



# KITTITAS COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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"Building Partnerships – Building Communities"

## OC-10-00010 BRUNSON OPEN SPACE CURRENT USE APPLICATION STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Kittitas County Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Jeff Watson, GIS Technician/ Planner II  
**DATE:** August 16, 2011  
**SUBJECT:** Brunson Open Space Current Use Application (OC-10-00010)

### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

**Proposal:** On December 29, 2010 Beth Brunson submitted an application for classification or reclassification as open space land or timber land for current use assessment under Chapter 84.34 RCW involving one tax parcel totaling 27.15 acres. The application has been reviewed by Assessor staff for ownership, parcel numbers, and legal descriptions, and Community Development Services staff for land use and critical areas assessment.

**Location:** The subject property is located at the end of Nanuem Road, approximately 8.8 miles northeast of the City of Ellensburg at the base of the foothills in the mouth of Naneum Canyon in a portion of section 20, township 19, range 19, WM, in Kittitas County; Assessor's map number 19-19-20000-0005, parcel identification number 098334.

### II. SITE INFORMATION

**Site Characteristics:** Utilizing Aerial Photography, analysis indicates the site is partially wooded with deciduous trees and undergrowth. Assessor's records indicate that there are no improvements to the property. The topography is gently sloped from north to south approximately 65 feet vertically over the roughly 2,080 foot length of the parcel. Critical areas review indicates that the parcel contains extensive 100 year floodplain which corresponds to the confluence of Wilson and Naneum creeks. Approximately 14 acres of the parcel are encumbered by Bonneville Power Administration restrictions from purchased right of way; the assessment of the property value duly reflects the physical and legal restrictions on development.

### III. RECOMMENDATION

The application as submitted is requesting classification as open space for current use. Justification for this proposed designation by the applicant is based on the following criteria listed in RCW 84.34.020

- (b) any land area, the preservation of which in its present use would*  
*(i) conserve and enhance natural or scenic resources, or*

Kittitas County ordinance 1994-025 stipulates that applications "... based on conservation or enhancement of natural resources must meet at least one of the following: .

- (1) Geologically significant rock formations that may be appropriate for educational study.*
- (2) Archeological sites that are registered with the state of Washington and protected.*
- (3) Game preserves and nesting grounds as agreed by the state of Washington Department of wildlife. (Public access may be controlled. Hunting and fishing may be denied.)*

This application's narrative does not indicate that any of these criteria have been met. Washington State DAHP shows no archaeological sites in their data base. The site is identified in the Priority Habitat Species data set as "Ellensburg Mule Deer Winter Range", but no indication was given that WDFW has any designation for game preserves or nesting grounds.

*(ii) protect streams or water supply, or*

Kittitas County ordinance 1994-025 stipulates that applications "... for open space on protection of streams and meet at least one of the following:

- (1) Preservation or protection of major drainage ways (major drainage ways being defined as the areas where feeder streams intersect with major streams) flowing directly into streams of 20 C.F.S. or more.*
- (2) Tracts continuous to or straddling major streams flowing at a rate of 20 C. F.S. or more.*
- (3) Significant aquifer recharge areas and areas of significant springs identified as water resources."*

Stream flow data for Kittitas County is limited, but the criterion for Shorelines of the State is set at 20 cubic feet per second. Wilson and Naneum creeks are not designated as such in this area. Kittitas County Code title 17A.08.010 *Designation of aquifer recharge areas* states that "No critical aquifer recharge locations have been identified in Kittitas County."

*(iii) promote conservation of soils, wetlands, beaches or tidal marshes,*

**PLANNER'S NOTE: THIS CRITERION BOX WAS NOT CHECKED BY THE APPLICANT IN THE APPLICATION. STAFF ASSUMED THAT POSSESSING THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE OUTCOME OF THE APPLICATION WOULD BE DRAMATICALLY AFFECTED BY THIS ANALYSIS THE APPLICANT WOULD HAVE WANTED IT REVIEWED.**

Kittitas County ordinance 1994-025 stipulates that applications "... will be restricted to at least one of the following:

- (1) Tracts with 25% or greater slope on at least 50% of the tracts or where there is physical evidence of erosion.
  - (a) Applications for this category shall be accompanied with a conservation plan prepared by the Soil Conservation Service including implementation program for the plan. (Failure to implement the plan in a timely manner will be cause for removal from the Open Space category and subject to penalties under RCW 84.34.)**
- (2) Tracts within the 100 year flood plain.*
- (3) Tracts where commercial development would destroy the natural cover and could result in erosion, loss of natural habitat and> such action would result in damage to adjacent property.*

The parcel indicated in this application contains approximately 4.4 acres of property delineated as Zone A of the 100 year floodplain in FIRM panel 5300950435B.

**Based on the criteria qualifications (iii), staff recommends approval of the application and designation as open space current use classification.**