

Supplemental Budget Request

Status: Pending

Public Works

Natural Resources

Suppl ID # 4964

Fund 1908

Cost Center 19082577

Originator: Gary Stoyka

Expenditure Type: One-Time

Year 1

2025

Add'l FTE ☐

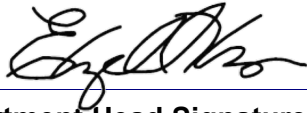
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Priority

1

Name of Request: County Water Rights Legal Services

X



Department Head Signature (Required on Hard Copy Submission)

Date

Costs:	Object	Object Description	Amount Requested
	6630	Professional services	\$300,000
	Request Total		\$300,000

1a. Description of request:

The Washington Department of Ecology filed a water rights adjudication in Whatcom County Superior Court in May 2024 and will send out summonses to all water right holders in 2025. Whatcom County has multiple water rights and permit-exempt wells that serve County properties. Whatcom County is required to file claim forms for each of these water rights to ensure continued use of these rights. Whatcom County has hired an outside law firm to assist in responding to the summonses and it is anticipated that assistance will be needed from a consultant as well. Costs for these outside services are being charged to the department that owns and operates the properties and associated water rights.

1b. Primary customers:

Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works Department, Conservation Futures Program staff, Flood Control Zone District.

2. Problem to be solved:

The County is required to respond to Court summonses in the WRIA 1 water rights adjudication to preserve its water rights. Responding to the summonses will require legal and technical expertise from outside firms.

3a. Options / Advantages:

The County does not have the necessary expertise; consequently, contracting with outside firms is the best approach.

3b. Cost savings:

Costs for these services will be charged proportionately to the departments that have the water rights.

4a. Outcomes:

Whatcom County will be able to properly respond to the summonses from the court and preserve the County's legal water rights.

4b. Measures:

Water rights claims will be filed with the court.

5a. Other Departments/Agencies:

Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Conservation Futures program staff

5b. Name the person in charge of implementation and what they are responsible for:

Gary Stoyka, Public Works

6. Funding Source:

Following the initial assessment of the water rights and properties, the cost associated with each water right will be charged to the fund associated with that property or facility. It is anticipated that most of the costs will be charged to Parks Department funds with lesser amounts charged to the Flood Fund, Road

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Fund, and possibly Conservation Futures Fund.