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Annual Legal Appeal 2011
Drink Wine for Friends
North Sound Alliance Needs

Non-Profit Org. US Postage PAID Permit No. 40 Mt. Vernon, WA 98273

Drink Wine & Support Friends!

Nell Thorne Restaurant, LaConner serves their own Elephant Head (label) wine and donates a portion of the proceeds to FOSC. To make reservations call 360.466.4261 or e-mail **nellinfo@nellthorn.com**. Nell Thorne serves lunch and dinner in their restaurant and bar and features a variety of local foods sourced from Northwest and Skagit producers. Thank you to Susan and Casey!

Libation Station Wine Shoppe, Mount Vernon (next to the FOSC office & across from the Food Co-op) offers a monthly wine club and will make a donation to FOSC if you mention Friends when you sign up. To sign up or give a gift go to: **Libation Station Wine Club**. Thanks Rich! **Hours: Tues thru Sat - 11am to 6pm, Closed Sunday & Monday. Phone: 360- 336-5266 Email: libationstation@gmail.com**

Thanks to Nell Thorne Restaurant and Libation Station Wine Shoppe for their support and understanding of the food and farmland connection!

FRIENDS OF SKAGIT COUNTY WORKS FOR YOU IN SKAGIT COUNTY! PLEASE JOIN TODAY!

NAME _____ E-MAIL _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

- I'm a REGULAR *Friend!* (\$35) I'm a FAMILY *Friend!* (\$50) I'm a NEIGHBORLY *Friend!* (\$100)
- I'm a SPECIAL *Friend!* (\$250) I'm a UNIQUE *Friend!* (\$500) I'm a _____ *Friend!* (\$_____)
- I'm making an additional \$_____ contribution to the LEGAL FUND.
- I'm making an additional \$_____ contribution in honor/memory of: _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I CAN HELP WITH: - research - monitoring county meetings - newsletters - mailings
 - computers - managing the website - other (_____)

DONATIONS TO FRIENDS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE TO THE EXTENT ALLOWED BY LAW. (Please consult your tax accountant.)

PLEASE MAIL THIS FORM AND YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO **PO BOX 2632, MOUNT VERNON, WA 98273** OR CHARGE IT TO YOUR CREDIT CARD ON THE NETWORK FOR GOOD or at **www.friendsofskagitcounty.org** — click on "get involved." 021010

North Sound Alliance Aims Toward Citizen Action

Through the generosity of an anonymous member, Friends of Skagit County (FOSC) has joined the North Sound Alliance (NSA). The NSA is a broad-based alliance of civic non-profits, education associations, unions and religious organizations which have joined together to act for the common good on issues where one organization alone could not succeed. Friends joined the NSA in order to have a "seat at the table" in deciding what actions to take on behalf of a vibrant democratic society. NSA decides on its actions using a strategy team. An example of an action could be concern over farmland preservation which was the highest ranked issue in a recent survey to the FOSC mailing list. However, farmland preservation may or may not be chosen for action.

Each member organization of NSA is entitled to appoint 3 delegates to be members of the NSA strategy team. At present FOSC has one strategy team member and is looking for 2 more delegates to share in NSA decision making. We are all busy, but it's important that FOSC be adequately represented on the strategy team when the NSA selects what action to take. Each delegate is expected to attend 2 partial days of training and as many NSA monthly meetings as possible.

ARE YOU WILLING TO SERVE? Please contact us if you wish to have a "seat at the table" in deciding NSA actions. Thanks very much!

Ellen Bynum, Executive Director, FOSC, (360) 419-0988 or friends@fidalgo.net.
Howard Pellett, Board Member, FOSC (360) 293-8128 or howardp71@gmail.com.

May 1, 2011



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People dedicated to preserving Skagit County's rural character by protecting the natural environment; supporting sustainable, resource-based economies; and promoting livable urban communities for present and future generations.

Dear Friends:

“What is the single most important thing that Friends of Skagit County has achieved?” I was asked this question by a new neighbor who wanted to know about Friends. As I thought about the long list of accomplishments, I replied that it isn't one thing alone, but the sum of many things Friends has done that has made a difference in Skagit staying rural.

