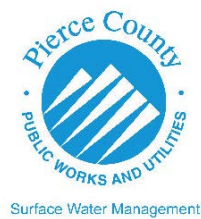


# **DRAFT Minter Creek Watershed Strategies**

## **A Coordinated Approach to Land Use Planning in the Watershed**



**Department of Commerce**  
Innovation is in our nature.

**February 2014, Final Draft**

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary..... 4

2. Background ..... 6

    a. Description of the Watershed..... 6

    b. Existing development..... 7

    c. Comprehensive Plan Designations..... 7

    d. Water Quality..... 9

    e. Other Planning Efforts..... 10

3. Description of the Minter Creek process..... 12

    a. Purpose ..... 12

    b. The Public Process..... 13

4. Minter Creek in Twenty Years..... 15

    a. The Vision..... 15

    b. Future Land Use ..... 16

5. Issues and Strategy Options..... 19

6. Conclusions ..... 23

7. Action Recommendations..... 24

8. Implementation of Puget Sound Action Agenda ..... 26

9. Results Already Realized ..... 26

Appendices..... 28



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## 1. Executive Summary

The Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce), with funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program, partnered with Kitsap and Pierce Counties to address regional planning for the Minter Creek watershed basin. The purpose of this effort was to look at land use within the basin, and provide recommendations for upcoming Comprehensive Plan updates under the state Growth Management Act (GMA). This project furthers the Counties' efforts to implement the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda to restore Puget Sound.

The Minter Creek watershed lies in both Kitsap and Pierce Counties. Land uses that occur upstream in Kitsap County have an impact downstream on land in Pierce County and Minter Bay. By working together, the Counties are looking at the watershed as a whole rather than separately by county boundaries.

The Counties and Commerce held an open house in August 2013 to educate citizens living in the watershed about land use and water quality, and to invite them to participate in a group to work on these issues. Over the course of five meetings the group developed a land use vision for the next 20 years, and action strategies for the counties to consider during their GMA review of comprehensive plans and regulations.

The group concluded that:

- While parts of the watershed have experienced some pollution, the overall health of the watershed is high.
- Zoning for rural residential densities and intensities must be retained in order to protect the rural character and water quality. Stream typing is a key step.
- Some commercial and industrial uses should be allowed to provide local jobs and services to rural residents, including retention of the Port Orchard Airport with some additional commercial uses. There is strong consensus for uses that support local agricultural producers.
- Trails and wildlife corridors are a high priority.
- The Counties should continue their communication and coordination with each other and with the community in the next steps in this process, as well as other planning processes.

The group recommends the Counties take under consideration the following actions:

### a. Coordinate land use planning

- Establish inter-jurisdictional communication protocols
- Coordinate water quality sampling and data collection
- Coordinate on planning for trails and recreation
- Participate in regional planning
- Support local efforts to communicate community values and vision
- *Share the results of this process*

- b. Allow commercial services in rural areas**
  - Keep commercial uses small scale (consistent with existing allowed rural uses, except for Port Orchard airport), but allow them to locate so local residents can minimize driving distances between services
  - Require new development to comply with low impact development standards
  - Restrict use of hazardous products
  - Maintain greenbelts and wildlife corridors
  - Improve on-site septic systems
  - Communicate with and educate commercial service providers regarding land use impacts to rural and natural areas
  - Rely on critical area ordinances to protect sensitive areas and habitat
  - Develop a subarea plan for the airport area as an employment center with industrial and commercial uses to serve neighborhood residents, but limit this future commercial development to neighborhood commercial/low intensity/rural commercial uses (i.e., no 'big box retail store')
- c. Preserve habitat and open space**
  - Update stream maps
  - Encourage landowners to protect wildlife corridors with incentive programs, such as purchase or transfer of development rights
  - Combine corridor protection for wildlife, parks and trails (non-motorized transportation plans)
  - Study wildlife needs, and review the science to confirm existing practices for buffers, water quality, and connectivity of habitat are sufficient for protection.
  - Revisit the Rural Wooded Incentive Plan in Kitsap County<sup>1</sup>
  - Work with large landowners such as Alpine Evergreen to protect habitat, including wildlife corridors outside stream areas
  - Plan for residential development near Hunter Road to incorporate trails and habitat protection
- d. Support agriculture**
  - Support agri-tourism (including the farm tour), aquaculture, and local food production by allowing local distribution centers, local sales and transportation improvements
- e. Address resistance to changes in land use/Grandfathering**
  - Acquire properties or easements on those properties critical for open space or wildlife corridors
  - Educate and communicate with property owners, the community, elected officials and conservation groups
  - Make incremental changes to comprehensive land use plans that take small steps toward the Minter Creek watershed vision
  - Consider comprehensive land use changes that allow local provision of services

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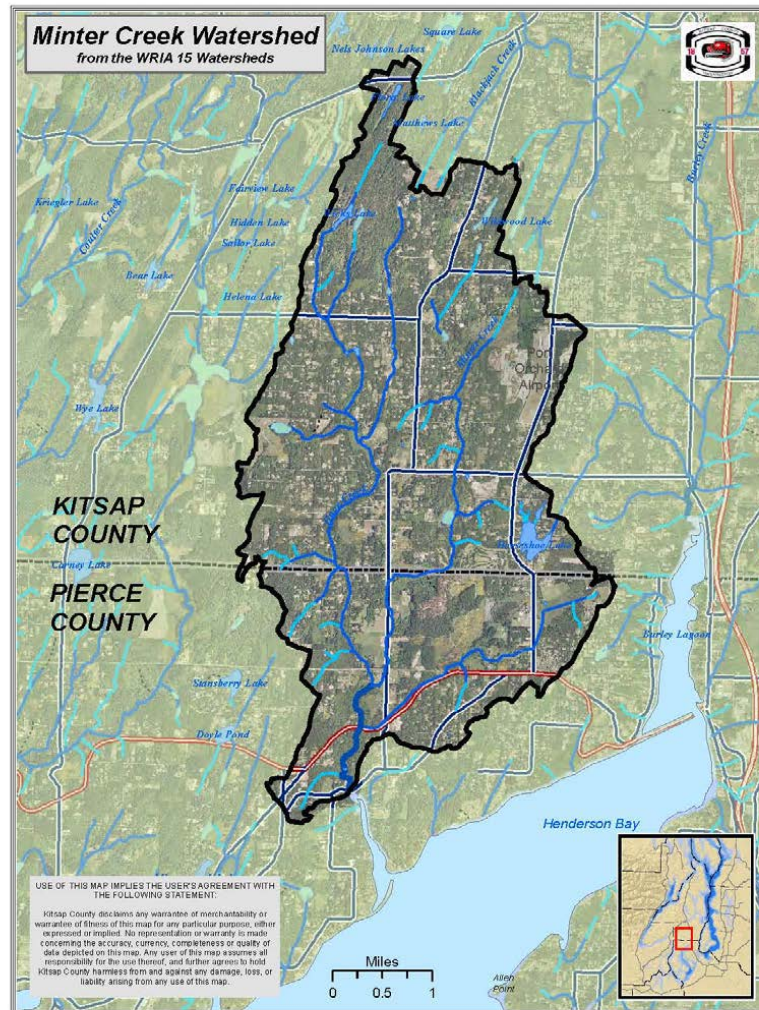
<sup>1</sup> See footnote 5.



