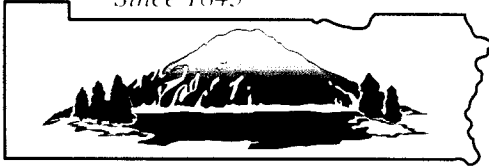


Since 1845

LEWIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Lewis County, Washington

LEWIS COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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RON AVERILL
First District
BILL SCHULTE
Second District
F. LEE GROSE
Third District

Sheila Unger
Board Administrator

August 12, 2009

David R. Bunting
114 Mt. View Drive
Packwood, WA 98361

Dear Mr. Bunting:

We received and read your letter dated August 7, 2009 regarding flooding and channel migration in the Packwood area. We respect your concerns. The Board of County Commissioners, too, is deeply concerned following the 2006 flooding and channel migration that occurred in the upper Cowlitz River that destroyed numerous homes, roads, bridges, and properties and seriously impacted thousands of people living in East Lewis County.

The flood maps, adopted in the early 1980's and used for regulatory purposes, are seriously out of date and because the 2006 flood became the new "flood of record," the County is required to remap the area, consistent with FEMA requirements, or be removed from the federal flood insurance program, effecting not just east county, but the entire county. We cannot afford the loss of federal flood-relief insurance countywide.

The County authorized and accepted the channel migration studies for the Upper Cowlitz undertaken by Geo Engineers, a qualified and respected hydrology/engineering company, as "Best Available Science." Those maps have not replaced the existing FEMA flood-maps, but are currently used as best available information, consistent with federal requirements to augment the existing flood-maps when they are inaccurate or when a new flood of record occurs.

The process of revising and adopting maps for the Upper Cowlitz River, including the Packwood area, has just begun. It will likely take several years to prepare, review and adopt final maps for use in the Upper Cowlitz River. The channel migration maps that have been prepared are not the final adopted flood maps and are subject to review, comments and revision just the same as any other proposed flood-map revision. The public as well the regulatory agencies will have numerous opportunities to review and comment on the maps, and the final maps will be the culmination of a public process that will represent the best available science and information.

In the interim, and until new flood maps are adopted, the County must consider recent natural events and best information when reviewing development proposals. If there is any doubt as to reasonable risk that may place liability on the County, a developer may be required to demonstrate acceptable mitigation to reduce or eliminate the risk. This being said, there are potential risks in developing in certain areas and the planning division and building department will work with property owners and developers to appropriately reduce such risks to the extent allowable under currently adopted laws, regulations and policies.

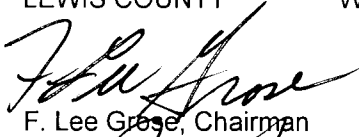
Mr. David Bunting

Page 2

We encourage you to be involved with the flood-mapping process and thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEWIS COUNTY WASHINGTON



F. Lee Grose, Chairman



Ron Averill, Member



P.W. Schulte, Member