



Building communities
Protecting the land

November 12, 2015

Received 2-26-16 B.R.

Mr. Ben Rough, Senior Planner
Okanogan County Office of Planning & Development
123 5th Ave. N, Suite 130
Okanogan, Washington 98840

Dear Mr. Rough:

Subject: Comments on the Determination of Significance and Request for Comments on Scope of the EIS for the Okanogan County Zoning Update

Sent via email to: brough@co.okanogan.wa.us

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Determination of Significance and request for comments on scope of the environmental impact statement (EIS) on the Okanogan County Zoning Update. We agree with Okanogan County that an EIS should be prepared on the zoning code update. We generally concur with the areas identified for analysis and the preparation of mitigating measures in the scoping notice. We also have additional comments in the scope of the EIS.

Futurewise is working throughout Washington State to create livable communities, protect our working farmlands, forests, and waterways, and ensure a better quality of life for present and future generations. We work with communities to implement effective land use planning and policies that prevent waste and stop sprawl, provide efficient transportation choices, create affordable housing and strong local businesses, and ensure healthy natural systems. We are creating a better quality of life in Washington State together. We have members across Washington State including Okanogan County.

The EIS must analyze the impacts of zoning code update on fire services and fire hazards

Fire services and police services are elements of the environment that must be evaluated in the Draft EIS because the proposed zoning regulations will have a significant impact on fire responses.¹ For the second year in a row, Okanogan County has experienced a record breaking fire. In 2014, Okanogan County endured the largest fire in Washington history. In 2015, Okanogan County had to endure an even larger fire.

The Okanogan County *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* has identified residential growth as having a serious impact on fire hazards and fire response. As the *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* states:

¹ WAC 197-11-444(2)(d)(i); WAC 197-11-444(2)(d)(ii); WAC 197-11-440(6).

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One challenge Okanogan County faces is the large number of houses in the urban/rural fringe compared to twenty years ago. Since the 1970s, a segment of Washington's growing population has expanded further into traditional forest or resource lands and other rural areas. The "interface" between urban and suburban areas and unmanaged forest and rangelands created by this expansion has produced a significant increase in threats to life and property from fires and has pushed existing fire protection systems beyond original or current design or capability. Many property owners in the interface are not aware of the problems and threats they face and owners have done very little to manage or offset fire hazards or risks on their own property. Furthermore, human activities increase the incidence of fire ignition and potential damage.²

These serious impacts need to be evaluated in the Draft EIS and mitigation measures identified.

Wildfires that require evacuation orders occur regularly in Okanogan County. In an interview, Okanogan County Sheriff Frank Rogers said that Okanogan County has huge fires every year and every year the county must do evacuation notifications.³ This requires the Sheriff, his deputies, and any available state patrol officers to drive every road in the evacuation area and stop at every house.⁴ This is time consuming, resource intensive, and the Sheriff has very limited resources, 20 to 30 officers, to do this important work.⁵ The Carlton Complex Fire this year burned 400 square miles.⁶ If just eight square miles zoned R-1 where to burn, the zoning update would allow over 5,000 homes on that land. Sheriff Rogers said his office could not notify 5,000 homes.⁷

A 2014 study calculated that each new dwelling in Okanogan County only generates "about 7% of the cost to provide services to the new dwelling" each year.⁸ So the county will not be able to afford to hire Sheriff Deputies to serve these new homes.

² *Okanogan County, Washington Community Wildfire Protection Plan* p. 88 (2013) accessed on Nov. 12, 2015 at: http://file.dnr.wa.gov/publications/rp_burn_okanogan_cwpp_2013update.pdf and in the record of the comprehensive plan update. If the county would like a copy of any of the documents referenced in this letter and not provided with the letter, please contact the author and we will furnish the county with a copy.

³ Transcript of KUOW "The Record" *One Wildfire Victim Never Got an Evacuation Notice, Here's Why* p. 3 (July 21, 2014) enclosed with this letter and in the record of the comprehensive plan update.

⁴ *Id.* at p. 2.

⁵ *Id.* at pp. 2 - 3.

⁶ InciWeb - Incident Information System Carlton Complex in the record of the comprehensive plan update.