## 2. Background

### a. Description of the Watershed

The headwaters of Minter Creek lie in south central rural Kitsap County, flowing south into the rural Key Peninsula and Minter Bay in Pierce County. The Minter Creek Watershed<sup>2</sup> includes the Huge Creek and Little Minter Creek tributaries, Wick's Lake, and potentially Horseshoe Lake.



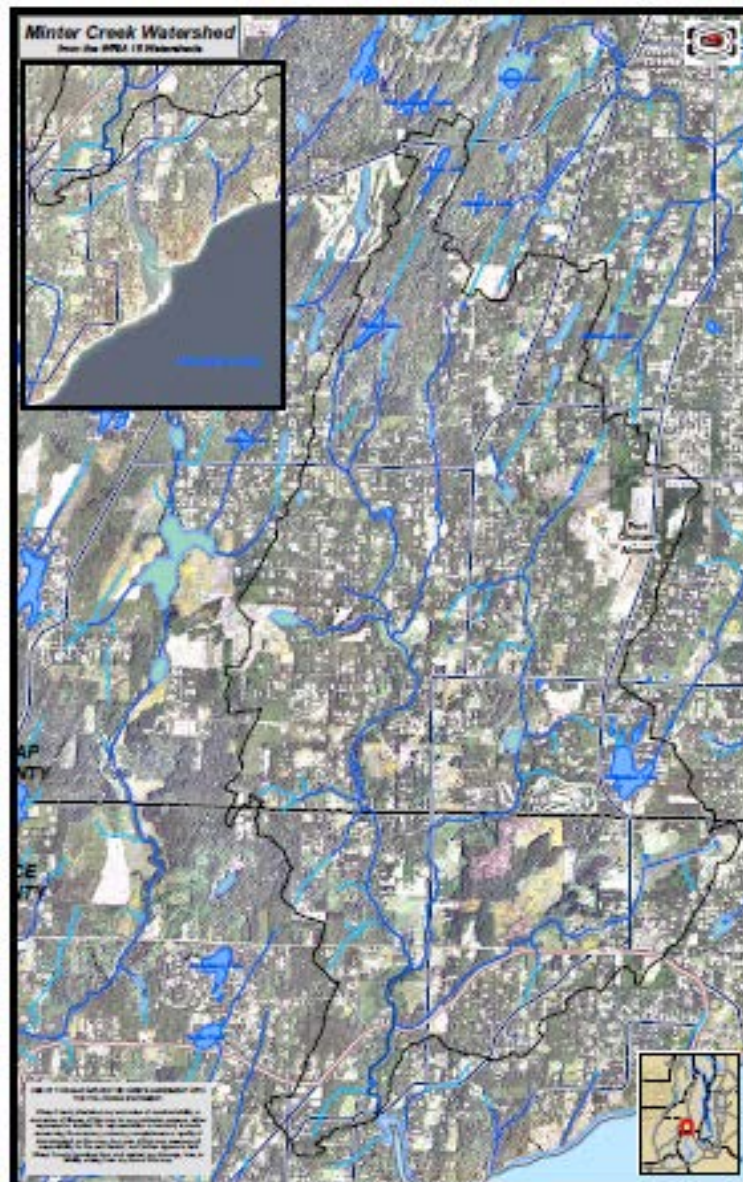
**2013 Watershed Map**

<sup>2</sup> A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same place. John Wesley Powell, scientist geographer, put it best when he said that a watershed is:

"that area of land, a bounded hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of a community."

