

COLUMBIA COUNTY

RESOLUTION 2012-08

Being an Resolution of Columbia County Washington

WHEREAS, the Washington State Legislature created, through ESHB 1886 and as codified under 36.70A Revised Code of Washington, a Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) as an alternative to a mandated update by counties of the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) adopted under RCW 36.70(A).060, to include protection of critical areas related to agricultural practices, and;

WHEREAS, the intent of the VSP is to protect the function and values of critical areas as they existed on July 22, 2011, and;

WHEREAS, the county legislative authority, in choosing the VSP alternative, must by resolution “op-in” to the VSP not later than January 22, 2012 or, alternatively, update the CAO to achieve the same goal of critical area protection as they specifically apply to agricultural activities no later than July 22, 2013, and;

WHEREAS, the Columbia County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has considered ESHB 1886, the VSP, and the current status of agricultural uses along the Tucannon and Touchet River watersheds at several regular meetings and received input from staff, the County Conservation District, the WSU Agricultural Extension Officer, the Washington State Farm Bureau and the local farming community, and;

WHEREAS, the County has, in the identification of participating watersheds, considered, including in the Comprehensive Plan, the role of farming within the watersheds including acreage, economic value, numbers of farming operations, and dangers of conversion, and;

WHEREAS, the County has, in the identification of priority watersheds, considered the importance of salmonid resources, the biological diversity of wildlife in the watersheds, and the likely successful establishment of a VSP based on existing programs and agencies involved with agricultural conservation, existing data, plans and strategies and ongoing environmental protection actions within the watersheds, as well as the leadership demonstrated, including the potential or local watershed groups capable of development and oversight of the VSP, and ;

WHEREAS, the BOCC directed staff to proceed within the requirements of ESHB 1886 to confer with farm, tribal and environmental interests regarding the VSP, and;

WHEREAS, the BOCC has determined that those portions of the watersheds of the Tucannon River (located in WRIA 35) and the Touchet River (located in WRIA 32) in Columbia County be included as “Participating Watersheds” in a VSP and that both should be nominated for consideration of the Conservation commission as “State Priority Watersheds”, and;

WHEREAS, the County has provided notice of the proposed action per RCW 36.70A.035, as required by ESHB 1886, and also, as required directly. contacted and conferred with the groups stipulated by ESHB 1886, as well as, neighboring and responsible agencies and school districts, advertised the intent to adopt a resolution to select the VSP option in ESHB 1886 by publishing a public notice, direct mailing, issuing a press release, using the Conservation District Newsletter to reach the farming community and posting information on the County Web site, and;

WHEREAS, the BOCC has considered the comments received as a result of the public outreach and the various implications of the options offered by ESHB 1886;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Columbia County Commissioners that:

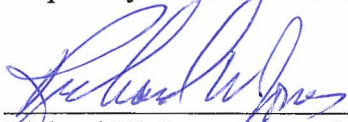
Columbia County will pursue the option accorded it in ESHB 1886 and RCW 36.70A relative to the protection of critical environmental areas as they relate to agricultural practices through development of a Voluntary Stewardship Program in lieu of an update of the Columbia County Critical Areas Ordinance; and

Identifies those portions of the Tucannon River and Touchet River watersheds locating in Columbia County to be included in the VSP and nominates these same watershed areas for consideration by the Conservation Commission as state Priority Watersheds; and

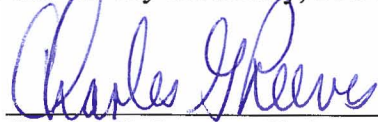
Elects to have Columbia County proceed as required by ESHB 1886, as currently codified in RCW 36.70A, to implement the requirements of the Voluntary Stewardship Program once the Washington state Legislature provides adequate funding for such activity.

The effective date of this resolution shall be Five Days after the date of adoption.

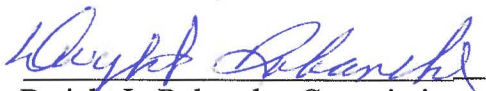
Adopted by the Columbia County Board of Commissioners this 4th day of January, 2012.



Richard W. Jones, Commissioner



Charles G. Reeves, Chairman



Dwight L. Robanske, Commissioner

Attest:



Leanne J. Peters
Clerk of the Board

Approved as to Form:



Rea L. Culwell
Prosecuting Attorney