



Snohomish County Council

For Release: August 2, 2007

Contact: 425.388.3494

Email: county.council@co.snohomish.wa.us

NEWS RELEASE

County Council adopts updated Critical Areas Regulations

The Snohomish County Council took an important step Wednesday to provide better protection for our local communities and natural resources through the adoption of revised Critical Areas Regulations. The regulations include significantly stronger protections for our drinking water, local streams, rivers, wetlands and steep slopes.

Critical areas include wildlife habitat areas, flood hazard zones, geologically hazardous areas and critical aquifer recharge areas. Examples of the benefits of the new protections of these areas include improved flood control, groundwater recharge, filtration of pollutants, and protection of wildlife habitat.

Over the course of five years, the ordinance adopting the regulations benefited from significant public comments. The ordinance is the result of a careful balance between the needs of the county's wildlife, the rights of property owners, and the responsibility of the county to prepare for the thousands of new residents that are expected to call Snohomish County home in the next 20 years.

Councilmember Sievers said, "I think we ended up with a very good ordinance. I'd like to express my appreciation to the public and county staff for all of their interest and hard work along the way."

Planning Committee Chair Dave Somers said, "I'm very pleased with the ordinance we passed today. We now have regulations based on best available science that protect our local communities while respecting individual property rights."

All cities and counties in Washington are required to adopt critical areas regulations by the Growth Management Act. The GMA was amended in 1995 to require counties and cities to include the best available science in developing policies and development regulations to protect the functions and values of critical areas. All jurisdictions are required to review, evaluate, and, if necessary, revise their critical areas ordinances

according to an update schedule established by the Legislature and approved by the Governor in 2002.

Councilmember Gossett said, “We have protected our water quality and wildlife habitats while balancing the ability of individuals to make reasonable use of their private property.

Councilmember Koster said, “This is a prime example of different interests coming together to reach a compromise.”

The new regulations will take effect October 1, 2007.

#####