## b. Existing development

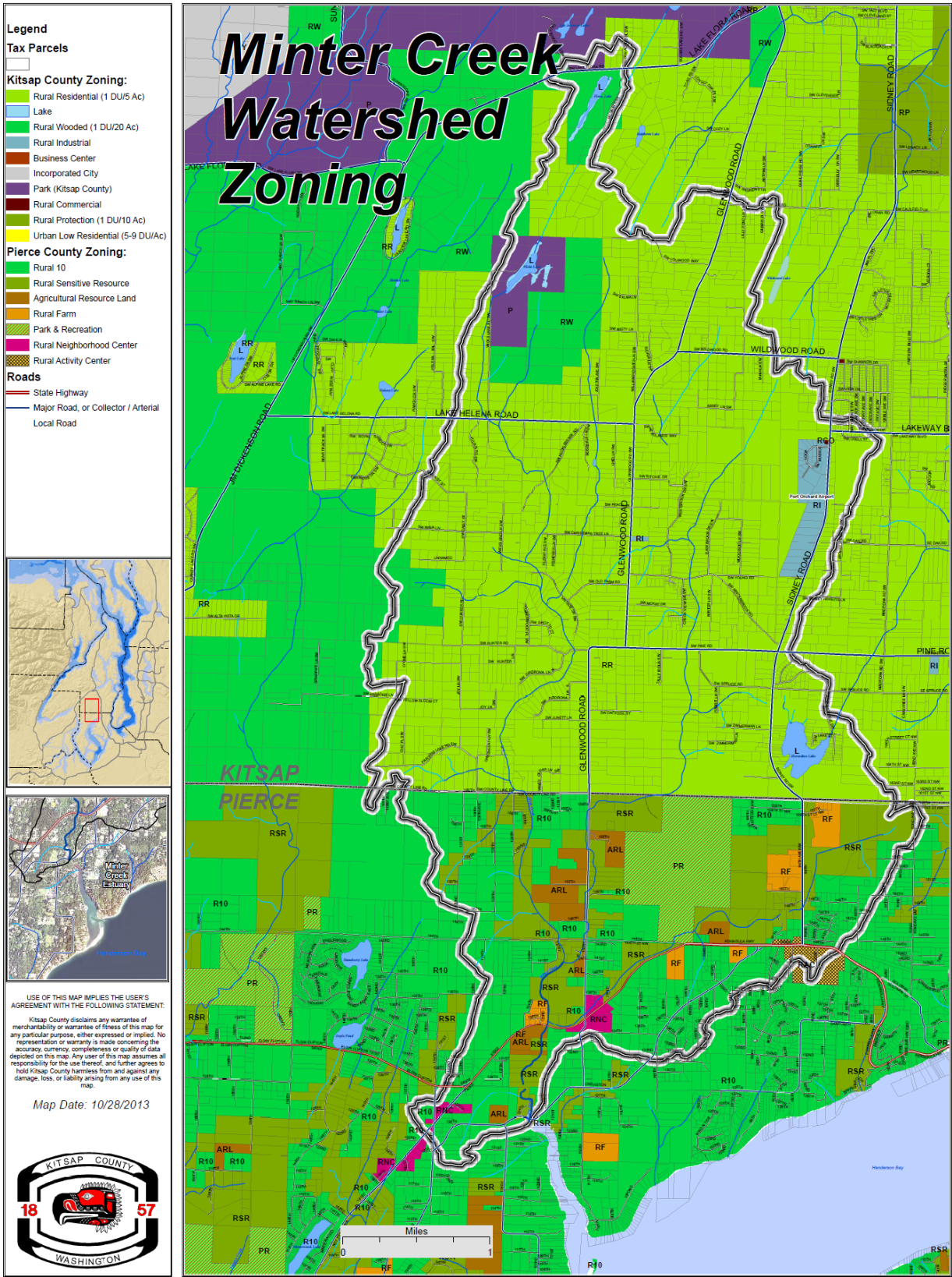
Existing development in Kitsap and Pierce Counties includes the privately-owned Port Orchard Airport with some small industrial and commercial uses, a gravel mine, rural forest, and rural residential. There are several small commercial businesses in the communities of Lake Katherine, 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 134<sup>th</sup> Avenue along Highway 302. Other uses in the watershed include home-based industry, the Horseshoe Lake Golf Course, Miles Sand and Gravel (Bomack Facility), and Miracle Ranch. Minter Creek supports two, state-run salmon hatcheries. At the watershed's terminal delta in Pierce County, a thriving shellfish growing and harvest industry serves as the number-two employer for Pierce County's Key Peninsula.



2013 Existing Development Map



c. Zoning Designations





The Minter Creek watershed is designated “rural” by both counties. Most of the basin is zoned rural residential with one dwelling unit per five or ten acres. Commercial uses are allowed in Pierce County designated rural centers – Pierce County designated Rural Neighborhood Centers at 94<sup>th</sup> and Hwy 302 (Lake Katherine village), and at 134<sup>th</sup> and Hwy 302. Kitsap County has zoned the airport for rural industrial with supporting commercial uses, and a smaller industrial lot to the west near the intersection of Glenwood Road and Christmas Tree Lane.

The Key Peninsula Community Plan is a component of the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan for the Key Peninsula. Effective June 1, 2008, the Key Peninsula Community Plan<sup>3</sup> contains policies and implementing actions for five major subject areas or elements: Land Use, Community Character and Design, Natural Environment, Economic, and the Facilities and Services. The plan designates seven types of land uses that are all included in the watershed: Rural Ten, Rural Sensitive Resource, Rural Farm, Agricultural Resource Lands, Park and Recreation, Rural Activity Center, and Rural Neighborhood Center.

#### **d. Water Quality**

The quality of water in our lakes, streams, and rivers often reflects whether human activities are being managed to effectively protect public health and the environment. Since most of our streams are relatively small, impacts from pollution are more apparent, and damage occurs more quickly. Because all of the Counties’ streams eventually flow into Puget Sound, polluted streams also have the potential to impact marine water and shellfish growing areas.

Water quality in Minter Creek is vital for the survival of the shellfish growing and harvest industry, as well as the two state-run salmon hatcheries. Residents of the Minter Creek watershed are solely reliant on groundwater resources for drinking water supplies. Minter Creek water quality is also important for recreational purposes such as fishing, swimming, boating, shellfish harvesting, and park enjoyment.

Kitsap Health District’s 2012 Water Quality Report for the Burley/Minter Watershed indicates a long term improving trend for water quality in both Huge and Minter Creeks (Appendix A)<sup>4</sup>. Water quality data collected by Pierce County Surface Water Management on a monthly basis from eight sites within the Minter system indicates that water quality is generally good (Appendix B). However, fecal coliform bacteria levels rise somewhat at all sites during the summer months. Bacteria levels trend lower during winter months, but the highest spikes in recorded bacteria levels have been associated with winter and spring storm events.

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<sup>3</sup> See the Key Peninsula Community Plan at <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/4040>.

<sup>4</sup> The Kitsap County Health District’s most current water quality reports can be viewed at [http://www.kitsappublichealth.org/environment/water\\_reports.php](http://www.kitsappublichealth.org/environment/water_reports.php).