⁷ Transcript of KUOW "The Record" *One Wildfire Victim Never Got an Evacuation Notice, Here's Why* pp. 2 - 3 (July 21, 2014).

⁸ Julie Ann Gustanski, Ph.D., LLM and David Scarsella, M.S., *Economic Analysis of Conservation Efforts in Okanogan County* p. 44 (2014) accessed on Nov. 12, 2015 at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01605/> and in the record of the comprehensive plan update.

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The proposed zoning applies the high-density R-1 zone to several areas that are served by dead-end roads. Some examples of dead-end roads serving R-1 zoning are Otto Road, Alta Lake Road/NF-2917, Lookout Lane, Eagle Crest Drive, Kamsak Road, Mountain Point Road, and the roads east and southeast of Reesas Basin Road.⁹ The Firewise Principles recommend “‘two ways out’ of the neighborhood for safe evacuation during a wildfire emergency.”¹⁰ So does the U.S. Fire Administration.¹¹ The value of a second way to access homes is shown by one of last year’s fires where the Sheriff had to turn back from giving evacuation notices in a residential development when “flames closed over the hood of his patrol car, and he was forced to retreat ...”¹²

The high density R-1 zoning is also applied to areas served by one lane roads. One example is the North Fork of Gold Creek, south of Carlton in the Methow Valley, which is a US Forest Service road accessing Foggy Dew Campground and several trailheads. Development along the North Fork road is planned in the Interim-Zone map as R-1, with a one-acre minimum lot size.¹³ The North Fork road is a poorly maintained one lane U.S. Forest Service road with no constructed turnouts, a steep cut bank on one side, and a steep drop-off into the North Fork of Gold Creek on the other side. During the previous two fires (Buckhorn Fire, 2012; Carlton Complex, 2014) fire crews or residents had to pull over onto the narrow shoulder in order to pass by each other.

Five acre zoning is also served by narrow one-lane roads. Private land in an inholding on the Middle Fork of Gold Creek within the National Forest boundaries is zoned Rural 5, with a five-acre minimum lot size.

The former Okanogan County *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* recommended “[i]ncorporat[ing] the Okanogan County Community Wildfire Protection Plan into the Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan, where applicable.”¹⁴ The current *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* reiterates this recommendation.¹⁵ But the comprehensive plan and

⁹ Google Earth 2013 Aerial Images showing Alta Lake, Eagle Crest Drive, Harmony Heights Road, Highway 20, Patterson Creek Road in the record of the comprehensive plan update.

¹⁰ *Firewise Toolkit A Guide to Firewise Principles* accessed on Nov. 12, 2015 at: <http://www.firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness/firewise-toolkit.aspx> and in the record of the comprehensive plan update.

¹¹ FEMA U.S. Fire Administration, *Wildfires: Protect Yourself and Your Community* *2 accessed on Nov. 12, 2015 at: https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/wildfires_protect_yourself_and_your_community.pdf and in the record of the comprehensive plan update.

¹² Ann McCreary, *Methow Valley News Online No relief: Valley copes with impact of new fires, storms, outages and evacuations* p. 3 of 5 (Aug 7, 2014) in the record of the comprehensive plan update.

¹³ Email from Isabelle Spohn (Sept. 5, 2014) enclosed with this letter.

¹⁴ *Okanogan County, Washington Community Wildfire Protection Plan* p. 199 (Jan. 30, 2009) in the record of the comprehensive plan update and accessed on Nov. 12, 2015 at: http://file.dnr.wa.gov/publications/rp_burn_cwppokanogan.pdf

¹⁵ *Okanogan County, Washington Community Wildfire Protection Plan* p. 97 (2013).

proposed zoning do not include any provisions from the *Community Wildfire Protection Plan*.¹⁶ For example, the *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* recommended the adoption of “stringent regulations to insure fire-safe development of rural subdivisions (see FIREWISE or similar programs for specific recommendations).”¹⁷ There is no comprehensive plan policy calling for implementation of this recommendation and no zoning regulations that would implement the recommendation that we can find. In fact, the Planning Commission rejected the *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* recommendations.¹⁸ The Draft EIS needs to analyze these failures to protect people and property and how the proposed zoning will address them. The Draft EIS must also identify measures to mitigate these impacts.

