

July 12, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. My husband, Scott, and I hold 76 acres in partnership with two family members on Swantown Road. We are, along with Island County, the largest land holders of Swan Lake. Scott and I are very much in support of the grant application by SLWPG to restore and enhance the current saltwater connection joining the lake with Puget Sound on the west side of Whidbey Island. As members of the SLWPG and residents with property adjoining the lake, we appreciate the critical nature of preserving and enhancing watersheds and ecosystems without which life here on the island would be detrimentally affected. This estuary is one of very few left in our state. Currently, we enjoy beautiful fields that host a myriad of bats, wild birds and major raptors such as eagles, hawks and owls. We also enjoy seeing coyotes and deer. Each and every day it is a pleasure to look out and see the fields and lake; we also enjoy seeing birds nesting and using the lake as a residence or as a quiet and plentiful respite on a long migratory journey.

We have been troubled by the rampant and poorly planned growth of Oak Harbor. Our family has held ownership of this land for nearly 40 years and feel this critical watershed will be adversely affected or destroyed by over development. In addition, we are very concerned about the future health of Puget Sound and the living creatures in it. To that end, we not only support the restoration of this valuable and critical estuary but envision a healthy environment for salmon which are so vital to the people and animals who live in and near it. As members of SLWPG, we are also committed to working as partners to help educate the public about the critical nature of this watershed and will be a part of the long-term stewardship not only as property owners but as citizens who want to keep the island rural for future generations to come.

Sincerely,


Suzanne Ashworth
360-240-0709


Scott Ashworth

To the members of the Salmon Recovery Board,

I'm writing this letter in support of the Swan Lake Watershed Preservation Group and their request for a grant to study the feasibility of restoring Swan Lake to its former status as a marine estuary. This may be one of those situations where it's appropriate for us to undo the harm we have inflicted on our natural environment. This may be an area that can support a rich diversity of life. Please give us a chance to find out.

I own property adjacent the lake as an individual and in common with other members of my family. We believe that restoring the estuary will preserve and enhance our long term interests and those of our children. Thanks for your time.

--Mark Ashworth
July 12, 2009