



Snohomish County
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Reardon signs critical environmental protections into law

County critical areas regulations update to take effect October 1

Today, Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon signed new regulations into law that will help protect the County's environment. The ordinance, which updates the County's critical areas regulations, was signed into law at a signing ceremony where Executive Reardon was joined by County Councilmen Somers and Sievers, county staff and community stakeholders.

The adoption of Snohomish County's Critical Areas Regulations represents over three years of dedicated work, compromise and commitment to improve protections for the most sensitive areas of the county's environment. The regulations will help protect critical areas, such as wetlands, wildlife habitat, steep slopes and river migration zones from the impacts of development in the county.

"We set out to rewrite our Critical Areas Regulations with the goal of protecting our environment for future generations while maintaining the property rights of our citizens," said Executive Reardon. "Through partnership with many devoted stakeholders we were able to update these important environmental protections responsibly."

At the signing ceremony Executive Reardon thanked the many community stakeholders, county staff, the Planning Commission and the County Council for their contributions to the ordinance. The ordinance was forwarded to the County Council by the Executive in July of 2006.

This updated critical areas ordinance greatly enhances protections for critical habitat and sensitive species, protects water quality by reducing pressure on aquifers and wetlands and secures the future of cherished streams, lakes and marine waters. It also sets the stage for updating the County's Shoreline Master Program.

Environmental protections improved in the updated critical areas regulations include:

- strengthening provisions regulating clearing;
- adding lakes, marine shorelines, state sensitive listed species and species of local importance to our list of protected areas;
- increased buffers;

- limitations on impervious surface and clearing adjacent to water bodies containing critical habitat;
- improved protection of habitat containing anadromous fish;
- provisions for habitat corridors to connect wetlands with high value for habitat to other critical areas.

“Our natural environment is our region’s greatest asset,” said Executive Reardon. “I am pleased to reaffirm our commitment to preserving our environment for future generations.”

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