Welcome to the Planner’s Update.

Please feel free to send us any comments or ideas for how to make this newsletter more useful.

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IN THIS ISSUE

1. Commerce Welcomes William Simpson To The Eastern Regional Office
2. Rulemaking Activities
3. Capital Facilities Planning Webinar Videos
4. 2015 Short Course Schedule
5. NEP Watershed Grant and Informational Webinar
6. Growth Management Grant Information
7. Ecology’s Coastal Training Program

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RESOURCES ON-LINE

1. Dept of Commerce/Growth Management
2. Commerce Regional Planner’s Forums
3. Commerce Short Course on Local Planning Schedule
4. American Planning Association Washington Chapter
5. PAW – Planning Association of Washington
6. AWC Videos: GMA Comp Plan Conversation Starters
7. Municipal Research Service Center (MRSC)
8. Smart Growth Online
1. COMMERCE WELCOMES WILLIAM SIMPSON TO THE EASTERN REGIONAL OFFICE

We are pleased to announce that William Simpson joined Growth Management’s Eastern Regional Office as a Senior Planner on January 16, 2015. He will serve as our urban growth area technical specialist and will work directly with Benton, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Pend Oreille and Walla Walla counties. Growth Management Services Technical Assistance Regions Map.

William comes to Commerce from Island County where he was most recently a project lead on Island County’s periodic update effort. William also worked on the critical areas ordinance, rural lands planning, shoreline management and a variety of other projects.

William has his Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from Eastern Washington University and a BA in Political Science from Western Washington University.

2. RULEMAKING ACTIVITIES

Housekeeping Amendments - Growth Management Services conducted a public hearing on proposed “Housekeeping Amendments” on December 11, 2014. The rule amendment aligns comprehensive plan and development regulation periodic review schedules with Legislative changes from 2011. The definition for Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas was also amended to exclude artificial drainage ditches and irrigation canals, consistent with 2012 Legislative changes. No comments were received on the proposed amendments during the official comment period. The rule update is currently being finalized with formal adoption anticipated mid-February, 2015.

Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) – In 2011, the Washington State Legislature adopted ESHB 1886, the Voluntary Stewardship Program (RCW 36.70A.700). Twenty-eight counties have opted into this program, which is a watershed based, collaborative stewardship process that uses incentives to protect critical areas where agricultural activities take place. The VSP is dependent upon adequate funding for both watershed workgroups and reviewing agencies, with a funding deadline of July 1, 2015.

If it is determined that adequate funding has not been provided, counties must decide how to proceed with critical area protections and have the following options to consider (see RCW 36.70A.735 for complete language):

a. Develop, adopt and maintain a watershed work plan approved by Commerce.

b. Adopt development regulations previously adopted under the GMA by Clallam, Clark, King or Whatcom counties.

c. Adopt development regulations certified by Commerce as protective of critical areas in areas used for agricultural activities.

d. Review and, if necessary, revise development regulations adopted under the GMA to protect critical areas as they relate to agriculture.

The VSP law directs Commerce to adopt rules to implement the two options (a and c) where Commerce has review and approval authority. Commerce is using the Conservation
Commission’s Advisory Committee as its stakeholder group. Rules are anticipated to be adopted early July, 2015.

Questions related to either WAC Update process can be directed to WACUPDATE@Commerce.wa.gov or by calling Scott Kuhta at 509-795-6884. Interested parties may also join the WAC Rule Update ListServe to keep informed on the status of rule development and opportunities for public comment.

3. CAPITAL FACILITIES PLANNING WEBINAR VIDEOS

In November and December Commerce hosted two webinars on Capital Facilities Planning. The first webinar introduces the new CFP Guidebook and covers the basics of CFP Planning under the Growth Management Act. The second webinar focuses on how to put together a capital facilities plan. The webinars are each less than one hour in length and are available on our website at:
http://www.commerce.wa.gov/Services/localgovernment/GrowthManagement/Capital-Facilities/Pages/default.aspx

4. NEW 2015 SHORT COURSE SCHEDULE

We are thrilled to announce the first five in a series of short You-Tube videos which provide the Short Course content in short easy-to-watch segments. These videos were created in coordination with our partners, the Planning Association of Washington, the Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association and the Washington Cities Insurance Authority with special thanks to the Association of Washington Cities for video production. We thank everyone involved in the conception and development of this series. These videos can be used as on-demand training for new planning commissioners, elected officials or staff, or reviewed as a refresher. Make some popcorn and settle into the Short Course in the comfort of your own home.