## e. Other Planning Efforts

### i. Kitsap and Pierce Non-motorized trails planning

Kitsap County's Non-Motorized Trails Plan was adopted in 2013. The primary trail connection from southwest Kitsap County to Pierce County is planned along the JM Dickenson Road corridor, located to the west of the Minter Watershed. The trail would then connect with the east-west power line corridor in Pierce County, which traverses the Minter Watershed.

Pierce County adopted a Non-Motorized Transportation Plan in July of 1997. That plan is being implemented by the Public Works and Utilities Roads Division, often as sidewalks associated with road projects; the Parks and Recreation Department as part of their facilities planning; and by the Planning and Land Services Department as part of land development requirements. Within the Minter Creek drainage, most of the plans call for adding bike lanes to existing roads - State Route 302, Creviston Drive, and the power line corridor serving as primary east-west connectors, and 94<sup>th</sup> and 118<sup>th</sup> Avenues NW serving as primary north-south connectors.

The Key Peninsula Community Plan's non-motorized transportation objective is to "create a system of non-motorized facilities to enhance pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian travel throughout the Key Peninsula area." The Plan includes principles for a continuous and interconnected network, safety strategies, consideration of non-motorized facilities in new development approvals and roadway construction, and coordination with other agencies, utility providers, civic groups and the public.

The Key Pen Parks 2014-2019 Comprehensive Plan draft<sup>5</sup> includes development of a high quality interconnected system of linear parks/trails and corridors that connect significant environmental features, public facilities and developed local communities and business districts. The draft plan includes provisions for an interconnected off-road multipurpose trail system and an on-road bicycle route system.

### ii. WSDOT Hwy 302 Corridor Study

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is conducting a corridor study of Highway 302. SR 302 is an important east-west link for Key Peninsula communities to Gig Harbor as well as Tacoma and other parts of Washington. Economic development puts demands on the highway system creating concerns about safety and congestion.

To address these concerns, WSDOT is studying the SR 302 corridor from Key Peninsula Highway to SR 16. The study evaluates the environmental impacts of creating a new corridor, and improving the existing corridor by providing improved

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<sup>5</sup> The Key Pen Parks 2014-2019 Comprehensive Plan draft can be viewed at <http://www.keypenparks.com/docs.htm>. See page 2 under Goals and Objectives for non-motorized trail discussion.

mobility and enhanced safety. Any decisions made by WSDOT as a result of this study could have significant land use impacts in the watershed that will need to be considered by the counties in the future.

WSDOT is working with the Key Peninsula Community Council on a Safe SR-302 project addressing safety and congestion on SR 302 from the Purdy Bridge to the Key Peninsula Highway. The project includes the addition of turn lanes, cut back of slop to improve sight distance near Goodrich Drive, and improvement of left-turn channelization at 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW. Construction of the project is scheduled to begin Spring 2014.



### 3. Description of the Minter Creek process

#### a. Purpose

The Washington State Department of Commerce, with funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program, partnered with Kitsap and Pierce Counties to address regional planning for the Minter Creek watershed basin. The purpose of this effort was to look at land use within the watershed basin, and provide recommendations for upcoming Comprehensive Plan updates under the state Growth Management Act. This project furthers the Counties' efforts to implement the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda to restore Puget Sound.

The Puget Sound Partnership is a state agency created by the Legislature as the backbone organization that would connect citizens, governments, tribes, scientists and businesses to do three key things no other organization in Washington does:

1. Set science-based regional priorities for Puget Sound
2. Accelerate implementation of priority actions
3. Ensure accountability for results

The Puget Sound Action Agenda is a road map that lays out the work needed to achieve an ambitious goal: restoring the health of Puget Sound by 2020. The [2012/2013 Action Agenda](#) identifies key ongoing programs, local priorities for different areas of the Sound and more than 200 specific actions that must be implemented over the next two years to stay on track toward adopted recovery targets.

The Growth Management Services Unit of the Department of Commerce received federal funding <sup>6</sup> to provide technical assistance to regional entities in support of the Puget Sound Partnership's *Action Agenda*.<sup>7</sup> Commerce staff is providing staff time and state agency expertise to develop strategies to address key land use issues that are barriers to implementing the *Action Agenda*. The objectives of this effort are to:

- To develop and prioritize land use strategies that can be incorporated into upcoming Growth Management Act (GMA) updates and possibly tribal land use plans.
- To create a framework for ongoing regional work in Action Areas around the Sound.

The Minter Creek watershed lies in both Kitsap and Pierce Counties. County staff and the community have engaged in an innovative partnership to look at future land uses within the Minter Creek basin at a watershed level. Because the watershed lies in both counties, land uses that occur upstream in Kitsap County have an impact downstream on land in Pierce County and Minter Bay. By working together, the Counties are looking at the watershed as a whole rather than separately by county boundaries.

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<sup>6</sup> Commerce received a Watershed Protection and Restoration grant from the National Estuary Program.

<sup>7</sup> Commerce is responsible for implementing Near Team Action A4.1 on page 58 of the [2012/2013 Action Agenda for Puget Sound](#).

## **b. The Public Process**

Engaging the public is essential to any planning process. Community involvement in this effort ensured that citizens were informed, that they had an opportunity to provide input with a vision and direction for the future, and that there is a process for keeping them informed and involved in the future. The Department of Commerce set up a web site where all meeting materials and this report are posted for the public at [www.ezview.wa.gov](http://www.ezview.wa.gov).

### **1. Open House**

On August 27, 2013, Kitsap and Pierce Counties hosted an open house, facilitated by Commerce, in order to inform citizens and interested parties about the project, and to provide information about the Minter Creek Watershed. Approximately 30 people attended the Minter Creek Watershed Strategies open house at Gateway Park on the Key Peninsula. County staff were on hand to talk about existing zoning in the watershed and water quality issues and efforts. Attendees were invited to participate in a group to talk about future land uses and strategies to address issues in the watershed.



## **2. Strategy Meetings**

Participants in the August 2013 open house indicated whether they wanted to participate in the Minter Creek Watershed Strategies group. Others found out about the group through the open house mailing, the web site, and word of mouth. The Watershed Strategies group provided a forum for citizens to learn more about the watershed and water quality issues, and to provide their input on how the watershed should look in twenty years.



