

Donna DePamphilis

From: Jan Alderton <janetmalderton@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 7:48 PM
To: Ingrid Gabriel
Subject: Population Projection Comments from Janet Alderton

To: San Juan County Planning Commission via IngridG@sanjuanco.com

From: Janet Alderton

491 Harborview Lane

Deer Harbor, WA 98243

June 13, 2017

A Story About Water

My home is on the shoreline of Deer Harbor on Orcas Island. No early homesteader would have thought of making a home here because freshwater is scarce and the soil is thin.

During the 12 years that I have lived full time on Harborview Lane, there has been one well that has been closed because of saltwater intrusion. The family who used this well came from the East Coast, and they wanted to have a lush garden. Since an "exempt" well permits 5,000 gallons use per day, this may have led them to think they would be able to use a lot of water. After their original well became unusable, they drilled one 800-foot deep dry well followed by a well with a 2 gallon per minute pump test.

I understand my neighbor's desire to plant water-requiring plants. I am a recovering Rhododendron enthusiast. I gave up my habit when I moved to this dry, rocky shoreline on the strongly rain-shadowed side of Orcas Island.

So far, 10 homes have been built on the 20 buildable parcels of the Harborview Lane subdivision. 14 of the 20 parcels are less than 5 acres and therefore "non-conforming" for this area that is zoned Rural Residential. People move away and new people arrive. We cannot control how much water people decide to use. I am concerned that the aquifer recharge is significantly less than the current water withdrawals. And I am concerned about future "exempt" wells further impacting our shared aquifer.

I think that reverse osmosis is a bad idea because there is not strong mixing in the marine waters of Deer Harbor. That leaves rainwater catchment and water hauling when wells are not adequate or safe for drinking water. The family whose well had salt water intrusion has installed rainwater catchment and has water hauled in the summer to supplement their marginal well.

In the early 2000's, in response to a survey by Health and Community Services, water haulers reported delivering a million gallons per year, all of it to the west side of Orcas.

Market forces have controlled past development. If we go forward with business as usual, the pressures on our shared water resources will continue to intensify. My mother lived in an area of Colorado where only household water use was permitted on parcels of less than 40 acres. I am not suggesting this as a solution, but we should think about the future of our water resources in the drier areas of our islands.

We should not plan for just the next 20 years. Instead, we should plan for full build-out.

Management of our freshwater resources should be part of our public services that are ensured by Goal 12 of the Growth Management Act.

Janet Alderton

Goal 12 of the Growth Management Act: Public facilities and services:

Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.