

## Robert Pare Comment and WDFW Response on Welts Property Restoration

Mr. Pare,

Thank you for submitting your comments regarding the proposed Samish River Unit (Welts) Wetland Restoration Project.

I understand that you are concerned about the project because of its impact to farmland. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) owns an easement on the property that requires implementation of the proposed project, to be consistent with criteria in its Wetland Reserve Program. The previous private property owner elected to enroll the property in the Wetland Reserve Program with NRCS prior to its sale to WDFW. As part of the Wetland Reserve Program, 5% of the property is eligible to be planted with agricultural enhancements, which WDFW intends to pursue. More information about the Wetland Reserve Program is available at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/easements/wetlands/>.

For clarification, the proposed project is not a Chinook recovery project, as the property will remain separated from the Samish River with the existing dike. The purpose of the project is to meet goals defined in the Wetland Reserve Program.

Thank you for your comments, and please contact me if you have any additional questions.

Loren

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-----Original Message-----

From: [rwpare@seanet.com](mailto:rwpare@seanet.com) [<mailto:rwpare@seanet.com>]

Sent: Friday, November 15, 2013 9:42 AM

To: SEPADesk2 (DFW)

Cc: SEPADesk (DFW)

Subject: Welt's Property, Fish and Wildlife tract 354, Samish River Unit

The Skagit Valley Hearld posted a comment Period for the development of the Welt's property, tract 354, F&W field office 360-902-2267, MV service ctr, agency USDA-NRCS.

Farmland is not be part of this proposed plan. This site is an excellent and highly visible site that could demonstrate the use of water and roadside buffers alongside active farmland.

The plan ignores any use of farmland on this property. Not only has this site been allowed to be fallow for at least 5 years, lack of use causes weed generation and control problems for nearby farmers, loss of

arable land that would provide work, commerce from seed and associated crop amendments sales, equipment sales or rental, and loss of lease land for the state, affecting all parties negatively. The core of this property needs to be farmed.

All of this seems to be in direct opposition to the Memorandum of Agreement by and between WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife and Western WA Agricultural Assoc.

The following is taken directly from the MOA.

2nd Para; one sentence.

"Lands that comprise the Skagit and Samish River deltas are the forefront of a host of contemporary issues involving the need to preserve farmland and farming while also promoting and pursuing sound public policy regarding the preservation and use of natural resources within a shared landscape."

Signed and dated 2008 by Bob Everitt regional director WA Dept. of F&W.

I am not sure passed HB 1418 before F&W obtained the property but converting this private farmland only to Chinook recovery would not be a "shared" sacrifice by both the State and the agricultural industry. The proposed replacement lands strategy ignores the spirit and intent of HB 1418.

This proposed parcel should include a farmland use as per the agreement and state law, especially due to it's high visibility to the public.

Robert Pare  
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Volunteer for the Skagit Conservation District, Storm and Stream Teams Volunteer weekend/holiday contact for the Samish River Shellfish Safety Department of Health Volunteer for injured wildlife rescue at Wolf Hollow, Friday Harbor.