



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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To: Floodway property owner

RE: Use of property located in the floodway

Dear Property Owner,

This letter is intended to provide information and answer some common questions about allowable uses and restrictions in the floodway according to Skagit County, Washington State and FEMA regulations.

BACKGROUND

Floodway regulation is required by FEMA as part of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Skagit County also participates in the Community Rating System (CRS) program that FEMA has established to grade communities on how well they are managing potential flood losses. Private flood insurance policy holders in Skagit County currently enjoy a 30% discount on their rates because of Skagit County's favorable rating.

FEMA and/or Washington State conduct periodic visits to assess how well Skagit County is continuing to follow the adopted codes and policies. This includes field visits to frequently-flooded floodplain and floodway areas. If violations are found, these could negatively affect Skagit County's rating and result in an increase in insurance premiums for every flood insurance policy-holder in the county.

To avoid these increases in premiums, as well as decrease possible property damage or personal injury, Skagit County wishes to assist property owners in remaining or becoming compliant with the adopted floodplain and floodway codes.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Below are a few common questions we receive from floodway property owners:

1. Can I construct a new building on my property?

An unenclosed picnic shelter, RV cover or similar structure consisting of posts and a roof could be built, if all other codes are complied with. Larger or enclosed structures may require a "No-Rise Study", which many find to be cost-prohibitive. See Skagit County Code 14.34.190 for additional information.

2. Are recreational vehicles allowed to be placed on my property?

Yes. The RV must be fully licensed and ready for highway use without the requirement for special highway permits, be towable by a regular duty truck without the requirement for special licenses, be on its wheels or jacking system, and have no permanently attached additions.

Also, the RV may not be placed in the floodway from November through April of any calendar year, except that RVs are allowed to be placed during this time for weekend and holiday use for a period not to exceed 14 days.

3. Is a park model considered an RV?

Yes. A park model is an RV and is subject to the same rules as any other RV.

4. Can a park model RV be used as a permanent residence?

No. RVs of any kind may only be used on a temporary basis.

5. Are building permits required for constructing buildings or structures in the floodway?

Yes.

6. I've heard that some buildings 200 square feet or smaller do not require permits. Would my building qualify?

The exemption from obtaining a building permit under Skagit County Code 15.04.030(1) does not apply to construction within the floodway.

7. Are building permits required for "temporary" buildings, shipping containers, or sheds on skids?

There is no provision for building permit exemption for temporary buildings, shipping containers or sheds when located in the floodway. These structures are required to comply with the same rules and restrictions as any other building.

8. Can I build a storage shed in the floodway as long as it has wheels?

Possibly, if constructed on a currently licensed, road-ready, standard-size trailer. See also the answer to question 2 regarding RVs.

Skagit County is interested in working with you to ensure that any use of or improvements to your property remain or become compliant with floodway requirements.

If you wish to find out additional information about property usage within the floodway, please call (360) 336-9410 or email jrmoore@co.skagit.wa.us .