The Okanogan County *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* explains that in their natural condition the county’s existing agricultural lands had some of the highest risk for wildland fires.¹⁹ Converting “much of the landscape historically prone to frequent fires” to agriculture has lowered the risk of wildland fires.²⁰ The *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* states “[t]he preservation of a viable agricultural economy in Okanogan County is integral to the continued management of wildfire risk in this region.”²¹ The impacts of converting this farmland to rural residential development on community fire safety as provided for in the proposed zoning regulations must be analyzed in the Draft EIS and mitigation measures identified.

The EIS must analyze the impacts of the zoning code update on senior water rights holders, ground water resources, stream flows, and lake levels

Water resources are elements of the environment that must be evaluated in the EIS because the proposed zoning regulations will have a significant impact on water resources.²² Water resources are very limited in Okanogan County. Within the Methow Watershed, Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 48, and the Okanogan Watershed, WRIA 49, “most if not

¹⁶ Okanogan County Resolution 119-2014 *Comprehensive Plan of 2014* pp. 4 – 36.

¹⁷ *Okanogan County, Washington Community Wildfire Protection Plan* p. 88 (2013) accessed on Nov. 12, 2015 at: http://file.dnr.wa.gov/publications/rp_burn_okanogan_cwpp_2013update.pdf and in the record for the comprehensive plan update; Okanogan County Resolution 119-2014 *Comprehensive Plan of 2014* pp. 4 – 36. A guide to Firewise principles can be found here: <http://www.firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness/firewise-toolkit.aspx>.

¹⁸ Okanogan County Resolution 119-2014 Attachment D Finding of Fact 12.

¹⁹ *Okanogan County, Washington Community Wildfire Protection Plan* p. 98 (2013).

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.*

²² WAC 197-11-444(1)(c); WAC 197-11-440(6).

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all of the available water has already been allocated.”²³ Parts of the water basins in the county are closed to new water appropriations.²⁴ Water is in such short supply that:

[The Washington State Department of] Ecology regularly sends out Administrative Orders under RCW 90.03 alerting water right holders they will be curtailed in favor of instream flows for the Methow and Okanogan Rivers. This has been a common occurrence in Okanogan County where users were curtailed or shut off four out of the last five years on the Methow and three out of the last five years on the Okanogan during times of low flow.²⁵

Ecology also explained that:

Demands of new water use reduce water legally available for existing, senior water rights including instream flows. Where hydraulic continuity is shown with surface water, new domestic uses established under RCW 90.44.050 are subject to curtailment to meet the needs of more senior water rights in water short years. If water supply becomes limited, water use could be curtailed by those with senior water rights, which includes instream flows established in Chapters 173-548, 173-549 and 173-563 WAC.

[The] Department of Health does not consider interruptible water rights an adequate and reliable water source consistent with WAC 246-290-420. For these reasons, future water source plans will likely not be a reliable supply for year round residential use and may be subject to interruption due to conflict with instream flows. As such, it will be questionable whether [the proposed comprehensive] plan would provide an appropriate provision for potable water supply under RCW 58.17.²⁶

The very limited water availability in Okanogan County is confirmed by the Methow Watershed Council. When the instream flow rule for the Methow was adopted, water was reserved for permit-exempt wells. The council states that to their knowledge, this is the only non-interruptible water available in the Methow sub basin.²⁷ The bedrock deposits that

²³ State of Washington Department of Ecology Water Resources Program, *Focus on Water Availability for the Methow Watershed, WRIA 48* p. 2 (Publication Number: 11-11-052, Revised August 2012) in the record of the Comprehensive Plan Update; State of Washington Department of Ecology Water Resources Program, *Focus on Water Availability for the Okanogan Watershed, WRIA 49* p. 2 (Publication Number: 11-11-053, Revised August 2012) in the record of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ Letter from Washington State Department of Ecology to Perry Huston Okanogan County Planning p. 3 of 5 (April 7, 2011) enclosed in a separate email.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ Methow Watershed Council Letter to the Okanogan County Commission Re: Okanogan Comprehensive Plan and watershed planning p. 1 (June 14, 2011) enclosed in a separate email.

underlie the aquifers subject to the instream flow rule “yield little water and are not considered a significant source of domestic water.”²⁸ The Council has projected that:

Assuming future build-out with no new parcels and existing parcel size regulations, 6 reaches would have water remaining in their reserves. The Lower Methow would exceed its reserve, leaving 1,092 presently existing parcels out of a total of 2,913 presently existing parcels unable to be supplied by a well.

