

Cortney Ingle

From: Jan Sodt <jan@sageranch.us>
Sent: Sunday, September 15, 2019 10:30 AM
To: Cortney Ingle
Subject: Comprehensive Plan Input

Dear Ms. Ingle and the Planning Commission:

I appreciate the chance to comment on your ongoing work to revise the Comprehensive Plan. After you consider public comments, I strongly support hiring an experienced consultant to author a legally defensible plan.

I am particularly concerned about:

Water: Human impacts on our groundwater and in stream flows will only increase as we deal with climate changes. We need specifics in the plan which consider complete watersheds, not individual canyons, neighborhoods, or historical water rights groups. The old “use it or lose it” does not work anymore in a world of drought, protection of post-fire lands, and heightened awareness for protecting our ecosystem. You need to hire an expert to conduct research and incorporate new ideas for care of the environment, including incentives for those who save water rather than use it to water extensive “lawns” or fields of grass. Our county is certainly not the first to grapple with building a plan for a dry, sparsely populated county that is trying to protect its resources.

Dark Skies: The plan needs to support communities within the County who want restrictions on lighting and development on ridge tops. Each community’s wishes need to be supported, with specific guidelines for what the majority of residents want. This is not an issue that gets fixed later. There are plenty of resources and guidelines available from Dark Skies communities.

Critical Areas Ordinance: This issue is the most important one to me. The missed deadlines on updates are unacceptable. Such delays, even in the interest of “getting it right” just make residents feel like there are back-door, late December deals being made, even if that hasn’t happened. Wetlands and habitat for all wildlife, not just fish, need to be specifically identified and protected within six months of the plan’s adoption. Again, if this means hiring experts, then that’s what needs to be done. Okanogan County cannot afford to lose our environment to unguided development.

Thank you for your work on the Planning Commission.

Jan Sodt
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