

Edited and Approved:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ADAMS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
s/Rudy Plager, Chairman
s/Roger L. Hartwig, Vice-Chairman
s/Jeffrey W. Stevens, Commissioner

RESOLUTION NO. R-02-2012

**ORDER OF BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ADAMS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

**IN THE MATTER OF OPTING INTO THE *RUCKELSHAUS* VOLUNTARY
STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM CONSISTENT WITH ESHB 1886**

WHEREAS, under ESHB 1886, known as the *Ruckelshaus* Process Bill, a county may elect to “opt-into” the *Ruckelshaus* Voluntary Stewardship Program (Program), provided that it do so voluntarily prior to January 22, 2012; and,

WHEREAS, prior to opting in to the Program a county is required to confer with tribes, environmental and agricultural interests in an open and transparent manner consistent with the requirements of ESHB 1886 and provide public notice before opting-into the Program; and,

WHEREAS, an informational session for the public was held on October 12, 2011, with Farm Bureau Lobbyist John Stuhmiller and various local members of the Farm Bureau providing information about the Program and responding to questions from the Board of Adams County Commissioners as well as members of the public; and,

WHEREAS, public notice of a stakeholders meeting to further discuss the Program was published in *The Ritzville Journal* on December 29, 2011 and January 5, 2012, and, in the *Othello Outlook* on January 5, 2012, and then held on Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. in the Othello District Courtroom at 425 E. Main, Othello; and,

WHEREAS, public testimony was received on January 11, 2012, from members of the Conservation Commission, the Farm Bureau, and from local citizens; and,

WHEREAS, written testimony was acknowledged as received over the last few months by the Board of Adams County Commissioners from forty-nine (49) individuals and organizations all in support of the Program; and,

WHEREAS, Adams County Planning staff has consulted and been in conversation with appropriate stakeholders to consider all options in compliance with ESHB 1886 as well as the requirement to “promote plans to protect critical areas, while maintaining and improving the long-term viability of agriculture and reducing the conversion of farmland to

other uses” with respect to agricultural activities within unincorporated Adams County (RCW 36.70A); and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Adams County Commissioners deliberated on this Program during regular sessions held October 12 and December 14, 2011, as well as on January 11 and January 17, 2012;

THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Adams County Board of Commissioners makes the following findings:

- Farming is vital to the economy of Adams County and is significant within each watershed;
- Lands within the following watersheds - Palouse – WRIA 34; Esquatzel Coulee – WRIA 36; Lower Crab Creek – WRIA 41; and Crab Creek – WRIA 43 – provide environmental and economically important agricultural functions which are vital and critical to the economy of Adams County and the State of Washington which could be impacted by inappropriate farming or regulatory actions;
- A healthy biological diversity within these watersheds is important to water and habitat quality and viability;
- Adams County has a history of local leadership in WRIA 34 and WRIA 43 watershed management teams, local government, and other agencies and stakeholders to make the Voluntary Stewardship Program successful;
- Data relevant to the Program is available and there are watershed plans and implementation strategies that can be integrated into a Program;
- Technical assistance is available locally as necessary to develop and implement the Program; and,
- Given adequate funding of the Program there is a likelihood of success with a local effort to establish and implement the Voluntary Stewardship Program.

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that as it appears to be in the best interest of Adams County to opt-into the *Ruckelshaus* Voluntary Stewardship Program;

THEREFORE IT IS RESOLVED that Adams County opts-in to the *Ruckelshaus* Voluntary Stewardship Program effective this 17th day of January, 2012, and that by this decision and adoption of the Resolution Adams County is now eligible for state grant funding to accomplish the intent of the Voluntary Stewardship Program. Adams County will proceed as required under ESHB 1866 to implement the requirements of the Program once adequate funding is provided by the State.

DATED this 17th day of January, 2012.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ADAMS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
s/Rudy Plager, Chairman
s/Roger L. Hartwig, Vice-Chairman
s/Jeffrey W. Stevens, Commissioner

ATTEST:
s/Linda Reimer, MMC
Clerk of the Board