Assuming full build-out of all possible parcels under present zoning, 5 reaches would have water remaining in their reserve. The Upper Methow and Lower Methow would exceed their reserves. The Upper Methow would have 127 parcels unable to be supplied by permit-exempt wells out of a total of 1,948 possible parcels. The Lower Methow would have 24,313 parcels out of a total of 26,133 possible parcels unable to be supplied by wells.²⁹

The comprehensive plan and proposed zoning do not change the Methow Valley Planning Area Sub Unit A subarea plan. The proposed zoning does not appear to reduce the allowed densities. So the new zoning will allow the creation of 24,440 parcels without a potable water supply. These impacts must be analyzed in the Draft EIS.

“Maintaining minimum streamflow is necessary to sustain anadromous fish populations.”³⁰ The county will not be able to allow development of 24,440 parcels because they lack an adequate supply of potable water. If development is allowed, the anadromous fish will be impacted. But the new zoning regulations do not include any requirement that new lots, new buildings, or new uses must be served by a water source that has a legal water supply and an actual water supply. Allowing the creation of so many lots beyond what the available water supplies can support is a serious adverse impact that must be analyzed in the draft EIS. Mitigation measures need to be included to address these impacts.

Failing to require that new developments have both legal water and an actual water supply will adversely impact senior water rights holders because the county will apparently continue to allow permit-exempt wells to be used for new developments despite the fact that all water in the county is already allocated. So this water will have to come from either instream flows or senior water rights holders or both. These impacts need to be analyzed in the draft EIS and mitigating measures developed.

²⁸ Expert Testimony of Laura Strauss, Hydrogeologist p. 4 (May 6, 2014) enclosed in a separate email.

²⁹ Methow Watershed Council Letter to the Okanogan County Commission Re: Okanogan Comprehensive Plan and watershed planning p. 2 (June 14, 2011) enclosed in a separate email.

³⁰ Expert Testimony of Laura Strauss, Hydrogeologist p. 12 (May 6, 2014).

Okanogan County has applied a Rural 1 zone along many streams that are already over appropriated.³¹ These streams include Bonaparte Creek in the Osoyoos basin, 41,188 percent over appropriated in the summer; Johnson Creek in the Salmon basin, 2,913 percent over appropriated in the summer; the lower part of Sinlahekin Creek in the Sinlahekin basin, 3,015 percent over appropriated in the summer; Tonasket Creek in the Osoyoos basin, 54,143 percent over appropriated in the summer; and Tunk Creek in the Omak basin, 1,300 percent over appropriated in the summer.³² In the Osoyoos and Salmon basins the 2006 ground water appropriations exceeded ground water recharge as it did for WRIA 49 as a whole.³³ "Groundwater and surface water interact throughout the [Okanogan River] watershed."³⁴ Allowing high densities along the over allocated creeks with a hydrologic connection to ground water is a significant adverse impact that must be analyzed in the draft EIS.

Okanogan County had more permit-exempt wells drilled, 1,275, than any other county in the state between January 1, 2008 and September 4, 2014.³⁵ "There are many reasons for the large increase in [permit-exempt wells in] Okanogan County, including that it is the largest county in the state and nearly all growth is occurring in rural areas outside of municipal supplies."³⁶ The Draft EIS must analyze the impacts of these permit-exempt wells, the county's practice of allowing these wells to be used for new development without a showing that the water is legally and actually available, and the county's practice of encouraging growth in the rural area.

