

Nov. 6, 2013

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RECEIVED

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HABITAT PROGRAM

I enjoy the outdoors, hunt, fish, hiking and especially enjoy winter bird watching in Skagit County. I was raised in the community of Blanchard since 1960. My career took me away from Blanchard for awhile but visited often during that time. I've lived and worked in every corner of the state and as a retiree, there's no place more beautiful than Blanchard and Skagit County. Growing up in the area afforded an opportunity in the outdoors that for me became a career that I cherished and always will appreciate nature and the outdoors.

Since, my younger years, I've witnessed that outdoor access opportunities in Skagit County have become very limited to the public, especially the flats and tidal areas from my community of Blanchard to La Conner. Skagit and Samish Rivers, Samish and Padilla bay dikes were areas that I used to enjoy year around. Presently, all these areas have very limited to no access. These are treasures the outdoor public does not get to enjoy or discover, especially for educational purposes. I am also a realist and don't advocate an open door policy to every landowners property but we have ample instances where with due care, rules and regulations could make these opportunities possible.

For this I overwhelmingly support the wetland restoration project of the Welts property adjacent to the Samish River at Edison. The advantages of this project are countless to the public, wildlife and all user groups. This is an opportunity that the public can freely enjoy throughout the year. Some fifty years ago I was introduced to waterfowl hunting on this very same property. It is fitting that this restoration project restore the very nature and access to the land and river alike for everybody to enjoy. We need public lands for all to enjoy. This is an excellent opportunity for our state and county dollars to give back to the public and wildlife. I encourage all user groups to support projects such as this one before more lands are cycled out of any possible public access by private hunting and fishing clubs. Our states fish and wildlife resources were not meant for a few to profit from and deprive all but a few from the same opportunities. Landowners are placed in an intangible position that when dollar offers are made by private fishing and hunting clubs for their access rights, they can't refuse and "No Trespassing" signs follow and will certainly surpass Christmas lights on the Skagit Flats. Support this project and appreciate our landowner neighbors that still allow walks on their lands.

In Your Support:

Sincerely, Jose Ramos

