



# FIVE THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU IRRIGATE

If you are looking for land to farm in Clallam County, you'll probably want land that comes with irrigation water. Irrigation, especially commercial irrigation, is not allowed everywhere. Before committing to a piece of property, answer the following questions to determine whether you can (or should) irrigate.

## #1. Do I need to irrigate?

Water is a scarce resource in the summer, and it should be managed conservatively. **Depending on your situation, irrigation may not be necessary.**

- If you are **growing crops** commercially or for home consumption, irrigation is nearly essential for good yields, so you probably need to irrigate.
- If you are establishing new landscape plantings, you probably need to irrigate. Once established, a thoughtfully-designed and maintained landscape with low water-demand plants like our native trees and shrubs and thick mulch, can survive with little or no irrigation. **Allow your lawn to go dormant** in summer, only irrigating once for each month without significant rainfall. (see <http://clallamcd.org/conservation-around-the-house/>)

*Consider irrigation a privilege rather than a right, even if you have the right.*

## #2. Do I have a legal right to irrigate?

For all intents and purposes, commercial irrigation requires you have a water right issued by the Washington State Department of Ecology or be served by an irrigation district or company (which hold water rights for their users). A water right specifies the source of water, when, where, how much water you are entitled to, and the purpose of water use.

## #3. Am I served by an irrigation district or company?

In the Dungeness Valley, between Johnson Creek and Siebert Creek there are four irrigation districts and three companies that hold water rights from the Dungeness River and McDonald Creek. These districts and companies provide water to their constituents for **irrigation from April 15 to September 15** and sometimes for livestock during the remainder of the year. Irrigation districts are special purpose units of local government. Irrigation companies (sometimes referred to as associations or groups) are private not for profit organizations.

- If your land is within the boundaries of an **irrigation district** (see map), you are legally allowed to use irrigation district water. Due to land subdivisions over the decades, some parcels may not have access to a district's water. If you must have irrigation district water, try to work with your neighbors to get permission to pipe the water to your land.
- If your land is located within the service area of an **irrigation company** (see map), you must own shares in the company in order to use the water. Not every company has shares available for new users. Check with a company representative (see *Irrigation Contact List*) to find out if new shares can be purchased.



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## #4. Can I irrigate from my private well?

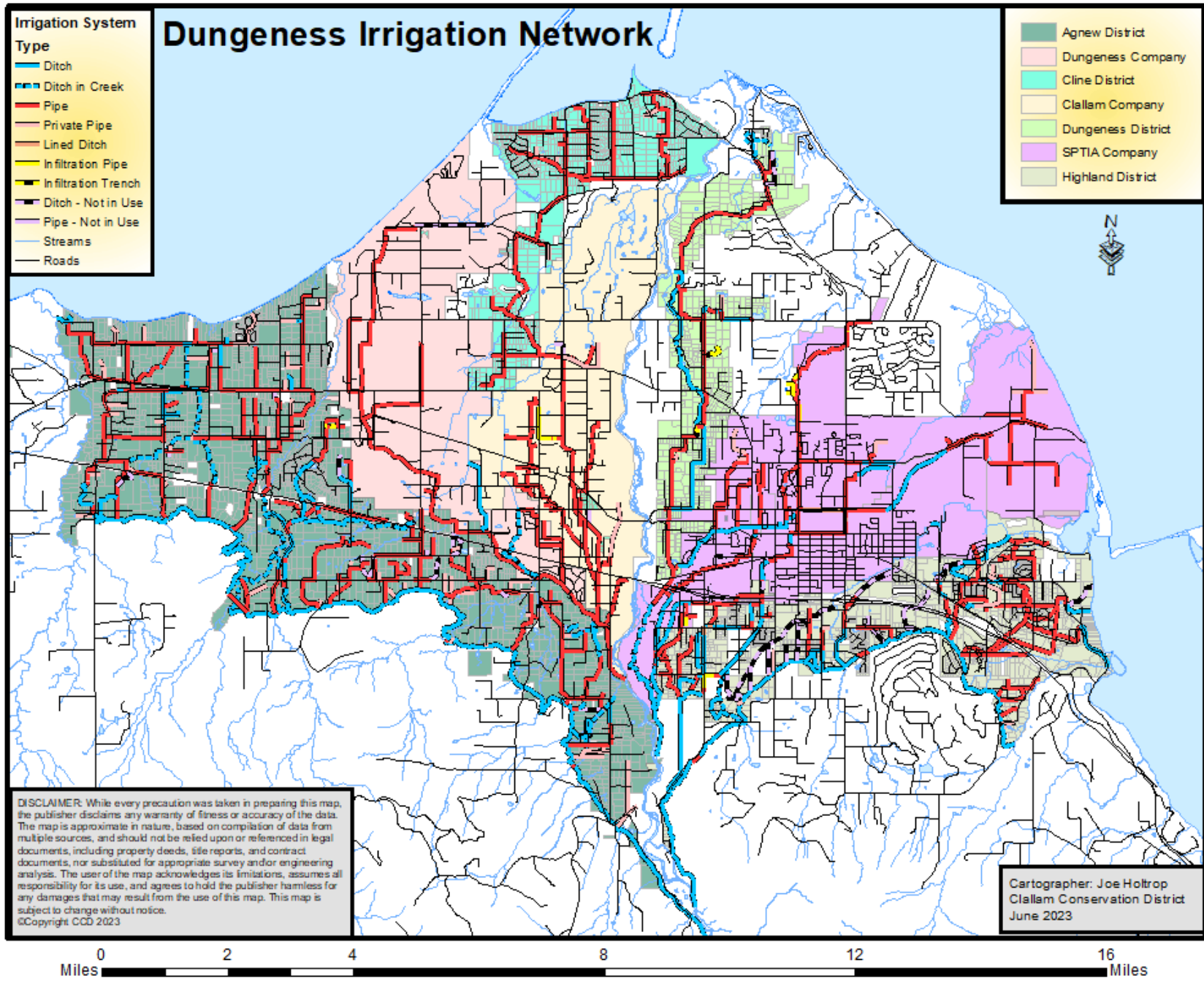
It depends. **If you do not have a water right and are not served by an irrigation district or company, your irrigation rights are very limited.**

