



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
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October 11, 2017

Roxana King
Okanogan County Office of Planning & Development
123 5th Ave. N, Suite 130
Okanogan, WA 98840

Subject: Proposed Revisions to Okanogan County's Comprehensive Plan

Dear Ms. King:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input for Okanogan County's comprehensive plan update process. This letter specifically addresses aspects of the plan related to wetland protection.

We support the Vision Statement contained in the 2014 revised comprehensive plan, specifically, "We further believe in directing the use of our land and natural resources so they will be able to provide for future generations . . . This plan is driven by the common belief that in preserving the future for generations to come, we must act wisely today." We believe that wisely directing the use of natural resources includes providing appropriate protection for the county's wetland resources, according to recommendations based on the best available science and requiring mitigation for unavoidable impacts.

Being able to "maintain a clean and healthy environment," and "provide families with a place to prosper and grow," includes the recognition that wetlands are valuable resources that contribute to the county's unique character. We encourage the county to adopt planning objectives that support the protection of these special ecosystems.

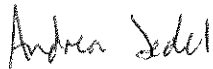
From headwater wetlands to wetlands within the river floodplains and shorelines, wetlands in Okanogan County collectively provide the habitat to support listed salmonid and resident fish species throughout the various stages of their life cycle. These wetlands serve to recharge groundwater, as well as moderate and replenish stream flows, a resource that is valuable to residents and fish species alike. These wetlands additionally contribute to passive and active recreation activities, providing an economic resource for the county. Wetlands also provide educational opportunities, since the future character of the county depends on the capacity of younger residents to understand the benefits and risks of protecting natural resources and make wise decisions in the future. We encourage the county to develop policies that direct the

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Page 2 of 2

protection of wetlands based on the best available science. This will ensure that natural resources are appropriately protected. It will also support the alignment of the comprehensive plan and critical areas ordinance with wetlands and resource areas identified in the Restoration Plan incorporated in the county's Shoreline Master Program update.

We look forward to providing technical assistance to county staff throughout the comprehensive plan process and the development of the county's wetland regulations. Please contact me at (509) 454-4260 or andrea.jedel@ecy.wa.gov.

Sincerely,



Andrea Jedel, PWS
Wetland/Shoreline/Federal Permit Specialist
Shorelines and Environmental Assistance Program

cc: Donna Buntten, Ecology
Gary Graff, Ecology
Benjamin Serr, Commerce
Carmen Andonaegui, WDFW
Perry Huston, Okanogan County