The EIS must analyze the impacts of the zoning code update on farmland

Soils and agricultural crops are elements of the environment that must be evaluated in the Draft EIS because the proposed zoning regulations will have a significant impact on these resources.³⁷ In 2012, Okanogan County had 1,205,285 acres of land in farms, a broad category that includes the land owned or rented by a farming operation but not federal or state grazing

³¹ Okanogan County Resolution 119-2014 Map 1 – Comprehensive Plan Overlay (3/5/2014); ENTRIX, Inc., *Level 1 Watershed Technical Assessment Final Report Okanogan River Watershed Resource Inventory Area 49* p. ES-9 & WRIA 49 Stream Monitoring Locations map (Sept. 2006) accessed on Nov. 12, 2015 at: http://www.okanogancd.org/sites/default/files/programs/owp/24_Technical%20Assessment.pdf and in the record of the comprehensive plan update.

³² ENTRIX, Inc., *Level 1 Watershed Technical Assessment Final Report Okanogan River Watershed Resource Inventory Area 49* p. ES-9 & WRIA 49 Stream Monitoring Locations map (Sept. 2006).

³³ *Id.* at ES-4.

³⁴ *Id.* at 2-24.

³⁵ Tom Culhane, John Rapp, and Dave Nazy, *Permit-Exempt Domestic Well Use in Washington Final Draft* p. 10 (Water Resources Program, Washington State Department of Ecology Olympia, Washington: Nov. 25, 2014) in the record of the comprehensive plan update.

³⁶ *Id.* at p. 21.

³⁷ WAC 197-11-444(1)(d); WAC 197-11-440(6).

allotments.³⁸ The Washington State Department of Agriculture Crop Distribution Geodatabase identifies those sections, generally 640 acre squares, of land that have crops growing in 2014 and the characteristics of those crops.³⁹ Unfortunately, the zoning code update zones most of the farmland for rural residential development. This is a significant adverse impact that must be analyzed in the Draft EIS.

The EIS must analyze the impacts of the zoning code on plants and animals and their habitats

Plants, animals, their habitats, and their migration routes are elements of the environment that must be evaluated in the Draft EIS because the proposed zoning regulations will have a significant impact on these resources.⁴⁰ The zoning code update zones many habitats, such as riparian areas and others, for high rural densities. The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife's "PHS on the Web" website can help the county identify these habitats. The department can also provide the county with GIS data layers of these habitats. The impacts of the zoning code on these habitats and species must be analyzed in the Draft EIS and mitigating measures developed. The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife's *Landscape Planning for Washington's Wildlife: Managing for Biodiversity in Developing Areas*⁴¹ and *Land Use Planning for Salmon, Steelhead and Trout: A land use planner's guide to salmonid habitat protection and recovery*⁴² contain information that can help the county analyze these impacts and develop mitigation measures to include in the Draft EIS.

The EIS must analyze the impacts of missing the update deadlines for the critical areas regulation update and the shoreline master program update and the zoning's failure to address critical areas such as landslide hazards

The scoping notice, on pages 2 and 3, indicates that the Draft EIS will take into account the county's critical areas regulations and shoreline master program. But the county has failed to update the critical areas regulations by the deadline in the Growth Management Act. The county also failed to meet the contractual deadline to update the shoreline master program.

³⁸ US Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service, *2012 Census of Agriculture County Profile Okanogan County, Washington* p. *1 accessed on Nov. 12, 2015 at: http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Washington/cp53047.pdf; United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, *2012 Census of Agriculture Washington State and County Data Volume 1 • Geographic Area Series • Part 47 AC-12-A-47 Appendix B p. B-13* (May 2014) accessed on Nov. 12, 2015 at: http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_2_County_Level/Washington/ and both documents in the record for the comprehensive plan update.

³⁹ Available at: <http://agr.wa.gov/PestFert/NatResources/AgLandUse.aspx>

⁴⁰ WAC 197-11-444(1)(a)(ii); WAC 197-11-444(2)(b)(vii); WAC 197-11-440(6).

⁴¹ Accessed on Nov. 12, 2015 at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/00023/>

⁴² Accessed on Nov. 12, 2015 at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/00033/wdfw00033.pdf>

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To date, neither the critical areas regulations nor the shoreline master program have been updated. So the Draft EIS must take into account that these regulations are out of date and will not protect critical areas.

