

# HOOD CANAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

Summer 2005

## HCEC Board Seeks Support for Revised Critical Areas Ordinance

The Hood Canal Environmental Council Board supports in general the proposed changes to the Kitsap County Critical Areas Ordinance. It is an improvement over the existing ordinance, though there remain some portions we would like to see strengthened. Our particular concern is, of course, the Hood Canal; given its evident problems, we cannot afford further degradation. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife recommends a riparian habitat buffer of 250 feet for shorelines of statewide significance, as the Hood Canal shorelines have long been officially designated. The 35-foot buffer proposed in the new ordinance is clearly inadequate for protecting anadromous fish, eel grass beds, spawning and holding areas for forage fish (herring, smelt) and shellfish beds from water quality and developmental impacts. Though 250 feet may be unobtainable politically, we would ask that the buffers be increased to at least 150 feet.

The claim that this ordinance constitutes "the biggest land grab in state history" is inflammatory and without substance. Quite apart from how this ridiculous statement would sound to a Native American, we say flatly that there is no land grab involved. No one will lose property. No existent development will have to be modified or moved. Future development remains possible (and likely) within rules that are themselves flexible if the landowner can demonstrate that an exception would be harmless.

What is involved is restriction on such future development as would be harmful to the general good. Such restrictions are common and most of us welcome them. Most citizens approve—even count upon—restrictions preventing the development of neighboring properties in ways that would interfere with our enjoyment of our own homes. The limitation on hog farms is a usual example.

Most of us came to Kitsap County for amenities we do not want to see destroyed. We are indeed obliged both morally and legally to protect the wildlife on whom we have intruded. The best available science tells us that it takes a certain amount of riparian area for habitat. It is through the Critical Areas Ordinance that we try to accomplish what the law and our mutual best interests say we must do. We urge all citizens concerned for the continuing health of our beautiful county to make known their support for the new ordinance.

Washington State Legislative Act Relating to establishing a management program for Hood Canal rehabilitation: (June 2005, chapter 90- RCW) creating new sections; and declaring an emergency. The newly enacted language establishes the entire Hood Canal watershed as a rehabilitation zone. To read the entire Act go to our web site, [www.hcec.ws](http://www.hcec.ws) and link to the Hood Canal Coalition.

### HOOD CANAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL YEARLY MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION

Individual - \$10 \_\_\_

Family - \$30 \_\_\_

Group - \$50 \_\_\_

Patron - \$100 \_\_\_

Contributions in any amount are welcome. \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE# \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this coupon and your check to: HCEC, P.O. Box 87, Seabeck, WA, 98380.

If you are living in the Hood Canal Watershed you are in prime position to act as its steward.....

The Hood Canal Watershed Pledge Program presented by WSU Mason County Extension and a Kitsap County Non-Point Pollution/Watershed brochure published jointly by the county departments of Health and SSWM offer you the chance to make personal choices to care for these waters, and reduce the cumulative affects of our collective actions.

Whether you live next to a stream or on the shoreline or miles from either, your everyday actions can and do affect our local water quality. We all live, work, and play in something called a watershed. This is an area of land that all drains to the same place, in this case, Hood Canal.

The focus of the publications is on septic system maintenance and operation, landscaping practices, and the management of storm water run-off and both stress that although an individual home may only be contributing small amounts of pollution to the environment, the combined effects are causing harm to the quality of water in Hood Canal.

The Hood Canal Watershed Pledge Program provides residents in communities surrounding Hood Canal with a booklet that highlights interesting features of Hood Canal and helps them identify actions that they would be willing to "pledge" to try so they can better protect Hood Canal. For information or to get involved as a volunteer or advisor please contact Emily Piper; 360.427.9670 ext.396 or [elpiper@wsu.edu](mailto:elpiper@wsu.edu). The Kitsap County brochure was distributed to residents of the county and can be viewed on the HCEC website, [www.hcec.ws](http://www.hcec.ws). For information contact Pat Kirschbaum [Pkirschb@co.kitsap.wa.us](mailto:Pkirschb@co.kitsap.wa.us).

**UPDATE Pit-To-Pier/Fred Hill Mining:** In July Jefferson County issued a Mitigated Determination of Non Significance (MDNS) for gravel strip mining in the Wahl Lake area of the Thorndyke peninsula. However, the county has restricted the SEPA determination to only 39 acres rather than the 165 acres requested. Further SEPA review will be required for any additional mining in the Wahl Lake area which is within the Hood Canal watershed.

The history of this SEPA activity is one of several reversals. The County first issued an MDNS on the entire 165 acres, followed by a Determination of Significance (DS) after massive inputs from the tribes, environmental groups, independent consultants, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), and the Hood Canal Coalition (HCC). At that point, the mining company elected to revise its proposal and restructure the sequence of mining operations within the 165 acre Wahl Lakes area. It also proposed additional ground and surface water monitoring to study adverse impacts to a nearby salmon spawning tributary of Thorndyke Creek. The County then issued a notice that they intended to issue an MDNS on the 165-acre proposed strip mining operation. However, further opposition and concerns from the HCC, the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe and WDFW resulted in down-sizing the current SEPA determination, and requiring a broad evaluation of hydrology issues before any additional mining is considered.

Thus, officials have refused to give blanket approval to the largest strip mine in the history of Jefferson County and the largest ever proposed within the Hood Canal watershed. While this is not the outcome we would preferred, it is a substantial victory for individuals and groups who are concerned about the future of Hood Canal. It also sends a clear signal to the mining company, Fred Hill Materials, that it can no longer mandate the outcome of land use issues in Jefferson County. John Fabian, Hood Canal Coalition

**HCEC BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Karen Best*
- Phil Best*
- Gary Cunningham, Vice President*
- Alice Harris*
- Carol Ann Jackson*
- Joe Lambert,*
- Margee Lynch*
- Bill Matchett, President*
- Judy Matchett*
- Don Monise*
- Karen Monise*
- Vern Rutter*
- Ester Starceovich, Treasurer*
- Theresa Trotland, Secretary*
- Nicola Yarbrough, Editor*

**The Board of Directors meets the second Monday of each month. If you would like to attend, call Bill Matchett at (360) 830-4154.**



P.O. BOX 87, SEABECK, WA, 98380

**This newsletter and back issues can be read by**

visiting HCEC at: [http:// www.hcec.ws](http://www.hcec.ws)