

4.0 Natural Resources Element

The Natural Resources Element guides the County in fulfilling the GMA requirement to designate and adopt regulations to promote stewardship of agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands of long term commercial significance.

4.1 Natural Resources Goal

It is the Natural Resource Lands goal of Stevens County to:

Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries in the county, protect critical areas including surface and groundwater resources, and provide for the stewardship and productive use of forest, mineral, and agricultural lands.

4.2 Natural Resources Policies

In furtherance of this Natural Resources Goal and the overall goals of the GMA, it is the Natural Resources Policy of Stevens County to:

- NR-1 Ensure that the use of lands adjacent to agricultural, forest or mineral resource lands does not interfere with the continued use, in the accustomed manner and in accordance with best management practices, of the designated lands.
- NR-2 Designate sufficient commercially significant agricultural and forest land to ensure the County maintains a critical mass of such lands for present and future use.
- NR-3 In determining which lands to designate for long term commercial agricultural use, comply with the requirements of the GMA and consider the guidance provided at WAC 365-190 and the following:
- A. NRCS Soils classification;
 - B. the presence of nearby urban growth areas, LAMIRDs, or small communities that might impinge on or detract from the viability of long-term agricultural use;
 - C. location in a flood plain;
 - D. current parcel sizes, ownership and use, to the degree known;
 - E. taxation as agricultural land or enrollment in an agricultural conservation program; and
 - F. the overall size and shape of the potential area to be designated and the adjacent or surrounding geography or terrain.
- NR-4 Designations of agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands should recognize that Stevens County overall has limited areas of high quality soils to support

agricultural activities and that agricultural and mining uses will also occur on lands that are designated as forest resource lands.

A. Recognized the county-wide, right-to-farm ordinance which protects both designated and non-designated resource lands.

NR-5 Clustering or other innovative techniques applicable to agricultural resource lands should ensure that development is limited appropriately on the most valuable soils. The County will also investigate transfer of development rights and use of conservation easements to help conserve its agricultural resources.

NR-6 In determining which lands to designate for long term commercial forest use, comply with the requirements of the GMA and consider the guidance provided at WAC 365-190 and the following:

- A. the DNR land grade and operability class;
- B. the presence of nearby urban growth areas, LAMIRDs, or small communities that might impinge on or detract from the viability of the forestry use;
- C. current parcel sizes, ownership and use, to the degree known;
- D. taxation as forest land or timber land; and
- E. the overall size and shape of the potential area to be designated and the adjacent or surrounding geography or terrain.

NR-7 In designating agricultural and forest lands of long term commercial significance, avoid whenever possible:

- A. designating very small areas;
- B. jagged or confusing boundaries; and
- C. splitting parcels.

NR-8 Designate areas with existing mining operations subject to DNR permits on the County's future land use maps. Designation of these sites is intended to ensure that they are protected from incompatible uses, and to raise public awareness of the potential for mining activities in an area. Designation on the land use map shall not be a pre-condition to mining.

NR-9 Consult with DNR and local mining interests to identify potential geologic and market opportunities and constraints to mineral resource activities within Stevens County. Based on such information, conduct a comprehensive identification of the location of mineral lands of long-term commercial significance and designate such areas on the future land use map.

NR-10 Ensure that the impacts of new or expanded mineral resource activities on adjacent properties and the environment are considered and adequately mitigated. Limit mining where it would conflict with identified shoreline resources and the

location of extensive critical areas.

NR-11 (Moved to LU-12 pursuant to ORD 2008-06 – 12-18-08)