

agcao

From: Betsy D. Stevenson **Sent:** Fri 10/21/2011 10:54 AM
To: Betsy D. Stevenson
Cc:
Subject: Invitation to Confer Regarding ESHB 1886 (Ruckelshaus) Voluntary Stewardship Program
Attachments:

Dear Agricultural or Environmental Association,

Skagit County is currently considering enrollment in the State's Voluntary Stewardship Program for protection of critical areas in areas of agricultural activity, created by the Legislature earlier this year through the legislation recommended by the Ruckelshaus Center, ESHB 1886. Section 4(2) of the legislation requires the County to confer with tribes and environmental and agricultural interests before enrollment.

Skagit County Planning & Development Services has released a proposed ordinance that would:

- Elect to enroll the County in the Voluntary Stewardship Program
- Nominate the Samish and Skagit watersheds for priority designation by the State Conservation Commission
- Make minor changes for clarity and organization to the County's existing critical areas ordinance for ongoing agriculture (SCC 14.04 Definitions and 14.24 Critical Areas)

The proposal is currently in a formal public comment period, with a public hearing before the County Planning Commission on November 1. Our planning and legal staff is available to meet with your staff to further explain the proposal and program and take your comments and suggestions. More information about the proposal is at www.skagitcounty.net/agcao.

The Voluntary Stewardship Program is an opportunity to put aside more than a decade of litigation and work for real progress toward agriculture preservation, water quality, and habitat restoration in the Skagit and Samish watersheds. We encourage your support for the County's enrollment in the program and your participation in ongoing efforts to find solutions that will benefit farms and fish alike.

Betsy

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