy

Mary Verner  
[mary.verner@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:mary.verner@ecy.wa.gov)  
WA State Environmental Program Manger

Becky Kelley  
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PO Box 40002, Olympia, WA 98504  
Governor Inslee's Climate Change Director

State Representative Alex Ramel – 40<sup>th</sup> District  
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P O Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504