- All wells put to use after January 1, 2013 in the **Dungeness Water Rule area** (Bell Creek watershed to Bagley Creek watershed) require a mitigation certificate. Mitigation certificates are available by purchase from the Dungeness Water Exchange operated by Washington Water Trust.
  - Separate mitigation certificates are required for indoor and outdoor water uses.
  - Additional fees are required for livestock water.
  - Visit the [Dungeness Water Exchange website](#) for more details and the current fees.
  - No outdoor water use is allowed uphill of the irrigation network (see map). However, you are allowed to install cisterns to collect roof runoff water to irrigate a small garden or provide water for livestock.
  - *And, a water right is required to irrigate with water from a pond.*
- For all other areas of Clallam County, a permit exempt private well entitles you to withdraw a **maximum of 5,000 gallons per day (GPD) for all water needs**. Landscape and garden irrigation is limited to ½ acre, but commercial use (including irrigation) is allowed up to 5,000 GPD. Landscape irrigation over ½ acre or withdrawals greater than 5,000 GPD require a [water right from Ecology](#), except water for livestock, which is not limited. ***These water uses and allowances are permitted in the DWR area only if supported by evidence of pre-2013 usage, even for pre-existing wells.***
- If you are served by a city, the PUD or a community water system, you are subject to their rules and regulations. ***Group B community systems served by permit exempt wells are limited to a total of 5,000 GPD and a total of ½ acre of landscape irrigation.***

## #5. How much water do I need?

**How much water you use depends on how much you need.** How much water you need depends on the crop you are growing and the climate. Soil type (texture) determines the amount of water you apply per irrigation and how frequently you need to irrigate. Contact Clallam Conservation District for irrigation requirements for specific crops and application schedules for specific soil types. For reference purposes, optimum irrigation for grass hay/pasture totals about 18 inches over the irrigation season and raspberries need about 24 inches. **Regardless of your water rights, it is illegal to waste water.**

- **If you have a water right**, your right specifies how much water you are entitled to (instantaneous rate and annual total) and when you can divert it (from a surface water source) or withdraw it (pump from a groundwater source).
- **If you are served by an irrigation district or company**, you are allowed to take water at a maximum rate of 0.02 cubic feet per second or just under nine gallons per minute. You are only allowed to irrigate up to one acre of lawn and landscaping. Ponds are prohibited unless necessary to pump from.



# DUNGENESS RIVER AGRICULTURAL WATER USERS ASSOCIATION

Seven irrigation districts and companies serve the Dungeness Valley. Collectively, they are known as the Dungeness River Agricultural Water Users Association. Each association member maintains their own water rights and manages their irrigation water delivery systems.

Below is the 2023 contact list for each irrigation district and company, listed from west to east. Please refer to the [Sequim Irrigation website](#) for contact list updates.

## 2023 CONTACT LIST

| ORGANIZATION & CONTACT  | PHONE        | EMAIL  |
|---|--------------|--|
| Agnew Irrigation District   | 360-683-4331 | <a href="mailto:agnewirrigation@gmail.com">agnewirrigation@gmail.com</a>                 |
| Dungeness Irrigation Group  | 514-571-0048 |  |
| Cline Irrigation District   | 360-640-9785 | <a href="mailto:sjojmo85@gmail.com">sjojmo85@gmail.com</a>                               |
| Clallam Irrigation Association <a href="http://www.clallamditch.org">www.clallamditch.org</a> | 360-912-3939 | <a href="mailto:ccdditchwalker@gmail.com">ccdditchwalker@gmail.com</a>                   |
| Dungeness Irrigation District   | 360-670-2263 | <a href="mailto:sequim135@gmail.com">sequim135@gmail.com</a>                             |
| Sequim Prairie Tri-Irrigation Association   | 360-808-7847 | <a href="mailto:secretary.spt@gmail.com">secretary.spt@gmail.com</a>                     |
| Highland Irrigation District  | 818-264-8858 | <a href="mailto:highlandirrigationboard@gmail.com">highlandirrigationboard@gmail.com</a> |
| WDFW Fish Screen Maintenance  | 360-972-0698 |  |