



**SKAGIT COUNTY FOREST
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June 29, 2012

RECEIVED

JUN 29 2012

SKAGIT COUNTY
PDS

Betsy Stevenson and Skagit County Planning Commission
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Dear Ms. Stevenson and Planning Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments on the updated SMP prior to making the final decisions. Because there are several sections that have not yet been completed it makes it very difficult for us to give a full and comprehensive review of the full Plan and to fully understand how it may impact the Forest Industry. As these sections become complete we will provide further comments.

As an initial review of the draft revised SMP we have the following comments and concerns:

1. **Natural:** 6A-3.5 Commercial forestry may be allowed as a **conditional use** in the Natural environment provided it meets the conditions of the State Forest Practices Act and its implementing rules and is conducted in a manner consistent with the purpose of the Natural environment designation.

We don't understand why it allows low intensity agriculture, but then for forestry it requires a CONDITIONAL USE? This is unnecessary with the already required State provisions of the Forest Practice Rules. This additional permit is expensive, time intensive and another revenue generating regulation should not add any more restrictions than are already realized by the Forest Practice Rules. The Forest Practice Rules have an Adaptive Management provision that is reviewed by state agencies (DOE and WDFW) as well as NMFS and NOAA. This needs to be dropped.

2. **Rural Conservancy Purpose:** The purpose of the Rural Conservancy environment is to protect ecological functions, conserve existing natural resources and valuable historic and cultural areas, provide for sustained resource use, achieve natural floodplain processes, and provide recreational opportunities.

Examples of uses that are appropriate in a Rural Conservancy environment include low-impact outdoor recreation uses, **timber harvesting on a sustained-yield basis**, agricultural uses, aquaculture, low-intensity residential development and other natural resource-based low-intensity uses.

What does timber harvesting on a sustained-yield basis mean? What definition are you using? Are you creating a whole new set of rules and definitions? The Forest Practice Rules have already built in the requirement for sustainable-yield. Why is forestry having additional restrictions?

3. *Conservancy – Skagit Floodway Purpose* **Text to be added – In development.** *Designation Criteria*

Text to be added – In development *Management Policies* **Text to be added – In development**

There is no text...how do we comment? And deadline is June 30th!!! Please let us know when there is draft language.

4. GENERAL: Why is mining and related activities listed as appropriate and not ag or forestry in Urban Conservancy?

5. *Forest Practices Policies* **6A-13.4 Forest practices should minimize adverse impacts on scenic views of, and from, Skagit County shorelines. Areas providing a diversity of views, unique landscape contrasts and panoramas, and recreational resources within forest practice areas should be identified and maintained where possible. [Existing comp. plan policy 6A- 11.10]**

This policy needs to be amended in the Comp Plan and should not occur within the Shoreline Policies. This type of policy can lead to legal actions that are intended to halt harvesting. We have seen this before and even at the end of the day when the courts found that logging was permissible within the view shed, it was costly and created extensive time delays. There are regulations in place in the Forest Practice Rules that require 'green up' and trees to be planted. This needs to be removed.

What is really meant by forest practice areas? Is this on State lands? Are you suggesting private landowners need to identify and maintain recreational areas and the like? This goes beyond the Forest Practice Rules and private property rights.

6. Under transportation we believe that there should be support for the transportation of logs and included.

7. *Shoreline Vegetation Conservation Policies DRAFT Chapter 14.04, DEFINITIONS Amendments Skagit County Code SCC 14.26 42 6A-28.1* **Protect, enhance, and maintain healthy trees and vegetation to support habitat, aesthetics and recreational values.**

It is hard to determine the context for this, but it appears that it may be inconsistent with forest practices. i.e. 'protect' and 'harvesting trees' could be in conflict with each other. We need staff help us understand this whole section.

8. Shoreline Residential. Looking at the chart:

The chart is coded according to the following legend.

SD/E = Permitted, may be subject to Shoreline Substantial Development Permit or shoreline exemption requirements

CU = Conditional Use Permit

X = Prohibited; the use is not eligible for a Variance or Conditional Use Permit

UPLND= Same as adjacent upland environment

-- = Not applicable

	Natural	Conservancy- Skagit Floodway	Rural Conservancy	Shoreline Residential	High Intensity	Aquatic
Dredging	--		--	--	--	SD/E ⁷
Dredge material disposal, in-water	--		--	--	--	CU
Dredge material disposal, upland outside CMZ	X		SD/E	SD/E	SD/E	--
Dredge material disposal, upland inside CMZ	X		CU	CU	CU	--
Dredging or dredge material disposal associated with restoration	SD/E		SD/E	SD/E	SD/E	SD/E
Fill, Excavation, and Grading						
Fill	X ^{4,9}		SD/E	SD/E	SD/E	CU ⁸
Excavation, grading	X ⁹		SD/E	SD/E	SD/E	-- ¹⁰
Flood Hazard Reduction						
Dikes, levees	X		SD/E	SD/E	SD/E	CU
Forest Practices	CU ^{11,12}		SD/E	X	SD/E ¹³	X ¹⁴
Agriculture	SD/E		SD/E	SD/E	SD/E	-- ¹

Why is Ag allowed in Shoreline Residential and FP are not? Why is a CU required for FP and not Ag in the Natural designation?

Again, thank you for the opportunity to make initial comments on the draft revisions to the SMP. We look forward to having staff come to a meeting and help explain some of our questions as well. If you have any other questions of us, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Dave Chamberlain
 Chairman
 Skagit County Forest Advisory Board