

KITTITAS COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Comments received 10/3/06 for Public Hearing before the Kittitas County Board of County Commissioners for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Map and Text Amendments

DARRYL PIERCY, DIRECTOR

ALLISON KIMBALL, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

COMMUNITY PLANNING • BUILDING INSPECTION • PLANS EXAMINATION • ADMINISTRATION • PERMIT SERVICES • INVESTIGATION • ENFORCEMENT • GIS

Deborah L. Kuhn
2941 Reecer Creek Road
Ellensburg, WA 98926
509-925-9226
Tax parcel 18-18-27020-0001

ROUTED TO:
DPW _____
PROSECUTOR _____
CDS <u>Debra, Kim</u>
DEPT. <u>Valencia</u>

RECEIVED

OCT 01 2006

~~1ST~~ ~~2ND~~ ~~3RD~~
BOARD OF KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

September 27, 2006

Kittitas County Board of Commissioners
205 W 5th Suite 108
Ellensburg, WA 98926

Dear Kittitas County Commissioners:

I am sending this to inform you that I do not think the UGA boundary should be expanded West of Reecer Creek Road. You will be creating urban sprawl if you do this. There is a 374 housing development proposed East of Reecer Creek Road right now. In my opinion this is grossly excessive for Ellensburg and the Kittitas Valley. Margo Cordner, who by the way, has bought the 8+ acres North of my property line, has informed me that this whole valley is going to be divided up for housing. This is great for her since she works for John L Scott and Pat Deneen, but what about the rest of us who have put our heart and soul into our homes and property?

Twenty-two years ago my husband and I bought this piece of land. Now it is priceless to us because of the work we have done. As developers come into this valley and continue to buy up Ag land to build house on top of house, our way of life will be taken away. All I hear by County planners and others is that we must follow the law. The law and growth is now destroying the long time residents of the area. Our taxes keep going up, and the noise of construction equipment, and the dust created by construction is destroying our rural setting. Look at the development down by Dry Creek Road. How many years is that mess going to continue? This is the reason you do not need more land put into the UGA.

Margo and Michael Cordner have bought the 8 acres next to us anticipating that once in the UGA they will be able to sell to a developer and then BOOM 30, 40, 50 houses go in. Our way of life is gone. Mr. Cordner told me that if I didn't like it I should move to Moses Lake. They are in it for the money...my husband and I are in it for the love of our place and taking care of the land. As the land is bought up and dried out around here (very high water table), the wildlife and environment surrounding this area will suffer. The heron have all but disappeared this year and I'm sure the many types of hawks, eagles, and waterfowl will be gone soon. How many miles from town do you have to live to have piece of mind and a quality life in a rural setting? It is here now for us, but will it remain?

Reecer Creek Road was initially redesigned to carry industrial traffic to the airport. This was to be obtained once Bowers Road was extended. No one around this area liked that idea but it was put forth anyway. What has happened to this original plan of industrial growth at the airport and how do all the new housing developments affect the plan? The reason Bowers Road was built was to keep this industrial traffic away from residential areas of Bender Road. What happened to this plan? Do we now spend more state and county tax dollars for another road?

We don't want to live in Moses Lake. We want to live in the Kittitas Valley where its caretakers have planned and thought out its future development. Lets keep this area half way rural. You are going to end up with a domino effect if the city and county continue with this destructive path...save it before it is to late. NO to UGA expansion at this time.

Sincerely,


Deborah L. Kuhn



AMERICAN FOREST RESOURCES, LLC

October 3, 2006

Mr. Darryl Piercy, Director
Kittitas County Community Development Services
411 N Ruby ST, Suite 2
Ellensburg WA 98926

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OCT 03 2006,

**Kittitas County
CDS**

Re: 2006 Comprehensive Plan Map Amendments 06-18 & 06-19

Dear Mr. Piercy:

On behalf of American Forest Resources, LLC ("AFR"), please accept this letter as a formal request to withdraw the above-referenced docketed applications ("Applications") from further consideration. As you know, the Planning Commission considered and recommended denial of the Applications following public hearings in September. Based on our review of the record for those proceedings, it appears that any further deliberation on the Applications at this time would not be constructive.

