



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Snohomish County Commits to Enhancing Farms and Fish

The Snohomish County Council today launched a new initiative to enhance agricultural land and restore habitat for threatened salmon. The initiative, called the Sustainable Lands Strategy, will propose new policies for resource lands that support farms and fish in Snohomish County.

Councilmember Dave Somers proposed the new initiative. “County goals already call for preserving farmland and restoring fish habitat,” he said. “Both goals are broadly supported, but disagreements come up when they both can’t be met in the same place.”

Under the new initiative, farmers, environmentalists, and tribal representatives are sitting down together to develop the new policies. Instead of fighting over priorities parcel by parcel, they are working on a framework to improve agricultural productivity and salmon productivity on a broader scale. Resolving conflicts between farms and fish will help habitat restoration projects move forward in some areas while ensuring that the productivity of farms stays the same or increases.

The project will seek broad involvement from a large number of interest groups over the next several months. A public review draft of the initial policies is expected this fall, with a final report due back to the County Council by the end of the year.

The Sustainable Lands Strategy is one part of the County’s overall effort to preserve and enhance farmland and to restore habitat for threatened salmon runs.

Today’s Council action authorizes a \$20,000 contract for a regional team of experts to lead the initiative. Somers secured an additional \$40,000 through the Puget Sound Partnership because of the statewide benefits of resolving conflicts between agriculture and fish habitat.

“Over the past decade, the County has worked hard to preserve farms, improve water quality, and restore salmon habitat,” said Somers. “This new initiative is essential to resolve conflicting goals and get everyone working toward preserving and enhancing our resource lands so that we have healthy local food from our farms and healthy local fish in our rivers.”

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