

BEFORE THE SKAGIT COUNTY HEARING EXAMINER

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

Applicant: Winston and Elaine Anderson

Address: 6237 South Shore Road
Anacortes, WA 98221

File No: Current Use Open Space #06-2014

Request: To transfer 41.7 acres from Current Farm and Agricultural to the Current Use Open Space program

Location: South side of Guemes Island within NE1/4 Sec. 7, T35N, R2E., W.M.

Assessor's Nos: P32763, P32765, P96273, P32784, P32786

Public Hearing: After reviewing the report of the Assessor's Office, the Hearing Examiner conducted a public hearing on October 29, 2014. The Assessor's Office recommended approval.

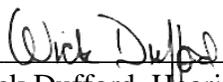
Recommendation: Approval

FINDINGS

1. On September 25, 2014 Winston and Elaine Anderson applied for the transfer of approximately 41.7 acres from the Current Use Farm and Agricultural classification to the Current Use Open Space program.
2. The property is on the south shore of Guemes Island. It is within NE1/4 Sec. 7, T35N, R2E, W.M. Parcel Numbers are P32763, P32765, P96273, P32784, and P32786.
3. The property was formerly farmland, but has been fallow for at least 75 years, except for some cattle grazing. The property contains two permanent residences, one large shop with quarters above and one tractor barn.
4. The property has historical significance. A home was built there in 1865 by James Clayton Matthews, the island's first homesteader. His son James and his native wife, Louise Cayou, farmed the land and raised 14 children. Many of their descendants still live on the island.
5. The present applicants purchased the property in two pieces, in 1978 and 1984, and have maintained most of it essentially in a natural state. Traces of the old homestead have been found, but the bulk of property is now forest and meadow land serving as the drainage for a stream that flows from late October into June or July. A pond has been built to the north by the owners, which acts as a centerpiece for surrounding wetlands.
6. South Shore Road transits the property above the shore on the south side. The waterfront consists of 800 feet of rocky beach. From it there is a panoramic view of Anacortes, Cap Sante, Fidalgo Bay and southwest Padilla Bay. The property and its shore support many species of waterfowl.
7. As open space, the property would protect streams, stream corridors, wetlands, natural shorelines and aquifers. The classification would likewise preserve historic sites and preserve scenic vistas and visual quality.
8. The applicants are in discussions with the Skagit Land Trust over the creation of a conservation easement on the property. The Land Trust notes that the property borders over 500 acres of protected lands on Guemes Island, either owned by a conservation entity or by private landowners subject to conservation easements.
9. The hearing was held after due notice. There was no public testimony and there were no written public comments.
10. The Examiner finds that the property meets the definition of the classification sought.
11. The Staff recommends approval. The Examiner concurs with Staff.

RECOMMENDATION

The Examiner recommends approval of the application.



Wick Dufford, Hearing Examiner

Date: November 20, 2014

Copies transmitted to Applicant: November 20, 2014