Neither the County nor the general public appear to understand the forest products industry or the necessities of responding to a shifting paradigm in the management of timberlands. As we tried to make clear in our presentation to the Planning Commission, the forest products industry is facing unprecedented challenges that threaten its continuing viability in Eastern Washington and throughout much of the northwest. Certainly the closure of the mills in Yakima and Naches, and resulting increased transportation costs, are contributing factors to this decline. But the mill closures are also indicative of the same decline in the industry brought about by a variety of factors, including federal tax laws, fluctuating timber markets, international competition, reasonable expectations of investment returns, and heightened environmental regulations.

In order to continue in timber production, landowners such as AFR are now compelled to approach the use and management of their timberlands differently. Strategies for non-productive timberlands that contain higher values for residential and recreational development must be explored. Unfortunately, the opportunity for this type of informed dialogue did not occur at the September hearings. Many times, public statements were made implying that the preferred approach to timber management is to simply leave the forests alone to grow back. Other members suggested that AFR should just "build its own mill." Anyone who

believes that a light or non-existent harvesting regime is beneficial to the health of the forest need only look to local Forest Service lands dominated by dense mature stands, and decimated by the spruce budworm. And the suggestion to build a modern mill in today's market that would surely cost millions is unfounded by any reasonable economic principles.

During the course of the September hearings, we also heard numerous statements that implied a lack of appreciation for the private ownership of AFR lands. Unlike state or federal lands which comprise some 60% of the County's commercial forestlands, for example, the public is allowed onto AFR lands at the will of the landowner. Like its predecessor, AFR has historically maintained campgrounds and allowed public access for recreation on its properties at great costs to the company. More importantly, there are no economic pressures on public lands similar to those applied to private timberlands.

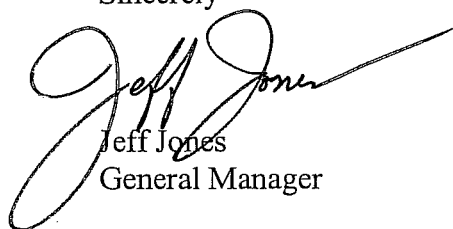
The intent of the Applications was to select parcels for Rural designation as an appropriate land use tool for creating a minimum land area allowing AFR to maintain a larger portion of its ownership for forest management, wildlife conservation, and continued recreational opportunities. We selected these particular parcels after conducting a careful and thorough analysis of AFR's entire ownership, including reviewing the County's criteria for designating both Commercial Forestry and Rural lands. The RLAC identified this area as having potential growth because the area has had and continues to have a history of development that is accessible to county roads and services. In addition, we selected these parcels after two years of exhaustive meetings and discussions with WDFW to ensure that wildlife issues were fully addressed and minimized, including impacts to spotted owls.

Even with these efforts, the level of misinformation surrounding AFR and their Applications by the general public and Planning Commission forces us to withdraw the Applications at this time. In its deliberations on the Applications, the Planning Commission refused to even consider our primary reason for applying to re-designate a portion of AFR's property from Commercial Forestry to Rural: a continuing decline of the economic feasibility of the forest products industry has reached a point that now requires the requested re-designation pursuant to the County's own criteria. We believe this refusal is indicative of the current inability of the County to understand the challenges facing the forest products industry within the County, and to provide a range of feasible opportunities to address these issues.

If the County desires to keep commercial forestry operating within the County, we recommend formation of a resource committee of forestry professionals. This committee would be charged to assist the County in developing informed criteria for the designation and re-designation of commercial forest lands within the

County, and not just one particular area. We would also encourage the committee to develop and adhere to a focused, six to nine month timeframe for accomplishing its stated objectives. AFR is committed to this idea in order to facilitate the processing of a future application by a fair, balanced, and informed Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners.

Sincerely



Jeff Jones
General Manager

Cc: Kittitas County Board of Commissioners:
Perry Huston, David Bowen, Alan Crankovich