

NATURAL RESOURCES/ENVIRONMENT

NOVEMBER 2005

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Fidalgo Island, although part of Skagit County, is more similar in landscape to the San Juan Islands. The Island provides many dramatic views of the surrounding land and water areas.

Critical Areas

- Wetlands
- Wildlife habitat areas
- Lakes and Streams
- Low Flow stream areas
- Geological Hazardous Areas
- Aquifer Recharge Areas

ISSUES IDENTIFIED TO DATE

Substantial portion of land is not buildable

- Steep slopes risk erosion & impermeability
- Steep slopes can cause increases in storm water runoff and contaminate other groundwater & wetlands
- Saltwater intrusion in aquifers
- History of landslides in part of the area

SUBAREA PLAN FEATURES

- Identify rural & mineral resource lands
- Identify recreational open space
- Identify Critical Areas
- Consistency with Skagit County Shoreline Master Plan

Potential tools and trade-offs:

Buffers around critical areas

- + Protection of ground water and prevention of infiltration problems
- + Habitat protection for species
- Density moved elsewhere
- Limited use of land

Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRD)

- + Provide services to protect public health, keeps density contained to one area
- Costly extension of urban services



UTILITIES

NOVEMBER 2005

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Skagit County PUD #1 and City of Anacortes water serve portions of South Fidalgo Island. A few areas on the west side of the island are served by community water systems such as Del Mar and Sunset. Individual wells are used throughout the rest of the area. The entire subarea is not served by sewer, and residents rely on individual septic systems.

ISSUES IDENTIFIED TO DATE

Some soils are unsuitable for septic tanks and deter additional density & development. Due to the location in unincorporated rural Skagit County sewer services are not allowed except in Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRD).

- Septic tank failures affect Similk Bay & wetlands
- Drainage problems create groundwater issues for wells
- Changes in land use & land cover have altered the infiltration & permeability of groundwater
- The county should prepare a detailed drainage and watershed study of South Fidalgo Island. The study is necessary to determine the development capacity of subarea lands.

SUBAREA PLAN FEATURES

- Description of regulatory setting
- Identification of special districts and future plans
- Inventory of existing public & private utilities
- Capacity & Level of Service (LOS)

Potential tools and trade-offs:

Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRD)

- + Provide services to protect public health
- Costly extension of urban services

Extension of water services

- + Would protect public health from shallow aquifers
- Would allow more density

