



## ISLAND COUNTY PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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### MEETING NOTICE TO ISLAND COUNTY PROPERTY OWNERS OF RURAL ZONED LAND

- Do you farm for personal, commercial or hobby purposes – such as, raise organic garlic, row crops, specialty or niche produce – like hot peppers, or have a vegetable garden?
- Do you graze animals, or lease pasture for grazing, or have a child in 4-H who raises animals on your property?
- Do you “hay” your property, or do you do custom mowing on rural parcels?
- Does your land have any wet spots -- is it spongy in the winter and dry in the summer? (Sometimes called a “summer pasture”.)
- Do you have drainage ditches or streams – even if they only carry runoff a few weeks a year? (Sometimes called a “winter creek”.)

**If you answered yes to any of the above questions,  
it is highly possible you will not be able to continue farming.  
THE RULES HAVE CHANGED.**

In 1999 your Board of Island County Commissioners called together a group of scientists and local farmers to develop rules that would protect the local environment and farming -- these rules are known as Agricultural Best Management Practices (AG-BMPs). The Courts have determined that these AG-BMPs do, in fact, protect the environment and farming operations, preserving the rural character of our islands. These AG-BMPs were made available to anyone who is farming, grazing animals or mowing/haying their property.

Had it not been for the Whidbey Environmental Action Network’s (WEAN) efforts, you would have been able to follow these rules, developed specifically for protecting the environment and preserving open space and rural character on Rural Zoned property for family/commercial farms, grazing and haying. WEAN’s litigation essentially nullified these rules – the Court of Appeals has agreed with WEAN that you cannot use these specialized standards thereby putting in place more restrictive rules than those established under the AG-BMPs.

Despite that for the past 20 years you have been able to conduct these activities without any critical areas rules, the Court of Appeals Ruling has changed all that -- *you are NOT grandfathered*.

The Island County Planning Commission will be holding hearings on these issues to decide how to comply with the Court of Appeals Decision. If you answered YES to any of the above questions you probably will have to limit or stop farming. To learn more about the Appellate Court decision and what rules have to be adopted for your County to be in compliance (and avoid tax sanctions), please attend and participate at one of the following Planning Commission hearings:

- **Camano Island -- May 17, 2005, 7:00 – 9:00 PM @ Utsalady Elementary School.**
- **Whidbey Island -- May 24, 2005, 7:00 – 9:00 PM @ Coupeville Elementary School.**