The recent Oso tragedy has drawn attention to the risk to lives and property of natural hazards such as landslides, which are a type of critical area.⁴³ Areas within Okanogan County are at significant risk for damage from natural hazards including landslides.⁴⁴ The *Okanogan County, Washington All Hazards Mitigation Plan* recommends that:

Land-use planning is one of the most effective and economical ways to reduce landslide losses by avoiding the hazard and minimizing the risk. This is accomplished by removing or converting existing development or discouraging or regulating new development in unstable areas. Buildings should be located away from known landslides, debris flows, steep slopes, streams and rivers, intermittent-stream channels, and the mouths of mountain channels. In the State of Washington, restrictions on land use generally are imposed and enforced by local governments by land-use zoning districts and regulations.⁴⁵

However, the proposed zoning fails to require or encourage development to avoid landslide hazards, allowing apartment buildings with densities of five apartments per acre throughout much of unincorporated Okanogan County. The Draft EIS must analyze the proposed zoning's failure to follow the recommendations of the *Okanogan County, Washington All Hazards Mitigation Plan* and recommend mitigating measures.

We recommend that the draft EIS not be prepared until the Okanogan County superior court decides the pending SEPA appeal

The appeal of Okanogan County's withdrawal of the determination of the significance for the comprehensive plan update will be heard on November 23, 2015 and will be decided soon after the oral argument. We recommend that the Draft EIS not be prepared until this appeal is decided by the superior court as the scope of the EIS may change if the appeal is granted.

⁴³ Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Significant Deep-Seated Landslides in Washington State – 1984 to 2014 p. 1 of 5 (2/10/2015) accessed on Nov. 12, 2015 at: http://www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/ger_list_large_landslides.pdf; RCW 36.70A.030(5) & (9).

⁴⁴ Okanogan County All Hazards Mitigation Plan Committee, *Okanogan County, Washington All Hazards Mitigation Plan* Volume I pp. 145 – 158 (Jan. 30, 2009) accessed on Nov. 11, 2015 at: <http://okanogandem.org/documents/AHMP/Okanogan%20County%20AHMP.pdf>.

⁴⁵ *Id.* at p. 160.

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Thank you for considering our comments. If you require additional information please contact me at telephone 206-343-0681 and email tim@futurewise.org

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and curves, likely representing the name 'Tim Trohimovich'.

Tim Trohimovich, AICP
Director of Planning & Law

Enclosures

Transcript of KUOW “The Record” *One Wildfire Victim Never Got an Evacuation Notice, Here’s Why* Mon July 21, 2014

Accessed on August 27, 2014 at: <http://kuow.org/post/one-wildfire-victim-never-got-evacuation-notice-heres-why>

Ross Reynolds: I’m Ross Reynolds this is the Record on KUOW. As you heard, good news from the wildfire front. Cooler weather is helping firefighters control those rampaging fires in eastern Washington. But for residents the long aftermath has just begun. Brenda Reagan of Brewster, Washington was able to see her home. The structure is still standing but it’s not safe for her to stay there so she stayed with 15 others at her sister’s house. Brenda spoke with KUOW’s Bill Radke this morning. She and her husband had very little time to get out.

Brenda Reagan: Well my husband manages an apple packing warehouse in the Town of Pateros where they were, hum, experiencing the fire. I called him and asked him if everything was alright, if it was OK and then this huge funnel cloud came down over the hill at Pateros. Since it takes us over 20 minutes to get to the city of Pateros we did not think we had anything to worry about at our house. Unfortunately, after the funnel cloud came down into Pateros, it turned around and went back up the hill to our house. This all happened within a matter of minutes. My husband got home. We threw a few things in our vehicles and we could hear the fire roaring towards us like a freight train. It came over the hill and we barely were able to escape. The unfortunately thing is so many of our friends lost their homes and there was no notification of any kind. We didn’t get any evacuation order, we didn’t get a warning. Everyone was just left to fend for themselves. And I am just very grateful that everyone was able to get out safely. Um, there were a lot of people who were injured trying to leave. We just really would have appreciated some kind of notice in enough time so we could be safe or maybe try to save some homes.

