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Letter: Logging causing low streamflows

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The recent low streamflows during summer months that are hampering the further development of properties at Falcon Cove are not just a function of climate change shortage of rain during critical months, or summertime overuse of existing supply.

The meticulously conducted 2016 Perry/Jones study (bit.ly/2BkcZWV) by scientists from Oregon State University demonstrates that low streamflows during summer months are directly related to past and ongoing logging. A scan of the hills east of Falcon Cove shows heavy logging over many years.

The Perry/Jones study used paired samples in experimental forests, primarily in the western Cascades, to compare mature and old growth parcels with replanted plantation sites. The study found that stream flows from the plantations parcels during summer months were 50 percent lower than those coming from mature stands. What was most shocking was that the same 50 percent water loss persisted, even when replanting had taken place 50 years earlier.

The Perry/Jones study was corroborated in 2017 by Christopher Frissell, lead scientist for Frissell and Raven, a highly reputable hydrobiological and landscape firm (bit.ly/2HPGX YA). He concluded, "The great majority of forested watersheds in the Pacific Northwest are likely experiencing severe, but previously unrecognized streamflow deficits caused by past and ongoing logging."

In light of these findings, residents of Falcon Cove who have to truck in some of their water during the summers might consider getting the timber companies to foot some of the bill.

ROGER DORBAND

Astoria