**November 2013 Strategy Meeting**

The Minter Creek Watershed Strategies group met four times – September 25, October 30<sup>8</sup>, November 21 and December 11, 2013. The discussion addressed what interested parties liked and wanted to keep in the watershed, what future land uses should look like over the next twenty years, potential conflicts with those land uses, and strategies to address the conflicts<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Three business owners were not able to attend the October 30 meeting – Port Orchard Airport, Alpine Evergreen and Port Orchard Gravel. County and Commerce staff met with them on November 7 to obtain additional input on future land uses that were added to the Future Land Use map.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix C for more detailed summaries of each of the meetings.



## 4. Minter Creek in Twenty Years

### a. The Vision

The group's vision for the Minter Creek Watershed in twenty years includes preservation of open space, as well as economic opportunities for business that serve the local residents. The group envisions:

- Open Space Preserved - open space that is conserved for natural areas, trails and wildlife habitat corridors.
- Protected, Healthy Environment - clean and clear water for streams, lakes and ground water that will provide healthy habitat for shellfish and salmon. Septic systems are upgraded, and clear cutting is limited.
- Economic Development – businesses that will provide local jobs and local products. Commercial development is compact and located in rural centers. Natural resources industries are able to harvest fish, timber and mineral resources.
- Managed Growth – growth managed to limit sprawl and keep land rural. The airport is retained, but with effects such as noise contained. Utilize subarea plans and cluster development. Prepare for the needs of older residents. Address grandfathered lots.
- Coordinated Transportation Planning – the counties work together on planning for trails. Road planning is coordinated with Washington State Department of Transportation plans for Highway 302.
- Coordinated County Planning – counties share data and communicate regularly regarding planning for land use and infrastructure.
- Community Involved – communication with the community happens early and often. The community remains invested in what happens in the area.



**Discussing the Vision and Future Land Uses**

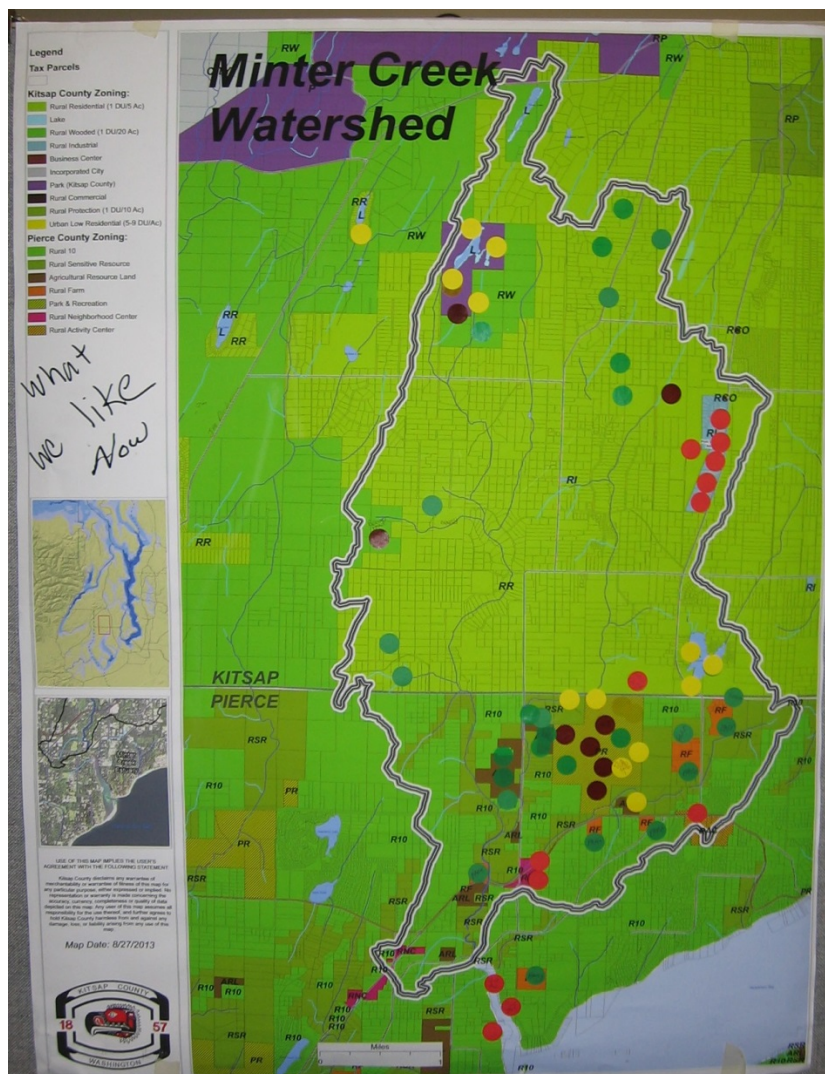
## b. Future Land Use

A mapping exercise allowed the group to visualize what land uses should be retained, and where contemplated changes in land use might be appropriate. Participants used colored dots to denote the types of land uses they want to retain on one map, and land uses they want to see in the future on a second map.

### 1. *Want to Retain*

Retention of zoning for existing uses and densities throughout the watershed is important to the group. This includes retention of the airport, parks and trails, commercial development in designated rural centers in Pierce County, and the Horseshoe Lake golf course. Retention of active timber lands is important for open space values. And retention of shellfish production and the fish hatchery is important for tourism.

**Dot colors:**  
 Brown = trails  
 Green = open space/  
 conservation/farms  
 Yellow = parks  
 Red = industrial/commercial  
 Blue = residential



What We Like/Want to Retain Map

## **2. Want to See**

### Parks and Trails

The group would like to see additional parks, including multi-use trails in the area west of the airport and a lake at the Port Orchard gravel mine when it is reclaimed. The group would like park amenities at Wick's Lake Park, with more parking and developed trails. Trail connections should be added throughout the watershed within and between the counties, including new trails west of Horseshoe Lake connecting the lake and the golf course.

Communication between Key Peninsula Metropolitan Parks District and Kitsap County Parks and Recreation Department regarding trails and recreation should be formalized.

