



Special Assessment Proposal

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Snohomish Conservation District Special Assessment Proposal

Snohomish Conservation District (SCD) has been providing services to landowners in Snohomish County since 1941. SCD works with all landowners, including rural, urban, residential, farm and forest landowners who have natural resource management issues and/or concerns on their property. In addition, SCD has a long history of successful partnerships with local groups and agencies to accomplish on-the-ground natural resource conservation.

SCD has been funded primarily by an Interlocal Agreement with Snohomish County, which was then leveraged to obtain local, state and federal grant funds on an average ratio of 1:1.2. Both of these funding sources are becoming more limited and therefore, SCD funding and program stability is in jeopardy.

Conservation districts have the authority under state law (RCW 89.08.400) to propose to their county government that a special assessment be added to the property tax on lands within their jurisdiction that benefit from district activities. Thirteen districts in twelve counties in Washington State that currently have an assessment are: Benton, Franklin, King, Kittitas, Lincoln, Mason, North Yakima, Okanogan, Pierce, San Juan, South Yakima, Spokane, and Thurston. SCD proposes to seek authorization to assess a per parcel fee to provide more reliable funding of its programs. This fee will be used to fund the operation of SCD programs and to provide match for grants that will continue to be pursued in order to leverage funding on a similar or greater ratio than currently occurs.

SCD proposes a fee of \$5.00 per parcel plus \$0.05 per acre, for the parcels within Snohomish Conservation District boundary. SCD assumes that the County will withhold approximately 1% to cover administrative costs for collecting the fee, as this is the statewide average in other districts with assessments.

Funds raised by the assessment will maintain and enhance current levels of service, including offering technical assistance and educational outreach to private landowners. Services to urban residents will be increased with these funds as well as an increased focus on Sustaining Agriculture and Preserving Farmland in Snohomish County. The District will be able to work with cities on urban conservation and with agricultural groups to expand its services to them.

The assessment funds will be instrumental in leveraging additional funds from various sources and addressing previously unfunded resource issues particular to Snohomish County residents. These additional funds will enable the District to offer assistance to private landowners to restore habitat and improve streams on their property.

The proposed assessment excludes parcels within the Stillaguamish Clean Water District (CWD) because stable funding is currently provided to the District under Title 25A Snohomish County Code to provide services to those landowners. In the event that the ordinance is not renewed, SCD proposes to include the parcels within the CWD in this assessment.

SCD has conducted considerable public outreach on this assessment including:

- Public hearings (9).
- Consulted with elected officials and staff members within cities and Snohomish County.
- Presentations to interested/affected organizations and groups.
- Media - Public Service Announcements (PSA's) and articles in local newsletters and newspapers.
- Internet information provided on our website.
- Informational fact sheets on the assessment were handed out at meetings, fairs, community events and mailings.

Consistent with the requirements under RCW 89.08.400, SCD is submitting this proposal, which includes:

- The SCD Assessment Proposal
- 2010 Work Plan and 2010 Budget
- The SCD Assessment Roll
- An Executive Summary of a Special Benefits Analysis Report prepared by Dr. Carolyn Henri of Resource Consulting Service, LLC. The entire report can be found at: http://www.snohomishcd.org/assessment/SCD%20Assessment%20Valuation%20FINAL_R_Oct16_07.pdf
- A list of support letters received from Snohomish County Stakeholder Groups
- A list of support letters received from citizens
- Public outreach documentation

The SCD Board of Supervisors recommends that this assessment be for a period of 5 years after which time the assessment will be subject to renewal.