

The Chelan County Water Management Program



Chelan County is implementing a Water Management Program starting April 1, 2021 to protect senior surface water and groundwater water rights and to ensure water reliability for new domestic uses. This guidance is intended to offer step by step instructions on how to get a building permit and comply with the new program. A separate document, Frequently Asked Questions, helps explain why this program is needed, which is available at the County's website at www.co.chelan.wa.us/natural-resources.

Step 1: Determine Availability

To get a building permit necessitating potable water, Chelan County must determine that water is both physically and legally available.

Physically Available: The applicant must demonstrate access to an adequate potable water supply. This can be done with one of the following:

- Letter of availability from an approved public water supply
- Drilled well meeting state and Chelan-Douglas Health District (CDHD) standards and requirements producing 400 gallons/day/connection
- Surface water source meeting the CDHD standards
- Other means as approved by CDHD health officer

***NEW REQUIREMENT* Legally Available:** The applicant shall provide evidence that potable water is legally available. This is done with one of the following:

- Water right from the Washington State Department of Ecology
- Letter from an approved water purveyor stating the ability to provide water
- Mitigation Certificate issued by Chelan County

The process for determining physical availability has been in place prior to April 1, 2020. The process for determining legal availability is a new requirement under the new Water Management Program effective April 1, 2021.

Step 2: Review Water Mitigation Requirements

In this step, you will need to determine if your building permit application requires a Chelan County Water Mitigation Certificate for legal access to water. This is dependent on three factors:

1. **Permit Type:** New Residential Building Permit - any structure that requires a new water use, including but not limited to, a single family residence, accessory dwelling unit, manufactured home, garage, or others. New structures on the same parcel that replace or provide an alternate source of water for an existing water use are exempt.
2. **Location:** This program applies to the following areas: Entiat Basin (WRIA 46), Lake Chelan Basin (WRIA 47), and Wenatchee Basin (WRIA 45).
3. **Water Source:**
 - a. If you provide evidence of a water right from the Department of Ecology for potable water OR a letter from an approved water purveyor stating their ability to provide water you DO NOT need a Water Mitigation Certificate.
 - b. Water Mitigation is necessary for a well (single or shared) without a permitted water right OR a surface water connection without a permitted water right.



Step 3: Complete Water Mitigation Application

Applicants applying for building permits requiring mitigation will complete the Water Mitigation Application and apply directly to Chelan County Community Development prior to submitting a building permit application. Water mitigation and administration fees will be collected at this time. All applicants must disclose whether they have access to outdoor irrigation water (e.g., irrigation district shares or water right), building permit type, and whether they propose to use a well or surface diversion.

Applicants with existing homes requiring mitigation will use the same application and process, indicating the mitigation is for an existing use rather than a new building. For example, if you have an existing home on Lake Chelan and withdraw water directly from the lake without a water right permit, this requires a water right on file with Ecology or a mitigation certificate issued by Chelan County.

Step 4: Collect Fees

There are two new fees associated with this Water Management Program that must be paid when the water mitigation application is submitted: 1) Water Mitigation Administration Fee, and 2) Water Mitigation Fee. Refer to the table below for the list of fees associated with the new program:

Application Type	Geographic Area	Fee
Water Mitigation	Lake Chelan Basin	\$1,000
	Upper Wenatchee and Wenatchee Tributaries	\$1,000
	Lower Wenatchee River	\$0
	Entiat Basin	\$0
Water Mitigation Administration	Wenatchee, Entiat and Lake Chelan Basins	\$1,000
Water Mitigation Annual Assessment	Wenatchee, Entiat and Lake Chelan Basins	\$0
Excess Water Usage Agreement	Wenatchee, Entiat and Lake Chelan Basins	\$0

The Water Mitigation Administration Fee covers county staff costs and must be paid on every new Water Mitigation Certificate in all areas in this program.

The Water Mitigation Fee covers the cost of developing mitigation by the County, and must be paid on new Water Mitigation Certificates if the applicant proposes to rely on County-provided mitigation. This fee does not apply in the lower Wenatchee River and Entiat River Basin at this time. An applicant proposing to use their own water right for mitigation does not pay this fee as long as the County finds it is suitable under Washington State Department of Ecology and Chelan County criteria.

Step 5: Obtain Finding of Water Adequacy

CCNRD will review the Water Mitigation Application. The applicant can request County-supplied mitigation (“I need a water right”) or Self-mitigation (“I have a water right on file with Ecology”). This step requires the following: 1) A completed Mitigation Application packet, consisting of a Notarized Statement of Understanding and an Affidavit of Irrigation Availability, and 2) payment of the Water Mitigation Administration Fee and the Water Mitigation Fee (if County Mitigation requested). Once CCNRD agrees that County-mitigation or applicant-mitigation is sufficient and appropriate fees are paid, it issues a “Finding of Water Adequacy” and provides that to the applicant. The Finding of Water Adequacy Checklist must be submitted as part of the building permit application.

After the Building Permit is approved by CCCD, applicants may apply for Final Occupancy permits through community development. This step requires the following: 1) A signed deed if applicant-proposed mitigation, or 2) recording of a Mitigation Certificate for the property.

Step 6: Annual Reporting

Chelan County will annually report mitigation certificates it issues, along with the status of the water mitigation supplies it holds to the Department of Ecology.