### Economic Development

The group recognized the importance of limited growth of rural economic activities within the watershed that will not impact water quality. Economic development should focus on existing commercial areas at Lake Katherine, and 118<sup>th</sup> and 134<sup>th</sup> streets on Highway 302 (Pierce County designated rural centers). However, any new development should meet low impact development standards to address stormwater issues. Support should be provided for produce stands and other outlets for locally produced foods from farms.

Within the footprint of the existing Port Orchard airport properties, the airport landowner will continue with existing rural industrial and commercial zoned uses and may request designation as a limited area of more intense rural development (LAMIRD) that would allow more neighborhood and commercial uses to serve this employment hub and local residents. This could include a food hub<sup>10</sup> in the airport area for farmers to process their produce to prepare and sell at local markets. The landowner's goal for the airport is for South Kitsap County residents to live, work and play in their neighborhoods. Northwest of the airport, the airport's neighboring landowner would like the future opportunity to develop currently designated mineral resource land for economic development uses. This would tie in with a potential east-west road corridor connecting Lake Helena Road to Lakeway Boulevard.

### Residential Development

A large landowner would like to allow some additional residential development next to Wick's Lake and in the Hunter Road area. The landowner believes this zoning designation would ease the transition between managing for forestry and residential use, particularly where Douglas Fir is dying from various root diseases.

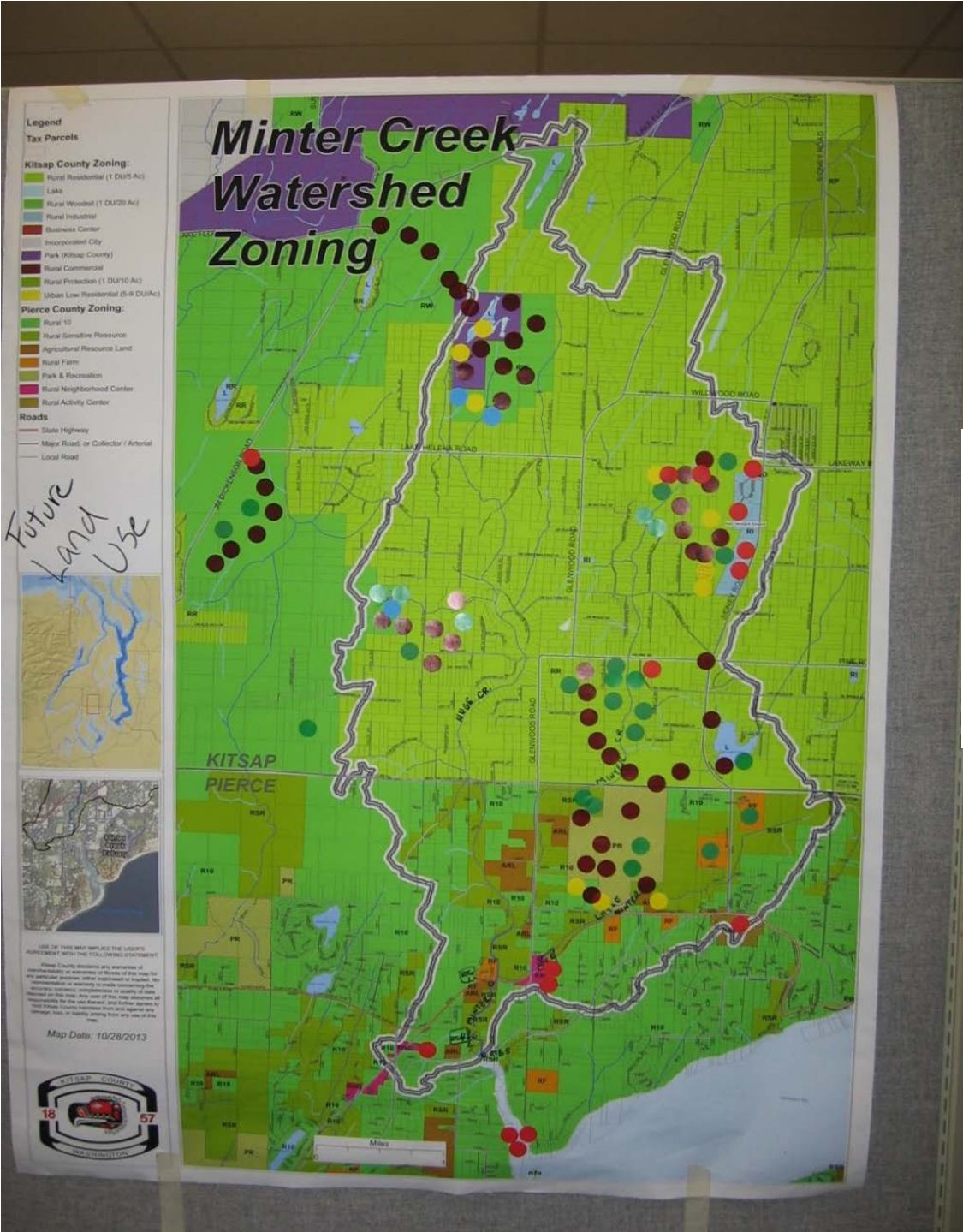
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<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service defines a food hub as: "A business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand." For more information about food hubs, go to <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/foodhubs>.



Water Quality

Communication between Kitsap and Pierce County regarding water quality should be formalized.



What We Want to See/Future Land Use  
Map

## 5. Issues and Strategy Options

The group spent two meetings: (1) identifying potential conflicts between what the group wants to keep and future land uses; (2) developing a list of possible strategies to address those conflicts; (3) prioritizing the potential conflicts and strategies; and (4) grouping the conflicts and strategies. The results of that work were used to develop a list of issues and strategy options, and are as follows.

