



Snohomish County
County Executive's Office
Aaron Reardon
County Executive

For Immediate Release – Monday, March 27, 2005

Contact: Donna Ambrose, Executive Management Analyst,
425.388.3883; 206.755.9823

Executive Reardon Signs County Ordinances Securing Existing Ball Fields for Snohomish County Little Leagues

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon today signed two county ordinances Saturday, March 25, legalizing the use of 10 existing playing fields on land zoned previously only for agricultural use.

The ceremonial signing took place during one of the North Snohomish County Little League's first practice games at the North and South Snohomish County Little League Complex in the City of Snohomish. The complex was one of the 10 ball fields saved by the new State and County laws.

"I am very pleased that we were able to save these existing ball fields," says Executive Reardon. "Our continuing goal is to add even more ball fields, parks and recreation facilities in the County over the next several years."

During the event, Executive Reardon gave back a bat given him by North Snohomish County Little Leaguer Brandon Kilpatrick, who last year gave it to Executive Reardon as a challenge to save his league's ball field.

Craig Ladiser, Director of Planning and Development and Karen Watkins, Senior Planner were instrumental in developing the changes to the County ordinances. One new County ordinance provides for changes to the Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan designating agricultural lands as recreational lands. A companion ordinance amends the County's Unified Development Code relating to playing fields on designated recreational land. It establishes permitting requirements and development regulations applicable to existing playing fields on designated recreational land in accordance with that of the Washington State Engrossed House Bill 2241. Due to the community benefits of these playing fields, the County has set a permit fee for land owners of zero dollars.

County planning staff is working closely with the owners and managers of the 10 approved playing field sites to guide them through the permitting process. These sites include: Stockers Field, Academy Holdings, Corky Klein, South Snohomish Little League, Paintball Field, Ballfield Farm, North Snohomish Little League, Blue Stilly Park Field, and Pilchuk Veterinarian Hospital.

Original state legislation aimed at saving only two ballfields, the North and South Snohomish Little Leagues. Upon the County's review of the final legislation, it was determined that more fields may be eligible. Executive Reardon was a leader in the hard-fought legislative battle that granted Snohomish County the legal authority to expand eligibility to eight additional ballfields in Snohomish County.

Engrossed House Bill 2241, signed May 12, 2005 by Governor Christine Gregoire, authorized all ballfields meeting specific criteria for a one-time opportunity to change the legal designation of the land from agricultural to recreational. These playing fields are required to be registered with the County and to comply with applicable permitting requirements and development regulations.

The ball field ordinances follow Executive Reardon's recent signing of a County Ordinance to purchase 39 acres of land from Dave Remlinger for sports fields in the City of Monroe. The land is being purchased in part with a \$150,000 Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program grant awarded by the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation. The County's acquisition will create a multipurpose facility featuring as many as 10 soccer fields and will be the future home of the 1,200 children of the Sky River soccer league.

"I am extremely pleased that the work we did in the legislature and the County is paying off for families in Snohomish County." said Reardon.

###