Since 1993, Friends has written hundreds of letters to elected officials, county and city planning commissions, and boards of review and appeal. We have worked with county and city staff to review Comprehensive Plans, codes, administrative interpretations and state laws.

Friends participated in over 60 land use appeals. More than half of these went before the Growth Management Hearings Board or Superior Court and Friends won all or part of the decision. The remaining issues were combined with other appeals, dismissed, settled or carried forward by other parties. Friends' attorneys and Board understood that each decision affects the future of Skagit County and together these changes are one reason why Skagit isn't (yet) a suburb of Seattle.

Here are a couple of examples. Conversion of farmland to other uses is not regularly monitored by the County. We gathered the 2008 list of converted lands (3,000 acres) from news, county documents, state agency reports and assessor information.

Skagit County is updating its Shoreline Master Management Program in the next two years. The SMMP is an adopted part of the County Comprehensive Plan and any changes will need to be proposed as a comp plan amendment. The County did not have this information in its timeline for the update. Both of these examples may seem like small things, not that important, but when you add them together, they add up!

Your membership and legal appeal contributions lets us speak for the land. Friend's Legal Appeals Program benefits every Skagit County resident now and (hopefully) into the future.

Send your check today, or pay with a credit card at Network for Good. Thank all of you for your continued support of Friends of Skagit County.

Yours sincerely,

Ellen Bynum
Executive Director

p.s. Please use the enclosed envelope to send in your donation today! Thanks for your help.

Friends is the only non-profit organization working in the County solely as an advocate for smart growth in cities, sustainable farms and forests, conservation of critical environments, shorelines and maintaining Skagit's rural way of life.

#5th Article -- A Continuing Series on Managing Growth Rules and Regulation

by June Kite, Vice-President, Friends of Skagit County

Most people want protection from wrongs and misdeeds that invade their own personal security. Much of the regulations of today have been written to correct problems that occurred in the past. But what happens when the written law does not do the trick? If you don't like the law you work to change the law.

So here comes the hard part. How do we write rules and regulations that cannot be corrupted by political influence or have loopholes that allow unwanted consequences?

The Skagit County Comprehensive Plan and Regulatory Codes are updated annually. Recently Skagit County published a legal notice of *Availability and Public Hearing* regarding proposed amendments to the *Unified Development Codes*. A quick review of the list of proposed amendments revealed the problems the Planning Department has encountered when processing development applications.

Following are examples of development applications the County processed that Friends of Skagit viewed as inconsistent with existing codes.

1. **Clear Valley Wet Land Mitigation Banking** – an investment bank -- converts land zoned agriculture and allows developers to fill wetlands in other areas for development.
2. **Hillside Motel, Starbird Road Exit, Conway** – a California investment corporation – converts a rural business zone with limited expansion to an urban style 4-story hotel with unlimited expansion.
3. **Lake Sixteen's 59-lot subdivision, Conway** – Windward Real Estate and Investment Inc. – converts undeveloped rural lands into urban sprawling residential development.
4. **Sanfi Acres long Conservation and Reserve Development (CaRD)** – Industrial forest and secondary forest-land – would convert remote forested land to 56 one-acre lots for residential development. The land is now owned by the Skagit Land-Trust.

Friends will work with the Code Amendment process, making written proposal to either clarify and/or add to existing language, and to close the loop-holes that misinterpret the intent of the codes. But we need your help. Please show your support with participation in the code amendment process and/or by your donation to Friends Legal Fund.

Friends of Skagit County Needs YOU!

Would you spend two hours a month working to keep Skagit County from looking like suburbia? Could you read the public notices in Thursday's Skagit Valley Herald and report on any which do not seem to be appropriate development for the County or cities? Can you give up 2 hours of television, sports or your favorite hobby to help Friends of Skagit County with its work? Is it worth it to monitor what the County is planning to change in the Code Amendments or the next Comprehensive Plan update so inappropriate development applications cannot be accepted by the County permit department?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, please call Ellen Bynum at 360-419-0988 or e-mail friends@fidalgo.net or Gene Derig, President 360-293-3928 at gderig@eanacortes.com and let us know you are willing to be a member of Friends Board of Directors for a 2 year term.

We Can't Do This Work Without YOU!!