### a. Ability of the counties to work together on land use issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

This issue came up several times during the meetings, and was a primary driver for the Counties to participate in this process for the Minter Creek Watershed. The participants from each county appreciated the opportunity to work together on these issues. At the December 11 meeting, the county staff reported that they were already coordinating on the updates to their comprehensive plans and regulations. Strategy options for continuing to work together on land use issues are:

- A communication protocol
- Coordination of water quality testing by Kitsap County Department of Health, Stream Team and Surface Water Management, Pierce County Surface Water Management, and the State Department of Health
- Participation in regional planning efforts
- Education



**Discussing Options for Recommendations**

**b. Future land use in the Port Orchard Airport area: Additional commercial development may prove difficult if requesting 'big box' and large urban type uses, since this not currently permitted by zoning**

The group was comfortable with keeping the airport functioning, and with some new development around the airport. Concerns were raised regarding conflicts with surrounding residential uses, water quality, and traffic impacts. Possible strategies to address these issues are:

- Buy the land or an easement from the property owner
- Educate and communicate with property owners, community, elected officials, conservation groups
- Scale back the intensity of the plan and take small steps
- Plan for the airport as an incubator for businesses (light industrial zoning designation allows this now)
- Restrict hazardous uses – this is regulated through County Health and Storm Water
- New technology for on-site septic systems
- Develop an airport area plan for the airport properties and to serve neighborhood business:
  - Employment center/ commercial uses to serve neighborhood residents
  - Maintain and keep future commercial development to neighborhood business center/ low intensity/rural commercial uses (no 'big box retail')
- Develop a subarea plan around the airport property - airport area plus some property around it

**c. Future land use conflicts with wildlife**

Participants indicated concerns with the impacts to wildlife in the area of any new development. They recognize that the area will experience some growth, but want to mitigate the impacts to wildlife. Options for strategies to protect wildlife in the area are:

- Educate and encourage landowners to protect and enhance wildlife corridors
- Do additional studies about needs of wildlife – connectivity of habitat, water quality, etc.
- Combine wildlife corridors with trails
- Determine if stream buffers are sufficient in the counties' critical areas ordinances.
- Use Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Priority Habitat and Species information to inform land use decisions
- Update the stream typing maps (Kitsap and Pierce County have begun some of this work)
- Adopt a viable rural wooded incentive plan in Kitsap County<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The Rural Wooded Incentive Program was a program adopted in the Kitsap County 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update, and subsequently appealed to the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board, and remanded to the County. The program code was eventually repealed from Kitsap County Code in 2010. The program allowed for increased densities in the rural area, if property was set aside in permanent open space.

**d. Resistance to expansion of commercial areas by conservation or neighborhood groups**

There is concern that any expansion of commercial uses will be opposed by conservation or neighborhood groups. Strategy options to address these concerns are:

- Preserving/creating greenbelts and wildlife corridors (suggest flying over and looking at the area)
- Include food sales in new commercial areas
- Minimize miles of driving by residents through the provision of local services and retail
- Provide mitigation for impacts to green belts and wildlife habitat

**e. Resistance by affected property owners to any change in land use/zoning designations**

Concerns were raised about resistance to change by property owners, as well as the impact of grandfathered uses. Possible strategy options to address these concerns are:

- Buy the land or an easement from the property owners
- Educate and communicate with property owners, community, elected officials, conservation groups
- Scale back the plan and take small steps
- Recognize that site-specific Comp Plan/rezone requests can be made in Kitsap during limited time windows
- Propose a comprehensive plan amendment – 2015 comp plan update in Pierce County and 2016 in Kitsap County
- Preserving/creating greenbelts and wildlife corridors (fly over and look at it)
- Include food sales in new commercial areas
- Minimize driving by residents through provision of local services and retail.
- Provide mitigation for impacts
- Manage traffic through existing regulations

**f. More intense residential development and road expansions**

Participants thought more intense development around Wick's Lake and a road expansion connecting Lake Helena Road to Lakeway Boulevard conflicts with the desire for parks and trails in the area. To balance these conflicting desires, the group proposed the following options:

- Plan for residential development and trails together to reduce traffic impacts
- Provide adequate buffers for new development
- Plan for zoning consistent with surrounding parcels
- Make some trade offs – mitigation of development impacts
- Check whether there already is a right-of-way



- Work with the landowner (Alpine Evergreen)
- Do the road expansion and create parks and trails through a master plan

**g. Traffic impacts from small business, agri-tourism, local food production and sales on site vs. a local distribution center for agricultural products**

The group wants to support agriculture in the watershed, but had concerns with the traffic impacts of allowing more activities. Some strategy options are:

- Manage traffic through the existing use regulations
- Provide infrastructure to support agriculture
- Base agricultural zoning on soils, adjacency and existing farms in Pierce County.
- Encourage agricultural clustering

**h. Former Brookside Restaurant (near intersection of SR 302 and 118<sup>th</sup>) site redevelopment could impact nearby critical areas**

Concerns were raised about possible redevelopment of the site of the former Brookside Restaurant, in Pierce County, and the nearby creek. Some possible strategies to address this are:

- Require low impact development (Pierce County – filter strips, rain gardens, and pervious pavement)
- Restrict uses to those with fewer people using water (septic), especially next to the stream – i.e. office, non-food retail
- Shift the commercial zone area away from the stream with new traffic access (politically difficult)
- Help businesses improve water and septic system problems
- Let nature take its course and let the business close as water and septic systems fail

**i. Resistance to change by county commissioners and council**

There were concerns that county elected officials might not want any further recommended change in Minter Creek, especially since Pierce County already has a plan that was adopted after a six-year process. There was a grass roots effort by the community to communicate its own values and vision, resulting in a local investment in the plan process. Some possible strategies to address this are:

- Elect new county officials
- Share the results of this Minter Creek process to inform the comprehensive plan update.
- Provide more communication and input into the comprehensive plan update – and report back to the Minter Creek Watershed Strategies group the results of the comprehensive plan updates.
- Change will result from Minter Creek process recommendations

## 6. Conclusions

While parts of the watershed have experienced some pollution, the overall health of the watershed is high. In Kitsap County, water quality in Minter and Huge Creeks over 2012 was good, with only a few periods of slightly elevated bacteria concentrations. Pierce County also found that water quality is generally good but saw a general rise in fecal coliform bacteria levels at all sites during summer months and occasional spikes in bacteria associated with storm events.<sup>12</sup>

Both counties have designated the area for rural uses, and Pierce County has a portion dedicated for agricultural use. Additionally, both counties have designated some industrial and commercial uses in designated rural centers and the Port Orchard airport area. The group concluded that zoning for rural residential densities and intensities must be retained in order to protect the rural character and water quality for residents, wildlife and the aquatic resources industries. Stream typing to verify existing stream bed location, habitat type and quality is a key step in protection of water quality and riparian habitat.

