

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

A. BACKGROUND

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

A Resolution establishing the Skagit County Salmon Heritage Program

2. Name of Applicant:

Skagit County Planning & Development Services

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

Skagit County Planning & Development Services
1800 Continental Place
Mt. Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 419-3373
Contact: Tom Karsh, Special Projects Administrator

4. Date checklist prepared:

March 16, 2007

5. Agency requesting checklist:

Skagit County Planning & Development Services

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

There will be a joint public hearing before the Skagit County Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners to take comments on the proposal. The public hearing date has been set for April 24, 2007 to consider the establishment of a Salmon Heritage Program. The Skagit County Board Commissioners will take final action on the proposal in late May, 2007.

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

This proposal is related to actions to amend SCC 14.24.120 (Ongoing Agriculture), to amend SCC 14.44 (Enforcement) and to amend R20040211 (Monitoring and Adaptive Management Program related to Ongoing Agriculture). SEPA documents are being released at the same time regarding these related actions.

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

1. Best Available Science Report. Use of Best Available Science in Skagit County Critical Areas Ordinance (Wetlands and Fish & Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas). The Watershed Company. January 17, 2007.

2. Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement evaluating alternative approaches that Skagit County may implement to protect critical areas and lands in on-going agriculture under the Growth Management Act issued June 12, 2003.
3. Skagit County Salmon Habitat Monitoring Program – 2004/2005 Baseline Report. Skagit County Public Works. December 2006
4. Skagit County Monitoring Program Annual Report – 2006 Water Year (October 2005 – September 2006). Skagit County Public Works. February 2007.
5. Lower Skagit River Tributaries Temperature Total Maximum Daily Load Study. Department of Ecology. January 2004.

The information listed above is available to view on Skagit County's website at skagitcounty.net

9. Do you know of pending applications for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.

None known

10. List any government approvals of permits that will be needed for your proposals, if known.

Skagit County Board of Commissioner's approval is required for the adoption of the Salmon Heritage Program by code or resolution.

11. Give a complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist which ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers of this page.

The Salmon Heritage Program would acquire conservation easements on riparian habitat in areas zoned Agriculture-NRL and Rural Resource-NRL inside the unincorporated areas of Skagit County. The conservation easements would restrict any activities in the easement area incompatible with salmon habitat protection. In addition the areas under easement would be made available for future habitat restoration projects.

The program will fully compensate property owners fair market value for their easements. For the program to be deemed successful at least 80% of the available riparian habitat (as defined by the program) must be acquired by 2012. If this is not accomplished the program requires the County to legislate mandatory buffers.

For additional information see the attached staff report and proposed resolution establishing the Salmon Heritage Program.

12. Location of the proposal. Please give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, please provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Please provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map if possible. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist. (Indicate if maps or plans have been submitted as part of a permit application.)

Lands zoned Agriculture-NRL and Rural Resource-NRL inside the unincorporated areas of Skagit County, WA located within Ranges 1-12 East and Townships 33-36 North, W.M., Skagit County, WA.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

Not Applicable

C. SIGNATURE

The above answers are true to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature:  _____

Date: March 16, 2007

D. SUPPLEMENT SHEET FOR NON-PROJECT ACTIONS

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

The proposed Salmon Heritage Program would not likely to result in any increase in discharge, emission, production or release any of the above beyond what is already occurring or permitted. In fact, acquisition of riparian buffers under the Salmon Heritage Program is likely to reduce these discharges. Any specific development resulting from this Salmon Heritage Program shall be subject to all applicable codes, regulations and statutes from the local, state and federal jurisdictions.

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

The proposed Salmon Heritage Program is not likely to have any adverse effect on any of the above beyond what is already occurring or permitted. The Salmon Heritage Program is intended to better protect the functions and values of critical areas including wetland, fish and wildlife habitat conservation, geologically hazardous, critical aquifer recharge, and frequently flooded areas. Any specific development resulting from this Salmon Heritage Program shall be subject to all applicable codes, regulations and statutes from the local, state and federal jurisdictions.

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

The proposed Salmon Heritage Program will not facilitate any depletion of energy or natural resources beyond what is already occurring or permitted.

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

The proposed Salmon Heritage Program is not likely to have any negative effects. The establish of a Salmon Heritage Program is intended to protect the functions and values of critical areas including wetland, fish and wildlife habitat conservation, geologically hazardous, critical aquifer recharge, and frequently flooded areas. Any specific development resulting from this Salmon Heritage Program shall be subject to all applicable codes, regulations and statutes from the local, state and federal jurisdictions.

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:

The proposed Salmon Heritage Program greatly enhances the existing County regulations meant to protect critical areas within areas of the County adjacent to ongoing agricultural activities. Any possible use or affect from any specific development resulting from the proposed Salmon Heritage

Program shall be subject to all applicable codes, regulations and statutes from the local, state and federal statutes.

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

The proposed Salmon Heritage Program is intended to strengthen environmental protection of the shorelines based on recommendations included in the Best Available Science Review documents. The Salmon Heritage Program is likely to result in a reduction of total acreage in agricultural production. The Salmon Heritage Program works in conjunction with the existing Shoreline Management Master Program. The Shoreline Management Master Program and the Shoreline Element of the Comprehensive Plan remain unchanged. Any specific development resulting from the Salmon Heritage Program shall be subject to all applicable codes, regulations and statutes from the local, state and federal statutes including the Shoreline Management Master Program.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:

The County will acquire conservation easements on riparian habitat in Agricultural-NRL and Rural Resource-NRL zoned land and increase compliance monitoring to better protect riparian habitat. To mitigate impacts for reduction of lands in agricultural production, the Salmon Heritage Program will provide compensation and will fund ongoing maintenance, fencing and removal of noxious weeds in the buffer area. Any possible use or affect from any specific development resulting from the establishment of a Salmon Heritage Program shall be subject to all applicable codes, regulations and statutes from the local, state and federal jurisdictions including the Shoreline Management Master Program.

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

The proposed Salmon Heritage Program will not effect demands on transportation or other public services or utilities.

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:

None required. Any possible use or effect from any specific development resulting from the proposed Salmon Heritage Program shall be subject to all applicable codes, regulations and statutes from the local, state and federal jurisdictions.

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

None anticipated