Comments for Green River as an Outstanding Resource Water

My name is Laurie Kerr. I reside in Battle Ground, Wa. and have lived here for 35 years. I am the leader of the local chapter of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness, a women-led organization whose mission is to advocate, educate, and steward wild public lands. I have been the leader for 6 years and we currently have 100 paid members.

Our chapter of the GOB has hiked many of the trails in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest as well as in and around Mt St Helens National Monument, including the Hummocks trail, Boundary trail, June Lake, Johnston Ridge, Coldwater Lake, Siouxon Creek, and others. These hikes offer unique opportunities for recreation among Mt St Helens area as well opportunities for scientific research during the recovery stages following the eruption. I have seen the changes to the ecosystem over the years and watched as forests were obliterated, lupines emerged, and then Indian Paintbrush, which attracted elk. We have witnessed Roosevelt elk feeding in the valley as we hiked along.

The value of clean drinking water cannot be underestimated for the community of Kelso. The Green River is the largest tributary of the North Fork Toutle River in the US state of Washington. I have personally spent time in parts of Mexico where clean drinking water is not available, purchasing bottled water for drinking. I have also gotten sick with giardia from drinking unsafe water and have been ill with bouts of stomach cramps and diarrhea for several weeks.

The Green River is not only a pristine area within a protected area of Mt St Helens Monument, it also offers a unique value from the recovery of the eruption, and provides high water quality to the down-stream communities. The time is NOW to preserve this precious resource. I urge you to designate the Green River as a river of Outstanding Resource Water tier III at the highest level to protect and maintain the water quality. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.