Bill Radke: What shape is your property in today and what is your neighborhood like as you look around you and look and hear and smell?

Brenda Reagan: Um, the smell is awful. I have terrible breathing problems, I’m having a really hard time I know others are as well. Smoke is thick and hazy. There was ash falling for days. When we left we turned around and there were two funnel clouds one went behind our house and one went in the front twirling and swirling and devouring everything that was there. There is really no other reason that our house is standing but that lord blessed it. And we are very grateful and we have a bit of damage, but when we came back the next morning we were amazed to see the miracle of our house standing there. There isn’t anything left. We lost our outbuilding, all of our fence, all of the vegetation, every tree around our house, the trees that are up against our house, the landscaping, the shrubbery is all burnt. It’s all gone, destroyed. We have so much work to do. We don’t have any power, um we don’t have any telephone lines. We have nothing. Um and if you turn and look around, it looks like you have been dropped on another planet there is nothing left. Its white ash, black soot, and the fire just raged in such a way that it is just unlike anything you can imagine. It’s just very devastating.

Bill Radke: How are you feeling about that lack of warning that you talked about?

Brenda Reagan: I am just in awe that no one was hurt. Because, it's very frustrating, I don't want to wait until someone does end up dying or many people do until something changes. I do not like the excuses that I have heard about it being just part of the system it takes money and it takes all of this effort, but you know we are talking about people's lives here, it shouldn't matter. It should be something that should be in place before something tragic happens. I know we don't have the population here in our rural communities, but every life is so precious and everyone deserves to be warned.

Bill Radke: Brenda Reagan Brewster, Washington. Brenda best of luck to you, we are glad you are OK, and thank you for talking with us.

Brenda Reagan: Thank you very much, I just hope that everyone keeps us in their thoughts and prayers there are a lot of people that would really appreciate their prayers.

Ross Reynolds: Brenda spoke to KUOW's Bill Radke this morning. Frank Rogers is Brenda's local sheriff in Okanogan County. This morning we asked him why Brenda never received a notification to evacuate.

Sheriff Rogers: Here is the other side you need to understand. Her house was not in that, where she was living was not in any notification at that time. We hadn't been advised by fire that any of these areas were in a trigger spot because the trouble was the fire was burning so fast that nobody knew how far ahead it was.

Ross Reynolds: So there was no evacuation notice to be issued to Brenda Reagan in Brewster?

Sheriff Rogers: Correct. She wasn't on our list yet. When we do an evacuation notice what we physically do is we physically drive every road in that area and we physically stop at every house. The trouble we had on this fire, where you got to understand, where this fire was covering over 100 square miles and there is only, I mean we only had ten of us, ten cops, we had state patrol we had everybody out there but you are talking hundreds and hundreds of miles of roads and, you know, thousands of homes. So it is so time consuming, I mean it was blowing so fast, there is no human way we could, there is just no way you're going to get to 5,000 homes, but you know just I am sorry. I mean I don't know.

Ross Reynolds: So it wasn't that Brenda did not get a notification that had gone out, no notification had gone out yet to where she was.

Sheriff Rogers: Correct. We were not told go to Brewster and start. And here is the other side of this too, I mean. We do this for a living. While we're in the fire and watching it, my guys are very good at this. It worked. The system worked. It's worked for 30 years. It worked. It is just sometimes you are going to get caught off guard. I mean it is no

different than those poor communities with tornadoes. You know, you notify, they send it but you know what, there is still destruction.

Ross Reynolds: Yea.

Sheriff Rogers: I mean is just, [where] we live we do not have tornadoes, we have wildfires. I have been a cop here for 30 years and I have never seen this, where this many homes uh, we have massive fires every year and we do not lose homes, all the time. So this is just one of those things. And I know she is frustrated and I sympathize with her 100 percent. But on this one there, it wouldn't have mattered.

Ross Reynolds: Well, is this the best system? I mean it sounds as though you weren't able to get to her and to perhaps others. Does there need to be a better system so that people get a notification to evacuate?

Sheriff Rogers: Yea, but I wish somebody, I don't know how you do it. I mean, we can go to the reverse 911 eventually, we hope.