However, the group also notes some commercial and industrial uses should be allowed to provide local jobs and services to rural residents. Specifically, the group supports retention of the airport with some additional commercial uses to service the community. There is strong consensus for uses that support local agricultural producers.

Trails and wildlife corridors are a high priority for the community. The group requests that the counties coordinate non-motorized transportation planning for trails.

Finally, the group appreciates the Counties' efforts to coordinate through this planning process. The group supports the county efforts to continue their communication and coordination with each other and with the community in the next steps in this process, as well as other planning processes.

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendices A and B for water quality reports from Kitsap and Pierce County.

## 7. Action Recommendations

Based on the issues identified, possible options for addressing them, and the conclusions, the group makes the following recommendations to Kitsap and Pierce County regarding the Minter Creek Watershed for consideration in the upcoming comprehensive plan updates and other planning efforts under the Growth Management Act.

### a. Coordinate land use planning

- Establish inter-jurisdictional communication protocols
- Coordinate water quality sampling and data collection
- Coordinate on planning for trails and recreation
- Participate in regional planning
- Support local efforts to communicate community values and vision
- ***Share the results of this process***

### b. Allow commercial services in rural areas

- Keep commercial uses small scale (consistent with existing allowed rural uses, except for Port Orchard airport), but allow them to locate so local residents can minimize driving distances between services
- Require new development to comply with low impact development standards
- Restrict use of hazardous products
- Maintain greenbelts and wildlife corridors
- Improve on-site septic systems
- Communicate with and educate commercial service providers regarding land use impacts to rural and natural areas
- Rely on critical area ordinances to protect sensitive areas and habitat
- Develop a subarea plan for the airport area as an employment center with industrial and commercial uses to serve neighborhood residents, but limit this future commercial development to neighborhood commercial/low intensity/rural commercial uses (i.e., no 'big box retail store')

### c. Preserve habitat and open space

- Update stream maps
- Encourage landowners to protect wildlife corridors with incentive programs, such as purchase or transfer of development rights
- Combine corridor protection for wildlife, parks and trails (non-motorized transportation plans)
- Study wildlife needs , and review the science to confirm that existing practices for habitat buffers, water quality, and connectivity of habitat are sufficient for protection.
- Revisit the Rural Wooded Incentive Plan in Kitsap County<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See footnote 5.

- Work with large landowners such as Alpine Evergreen to protect habitat, including wildlife corridors outside stream areas
- Plan for residential development near Hunter Road to incorporate trails and habitat protection

**d. Support agriculture**

- Support agri-tourism (including the farm tour), aquaculture, and local food production by allowing local distribution centers, local sales and transportation improvements

**e. Address resistance to changes in land use/Grandfathering**

- Acquire properties or easements on those properties critical for open space or wildlife corridors
- Educate and communicate with property owners, the community, elected officials and conservation groups
- Make incremental changes to comprehensive land use plans that take small steps toward the Minter Creek watershed vision per this report
- Consider comprehensive land use changes that allow local provision of services



## 8. Implementation of Puget Sound Action Agenda

The Puget Sound Action Agenda is a road map that lays out the work needed to achieve an ambitious goal: restoring the health of Puget Sound by 2020. The [2012/2013 Action Agenda](#) identifies key ongoing programs, local priorities for different areas of the Sound and more than 200 specific actions that must be implemented over the next two years to stay on track toward adopted recovery targets. One of these specific actions, or Near Term Actions (NTAs), is NTA A4.1 “to integrate growth, infrastructure, transportation, and conservation planning at sub-regional levels and across jurisdictions.” The Department of Commerce is facilitating this process at the request of Kitsap and Pierce Counties to implement NTA A4.1 in the Minter Creek Watershed.

The Counties believe that growth, infrastructure, transportation and conservation planning at the sub-region of Minter Creek watershed and across county boundaries are critical to water quality protection in the watershed. The work done by the Minter Creek Watershed Strategies group will inform each of the Counties’ decision-making processes as they move forward with updates to their comprehensive plans and regulations under the Growth Management Act (GMA) in the Minter Creek watershed, especially as it relates to managing growth, conserving habitat and wildlife corridors, and protecting water quality..

One of the three key strategies for 2012- 2013 in the Action Agenda is the recovery of shellfish beds. “Shellfish health begins on land through reduction of pollution from rural and agricultural lands and maintenance and repair of failing septic tanks”.<sup>14</sup> Coordinating the stream-typing work will enable both counties to improve key watershed functions for shellfish and drinking water supplies. Recommendations to improve on-site septic systems in the rural area will also benefit shellfish and drinking water. Any new residential or commercial development proposals should include consideration of water quality impacts.

Finally, this work will assist Commerce with NTA A1.2 NTA 1 with respect to identifying barriers to water quality standards and rural lands protection, and developing best practices for other counties that are consistent with Puget Sound protection and recovery targets and with the GMA and Shoreline Management Act.

## 9.

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<sup>14</sup> 2012/2013 Puget Sound Action Agenda, page ES-5.

## **Results Already Realized**

The process has already resulted in better coordination between the counties in developing their work plans for their respective GMA updates – Pierce County due June 2015 and Kitsap County due June 2016.

Kitsap County has worked diligently to find additional capital to allow for stream typing for the Minter Creek Watershed. The County received \$40,000 in funding from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and is beginning stream typing work in the watershed as a result of the work done by this group.

## Appendices

- Appendix A: Burley/Minter Watershed: 2012 Water Quality Monitoring Report, Kitsap Public Health District
- Appendix B: Pierce County Water Quality data
- Appendix C: Meeting summaries