

August 10, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

The following letter is in response to the Preliminary Plat Request for the Plat of Blanchard Knob (PL10-0383) submitted by Pat Stephens, PS 103, LLC. The proposed request is to allow for the division of approximately 90 acres into ten (10) lots through the Conservation and Reserve Development (CaRD) process. The proposal includes nine (9) lots for residential development ranging in size from .63 acres to .98 acres and one (1) 82+ acre open space lot. An internal plat road, a Class B community water system, and individual onsite septic will serve the project. The subject property is designated as Rural Resource-NRL (RRC-NRL) on the Skagit County Zoning and Comprehensive Plan maps. The proposed project is located on the north side of Wood Road between 16595 & 16887 Wood Road, Bow, WA; within a portion of the NE ^o of Section 23, Township 36 North, Range 03 East, W.M., Skagit County, WA. P48084, P48085

I have several reasons to oppose this CaRD request.

a.. Skagit County has not done a study on the aquifer that this Class B community water system would draw from. This is an area of limited water resources and it is unknown how this added demand would effect the surrounding private wells that all draw from the same aquifer.

b.. Because no study has been done it is also unknown how this added demand on the aquifer and water table would affect the surrounding streams, especially Colony Creek that has just started to function again as a salmon spawning stream.

c.. Additional run-off from logging, road building, construction and septic systems would run directly off mountain and into Samish Bay, potentially counteracting efforts to clean up Samish Bay.

d.. Lastly, Wood Rd. would have to be brought up to rural standards implying that road widening and paving would eventually ensue.

I would finally like to draw attention to the fact that an adjacent 80 acre parcel owned by BS 80 LLC has already been approved for the CaRD process and is currently working towards 72,000 gallons a day in water rights. If water rights are granted, eight houses and individual septic systems will be constructed. In the end, a total of 17 houses would be built in a neighborhood that was once mostly quite forestland accessed by a one-lane dirt road. If the Blanchard Nob development is approved it would drastically alter the character of this Rural Reserve area.

Your attention and care to this proposition is much appreciated.

Thank you,
Sarai Stevens
Bow, WA

cc: Dept. of Ecology, Dept. of Health, County Commissioners

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Regarding the development on Wood Road in Skagit County, referred to as the Blanchard Knob, it is clear that there ought to be some serious concerns addressed before the county and citizens agree to more rural development in this ecologically sensitive niche.

First of all, the development is asking for water rights to use 72,000 gallons of water a day to obtain water for a 9-house development on 90 acres; currently, it is designated rural resource land. The project is applying for a CARD to divide the acreage into 10 lots that get their water from one shared source, described as a Class B community water system.

Next, this means that there are unanswered questions that should be resolved before more action is taken on this project. The Envision Skagit 2060 concept specifically cites Alger as an expanded rural village that should benefit from transferred development rights; why would the county allow expanded development into rural resource land when less than five miles away is an area designated as a long-term goal for higher population density? Also, in light of the water table, how will using this much water affect the community of Wood Rd and Colony Mountain that already utilize this source? Will people with private wells that are affected have a means to ensure that their water rights are protected? Planning notes indicate that Wood Road will have to be brought up to rural standards; does this mean widening and paving the road? Finally, the last question is about the watershed. The topography of the development indicates very steep hills, which logically means that all the run-off from this project will wind up in either Colony or Whitehall Creeks and flow down into Samish Bay; how will this affect the efforts of Skagit County to keep the bay clean and the oyster industry afloat?

It appears that this project has gone forth with road building and tree clearing before water rights are established. It also seems like there are some serious negative consequences that will affect this rural area. A land and water needs analysis would clarify much of the impact of this project. Finally, a moratorium on further development seems necessary until the impact is ascertained and it can be determined if this kind of project aligns with the long-term goals of Skagit County.

Sincerely,
Mike Stevens
Bow, WA

cc: Dept. of Ecology, Dept. of Health, County Commissioners