The five videos are:
- **Introduction to the Short Course** with Kendee Yamaguchi, former Assistant Director of the Department of Commerce and guests
- **Comprehensive Planning Basics** with Joe Tovar of Tovar Planning
- **Implementing your Plan** with Joe Tovar of Tovar Planning
- **Updating your Plan** with Bill Grimes of Studio Cascade
- **Washington’s Legal Framework for Land Use Planning** with Scott Missal Attorney at Law with Short Cressman & Burgess PLLC

Five additional videos will be posted this spring including:
- Quasi-judicial actions and the Appearance of Fairness Doctrine
- Due Process, Takings and other Constitutional Protections
- Roles in Planning
- Public participation and Effective meetings
- Open Public Meetings Act and Public Records Act*
*This required training is available as a series of videos from the Office of the Attorney General at www.atg.gov/OpenGovernmentTraining.aspx.
Of course, we also encourage you to attend an in-person short course where your questions can be answered by knowledgeable volunteer speakers.

The Short Course Calendar is filling up with requests from all over the state. Upcoming courses:

- **Kelso February 10**
- **Colfax February 18**

Also coming this spring are short courses in Stanwood on April 6, Othello and Spokane Valley. As always, check out our [Web page](#) for the most up to date information.

### 5. NEP WATERSHED GRANT AND INFORMATIONAL WEBINAR

A webinar related to the new Ecology grant application online system. **Application Period:**

**Opens on January 20th and closes on April 20, 2015.**

In January 2015, the Washington State Departments of Ecology (Ecology) and Commerce (Commerce) will be soliciting applications for grants under the NEP Watershed Protection and Restoration Grant Program. This program is supported by federal funds from the Environmental Protection Agency.

**Informational meeting & training on new application process on January 29, 2015:**

We will hold an informational meeting to clarify the requirements for the solicitation and to provide training for submitting an application through a new online system. This will be held in person in Lacey and via webinar on January 29th from 10am to 1pm. [Program website](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/puget_sound/grants_fed_watershed.html).

### 6. GROWTH MANAGEMENT GRANT INFORMATION

For grantees with **2016 GMA Update Grants**, your next status report due date will be March 31, 2015, so please consult your contract and contact us if you have any questions regarding your grant Scope of Work. Your closeout for this grant period is June 2015.

For grantees with **2015 GMA Update Grants**, you are now in your second and final year of the grant. Many of you will continue to have deliverables due this spring and fall, and your final closeout will be June 2015. Please refer to your contract for due dates.

Future grant applicants: Commerce will announce more details this winter/spring regarding the application process for new GMA update grants, for eligible cities and counties with update deadlines in 2016, 2017 and 2018. Please refer to RCW 36.70A.130(5) for more information on GMA review and update deadlines and the Commerce Growth Management Services Period Update webpage.

If you have any questions or concerns about meeting a specific due date, or need to discuss possible amendments to your grant Scope of Work, please contact your assigned GMS program staff representative. For general questions on your grant status reports, please contact Paul Johnson at (360) 725-3048 or gmsgrants@commerce.wa.gov.
7. ECOLOGY’S COASTAL TRAINING PROGRAM

Ecology is very pleased to offer a new class through the Coastal Training Program in **WEBINAR** format! Wetland Specialists from Ecology’s Wetlands Program have developed a 2-part webinar, which will be offered on **February 24 & March 3**. All sessions will be from 1-3 pm, and the cost is $25 for both days. Due to space limitations, these initial webinars will only be available for local government planners – particularly planners who are in small jurisdictions with no technical wetland support staff.

We hope to offer this webinar again in the future or provide an on-demand version on Ecology’s wetland web page: [http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/wetlands/education/webinars.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/wetlands/education/webinars.html). Watch for future announcements!

To register, please go to the [New Coastal Training Program Website](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/wetlands/education/webinars.html). If you are registering for the first time on our new site (or if you haven’t already set up a profile), please click on the “Scheduled Classes” tab to read our recommendations for registering.

**WETLANDS 101 FOR LOCAL PLANNERS**

This is a two-part webinar series for local government planners, particularly those at small jurisdictions with no technical wetland support staff. It is intended to give planners the basic tools they need to be able to recognize whether a wetland is present on a particular site, to question whether a wetland delineation report provides adequate and accurate information, and to feel comfortable in discussing wetlands with applicants and their consultants. For each wetland indicator (hydrology, soils, vegetation), we will discuss how to review the corresponding portion of the delineation form.

This class focuses on western Washington wetlands. We hope to offer this series for eastern Washington later this spring. (4 CM AICP Credits/CEP Points)

**Day 1, 1:00-3:00**
- Introduction to wetlands, their types and their functions
- Hydrology

**Day 2, 1:00-3:00**
- Soils
- Vegetation

*This is not a delineation training class. If you have had delineation training, this class will not provide you with any additional information.*

Class size is limited to 25 local government planners.