

**SAN JUAN COUNTY (SJC), WASHINGTON  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
COUNTY COUNCIL  
May 7, 2012**

Monday, May 7, 2012 – Legislative Hearing Room, 55 Second St, Friday Harbor

**8:45 AM**                    **DISCUSSION:** Wetlands Section of the Critical Area Ordinance (CAO) staff review of Planning Commission Draft and review of key scientific papers used in Wetlands Section (1<sup>st</sup> touch) – Shireene Hale, Planning Coordinator; Jon Cain, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Ms. Miller opened the Special Meeting at 8:45 am. Council Members present: Howard (Howie) Rosenfeld, Richard Fralick, Jamie Stephens, Rich Peterson, Lovel Pratt; County Administrator Pete Rose, Clerk to the Council Ingrid Gabriel, Deputy Clerk Maureen See, and interested members of the public were present.

Ms. Miller asked the Council to excuse Mr. Rose so he can attend to matters concerning the transition plan.

**Moved by Mr. Peterson, seconded by Mr. Rosenfeld, to excuse County Administrator Pete Rose from today’s meeting. ALL AYES, MOTION CARRIED**

Ms. Hale gave a PowerPoint presentation to review the proposed site specific approach to wetland buffers.

**Moved by Ms. Pratt, seconded by Mr. Rosenfeld, that the Council reconsider the policy decision to update the wetlands section of the Critical Area Ordinance with regulations that would provide a moderate level of risk given the unique importance of wetlands in San Juan County:**

“Each county and city has its own unique set of circumstances, but those of San Juan County are in several ways dramatically different from those of the rest of western Washington.

- Not mainland. This is noteworthy because islands everywhere have less ecological resilience. Native wildlife and plants are especially sensitive to introduced species, e.g. feral cats. ...
- Precipitation is significantly lower than in the rest of western Washington. There is no snowpack or large watersheds to feed wetlands throughout the summer. ...
- The predominant threats to wetlands are different. Illegal pond construction and drainage of small wet areas near residences are perhaps more common than elsewhere.”

*BAS Chapter 2.1.6 What’s Different About San Juan County, page 12*

“Appendix 2B-2 indicates which of the county’s wildlife species are most likely to occur in wetlands and similar surface waters. Many of these species cannot adapt and reproduce successfully in alternative habitats when the wetlands they prefer are destroyed or degraded.

Many (particularly wetland mammals) do not routinely move long distances, especially interisland, to find remaining wetlands, because doing so exposes them to predators and the elements. Some of these species require specific combinations of microclimate, soils, water regimes, and vegetation in order to reproduce successfully in wetlands.

Although comprehensive biological surveys have not been conducted, based largely on their complex and varied vegetation structure, SJC wetlands as a whole are likely to host more species per unit area than any other habitat type present in the county (see Appendix 4-B in Chapter 4). At least 198 wildlife

species (162 birds, 22 mammals, 7 amphibians, and 6 reptiles), of which 73 (37%) are considered by WDFW to be Priority Species, regularly use wetlands and fresh surface waters. This represents 75% of the county’s total fauna, and 65% of the county’s 113 Priority Species. Species that are restricted almost entirely to freshwater wetlands, ponds, and lakes number about 16.”

*BAS Chapter 2.2.3.1 Importance of Habitat Functions of SJC Wetlands, pages 18-19*

“Like all counties, SJC lacks the financial resources to buy up all wetlands and their surrounding buffers, even knowing that the loss or degradation of substantial numbers of wetlands will cause irreversible disappearance of some plant and wildlife species, as well as increasing costs to neighbors and the public at large, e.g., for stormwater management.”

*BAS Chapter 2.4.2 Protective Purchasing, page 26*

**Moved by Ms. Pratt, seconded by Mr. Rosenfeld, to table the motion. VOTE: 3-3 (Rosenfeld, Stephens, Pratt ayes) (Fralick, Miller, Peterson opposed) MOTION NOT CARRIED**

**VOTE: 2-4 (Pratt, Rosenfeld ayes) (Miller, Fralick, Peterson, Stephens opposed) MOTION NOT CARRIED**

**Moved by Ms. Pratt, seconded by Mr. Rosenfeld, to have staff provide a recommendation regarding the exclusion of driveways from square footage calculations as long as best management practices are utilized in driveway construction and maintenance. VOTE: 2-4 (Pratt, Rosenfeld ayes) (Peterson, Fralick, Stephens, Miller opposed) MOTION NOT CARRIED**

Discussion followed on the Zhang and Mayer studies. It was agreed that the Council will forward questions for Dr. Adamus to Ms. Hale by May 22.

Topics for further discussion: CASP, confirmation regarding something other than buffers, maps, realignment on site specific buffer, clarification on science, issue of non-conforming, reconsideration of medium risk, response from GIS on flow path, Tulalip decision, cost of implementation.

**11:39 AM RECESS FOR LUNCH**

**12:30 PM WETLAND FIELDTRIPS:** Review multiple sites with wetland specialist and staff

Council and citizen participants visited two sites: Vince and Vicky Daucinus, and Mike Carlson. Scott Rozenbaum provided site information.

**4:45 PM ADJOURNED**

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**These Minutes were approved and signed on May 22, 2012. The original document is retained in the Council's permanent proceedings file. Attest: Ingrid Gabriel, Council Clerk.**