Ross Reynolds: What is reverse 911 because some people may not know what it is? What is that?

Sheriff Rogers: It is basically a phone system where you set it up and it will dial, it's a reverse dial. It dials you, it's your house and tells you, you know whatever. You have a wildfire, you've got this. So that would be a great way.

Ross Reynolds: So if this had been in operation this past week instead of going to Brenda Reagan's house she would have gotten a phone call?

Sheriff Rogers: No. No. On evacuation notices we have to go to the house. You remember the other problem we have in this area is that we're so rural no cell coverage. I mean, I understand the frustration but when the fire was going at the same time let's say we had the 911 service in place, well when this fire blew-up we lost power, they lost phone lines. Well, once power goes out and you lose phone lines we can dial all of the 911s we want, there not going anywhere so we can't comfortably say you know we got a 911 reverse, send it out we're good. We're are trying to evacuate 600 people, there is only, you know, 20 – 30 cops now, trying to get everybody out of town. I mean you understand where I am going? I am sorry.

Ross Reynolds: It sounds extremely difficult and complicated and I can hear the frustration in your voice about being able to use the best means.

Sheriff Rogers: Well, well, I will tell you, we have huge fires every year and every year we do notifications. We've done notifications for dozens of years and we've never had a problem. Because there is no way you will ever get everybody a notification. I mean all we are trying to do is we are trying to save lives, trying to do the best we can. If you get the 911 thing working, that will help a little, but we're still going to physically drive, I

mean that just the way it's done. So, I mean we do what we can, I don't know how to improve it anymore it is just so difficult.

Ross Reynolds: Okanogan County Sheriff Frank Rogers. We also reached out to Washington's Department of Natural Resources for comment on the notification when a wildfire is coming. We will let you know what we find out. This is the Record on KUOW.

Tim Trohimovich

To: Isabelle Spohn
Cc: Ruth Dight
Subject: RE: Isabelle's Comments on 9/10/14 Comp Plan SEPA brief

From: Isabelle Spohn
Sent: Friday, September 05, 2014 2:28 PM
To: Tim Trohimovich
Cc: Isabelle Spohn; Ruth Dight
Subject: Re: Isabelle's Comments on 9/10/14 Comp Plan SEPA brief
Importance: High

I. Areas with one-acre zoning: One example would be the North Fork of Gold Creek, south of Carlton in the Methow Valley, which is a USFS road accessing Foggy Dew Campground and several trailheads. Development along the North Fork road is planned in the Interim Zoning ordinance for 1 acre minimum lot size. But the North Fork is a poorly maintained one lane U.S. Forest Service road with no constructed turnouts, a steep cutbank on one side, and a steep drop-off into the North Fork of Gold Ck on the other side. In one section, very sharp turns skirt steep cliffs on one side and a deep drop-off into the creek on the other. During the previous two fires (Buckhorn Fire, 2012; Carlton Complex, 2014) fire crews or residents had to pull over onto the narrow shoulder in order to pass by each other.

5-acre zoning: Private land in an Inholding on the Middle Fork of Gold Creek (total of 71.06 Acres) within the National Forest boundaries is classified in the interim zoning ordinance as 5-acre minimum lot size. With no boundary line adjustments or consolidation of properties under one ownership, at least 11 five-acre parcels could be permitted along this dead-end, narrow one-lane dirt road under the interim zoning ordinance. With boundary line adjustments and/or consolidation of properties under one ownership, at least 14 five-acre parcels could be built upon. This bottle-neck, with no possible second exit from the drainage due to the narrow structure of the valley, could be disastrous in either wildfire or the resultant mudslides, especially if fire traffic is attempting to enter while residents are attempting to leave. During the two recent fires above, residents had to either pull over into the brush to pass each other or one of the vehicles had to back up several hundred yards.

******Note: Tim** – I say "at least" because all but one of these parcels recently purchased a "Tract C" parcel, which bisected all of the properties, from the US Forest Service. That means that a couple of the properties could now legally have more parcels. I am unable to find the exact acreages of the segment of Tract C that cut across these properties which now adds to their total acreages.