

Adam Zack

From: Mike Carlson <mcarlson@rockisland.com>
Sent: Friday, May 21, 2021 6:16 AM
To: Lynda Guernsey; Erika Shook; Adam Zack
Cc: Jan Rohila; Jayson Schmidt; 'Jim Lawson'; Katie Schmidt; Lorne Paulson; Mike; Mitchell Carlson; 'Patrick Mullin'; Rick Petro; TOM BROWN
Subject: San Juan Building Assn Resource Lands
Attachments: SJBA Resource Lands Comment to Planning Commission.pdf

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Lynda

Please see the attached comment letter about the Resource Lands Review for the Comp. Plan Update.

Can you please see that the Planning Commission receives copies of our comment letter?

Best Regards,

Mike



Mike Carlson, President
San Juan Building Association
c. 360 378 7484
mcarlson@rockisland.com



May 20, 2021

San Juan County Planning Commission

135 Rhone Street

Friday Harbor, WA 98250

Re: San Juan County Resource Lands Review

Dear Planning Commissioners,

I am writing on behalf of the San Juan Building Assn. (SJBA) to comment about the Dept. of Community Development's (DCD) April 2nd Draft Natural Resource Land Designation Review Phase One and Two Results.

We are impressed with the comprehensiveness of these reviews and for the most part agree with the proposed changes that DCD is proposing so far.

SJBA is in support of the Phase One and Phase Two analysis' DCD has done to determine the degree to which lands in SJC meet the criteria for forest and agriculture long term commercial significance and those lands meet the Comprehensive Plan designation criteria.

SJBA does not support increasing the AG or Forestry Land designations beyond what is currently designated for the following reasons:

- Since the San Juan County Board of Commissioners voted to plan according to the Growth Management Act in November of 1990 and since the establishment of the Land Bank was approved by the voters in the same month and year, open space and resource lands are being appropriately protected.
- San Juan County has an affordable housing crisis which in large part is due to a lack of available building lots. Through GMA planning, Land Bank Acquisitions and other preservation programs our county has significantly reduced the number of acres available for the development of housing of any kind.
- We do not support adding land that has not already been designated but meets Plan criteria and has a higher LCSJ because lands in this category are not precluded, absent a designation from participating in AG or Forestry if the owners choose to do so.

Regarding Forest Lands of Long Term Commercial Significance.....

While the Natural Resource Land Designation Review process may not be the appropriate exercise to address difficulties which have made traditional forestry unviable in much of San Juan County, identifying some of the obstacles will help point out the struggle that exists in making traditional forestry have any “Commercial Significance”

- **Transportation of logs to market via the Washington State Ferries is too costly and unpredictable as far as ferry system reliability.** While it is viable to haul logs from Orcas, Shaw and Lopez because it's possible to haul two trips per day while it's not as viable from San Juan because only one trip per day can be done.
Barging logs off of the islands is being done now and is viable and more profitable due to the amount of logs that can be hauled at one time. The barge will haul 40 to 50 logging truck loads per load. For barging of this scale to work, barge landing sites are needed. *Having a barge landing site like the old gravel pit at Jackson Beach on San Juan Island as an example will go a long way toward solving the biggest obstacle to profitable traditional forestry.*
- **The growth in acreage that is now owned/preserved by San Juan County Parks, National Parks and the Land Bank.** For example, the DNR have divested all of their School Trust Lands by selling/transferring them to San Juan County, National Parks and the Land Bank. The DNR recognized they could not manage their Trust Land as profitably like they could in other counties on the mainland for the reasons I've stated above. This exemplifies the fact that traditional forestry in SJC is *barely* commercially significant.
Transferring some 2000 acres of DNR lands into Parks and other preserves ensures those forests will most likely never be managed for forestry again. There are also numerous former privately owned properties that are now owned by the Land Bank properties which were once used for traditional forestry. Those important forest lands could and should be managed as traditional forestry with some level of timber harvesting which could contribute to the viability of forestry on SJC over the long term. In any case, all of these forested lands are protected from development.
- **Cash flow from small parcel forestry is minimal in the best of circumstances.** Therefore, it could be beneficial to expand the allowed uses on Forestland for activities that are compatible with traditional forestry. Those uses could be mountain bike trails, vacation rentals, camp sites, zip lines or other recreational activities that can *supplement revenue* from traditional forestry.

Regarding Ag Lands of Long Term Commercial Significance.....

SJBA is in agreement with the DCD April 2nd Draft Review for AG Lands

Like forestry, farming in the San Juans is a *labor of love*. SJBA believes that the beauty and open spaces of the farm lands in San Juan County are a significant aspect of what makes our County so desirable. SJBA supports and appreciates what farming does to enhance the livability of SJC. Most of the farm land is used for hay crops and grazing for cattle, horses and sheep as has been done in SJC for over 100 years. More recently, organic vegetable farms, wine vineyards and orchards are being cultivated. *Since the economy of San Juan County is mostly of tourism, SJBA supports expanding allowed uses on AG Lands to include recreational activities that are compatible with farming. There are numerous examples of farm tours, wineries, distilleries, farm vacation rentals, wedding and special occasion venues that are sited on working farms all over the country. These are very compatible uses that help to stabilize and sustain farming viability.*

We look forward to participating in the comprehensive plan updating process and thank you for your service as planning commissioners.

Sincerely,



Michael W. Carlson, President

cc: Adam Zack. Erika Shook, SJBA Board