February 2, 2004

TO: Kitsap County Best Available Science Technical Review Committee

RE: Scenarios for Wetlands section of CAO (KCC 19.200)

Following is a summary of possible changes to the Wetlands chapter of the Critical Areas Ordinance, based on the January 21 committee discussion.

Options:

1. **Reevaluate non-regulated wetland size criteria.** Kitsap County does not regulate Category III wetlands that are isolated and less than 2,500 square feet or Category IV wetlands that are isolated and less than 10,000 square feet. Literature submitted by Alison O’Sullivan suggests that smaller wetlands harbor populations of amphibians that are capable of migrating out to equally small wetlands in the surrounding landscape. These deemed “metapopulations” provide individuals within and outside its homesteaded wetland area. Loss of these small wetlands severs connectivity of suitable habitat, removing crucial corridors within the region and may be putting the species at risk. Further research into available literature is warranted on the subject.

2. **Consistency in buffer control when multiple parcels border a common wetland.** Development is addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis. Acquired wetland information is recorded in reference to that particular parcel, leaving gaps in extending the viable information to surrounding parcels affected. Kitsap Counties LIS permit tracking database may allow for better tracking or tagging of adjacent parcels. A process or policy, independent from the CAO, may be developed.

In addition, staff has identified the following issues for further analysis:

1. **Establish distance limitations for Category I wetlands affected by Class I Salmon habitat.** Wetland areas associated with Kitsap County streams automatically define the outer limits of critical stream habitat, Class I Salmon Habitat. This requires a 200-foot native vegetation buffer along its delineated boundary. Some cases the wetland extends 300-feet or greater, beyond the stream channel. Further investigation is needed to determine whether there is some distance (greater than 300 feet) or circumstance (slope or severed) where wetlands no longer establish
“critical” status for stream function, allowing for the Class I Salmon Habitat status to fall out, making the DOE Category rating prudent?

2. **Review Best Available Science for wetland buffers.** Pursuant to the Growth Management Act, staff will review BAS relative to current wetland buffers. Current CAO requirements are: Category I - 200 feet; Category II - 100 feet; Category III - 50 feet; Category IV - 25 feet.

3. **Mitigation standards and guidelines.** Successful mitigation relies on many factors including construction methodologies, performance standards, maintenance requirements and monitoring time lines. In order to achieve a consistent degree of success in Kitsap County mitigation projects strict guidelines must be developed. Instructions for the adopted guidelines must be developed. Past mitigation projects and their shortcomings must be evaluated for understanding current policy deficiencies.