

THURSTON COUNTY OPEN SPACE PROGRAM

PLANNING COMMISSION – FEBRUARY 15, 2023



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OPEN SPACE TAXATION ACT (RCW 84.34)

- **Open Space Taxation Act:** Enacted by the WA State Legislature in 1971 (RCW 84.34)

“for the purpose of maintaining, preserving, conserving and otherwise continuing in existence open space lands for the production of food, fiber and forest crops, and to assure the use and enjoyment of natural resources and scenic beauty for the economic well-being of the state and its citizens.”

CRITERIA

- ✓ Applicants must meet the criteria in **RCW 84.34** and the **Thurston County Open Space tax program guidelines**.
-  A **property tax reduction** results from open space classification because the land is valued (for tax assessment purposes) on the basis of its current use and not its 'highest and best use'.
-  The % reduction of market value is based on the **Public Benefit Rating System score**. The BoCC reviews eligibility & recommends approval; the Assessor's Office completes the tax reduction process.
-  **Supporting documents** must be submitted with application materials

APPLICATIONS

- One application:
 - Clements: Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land, no public access

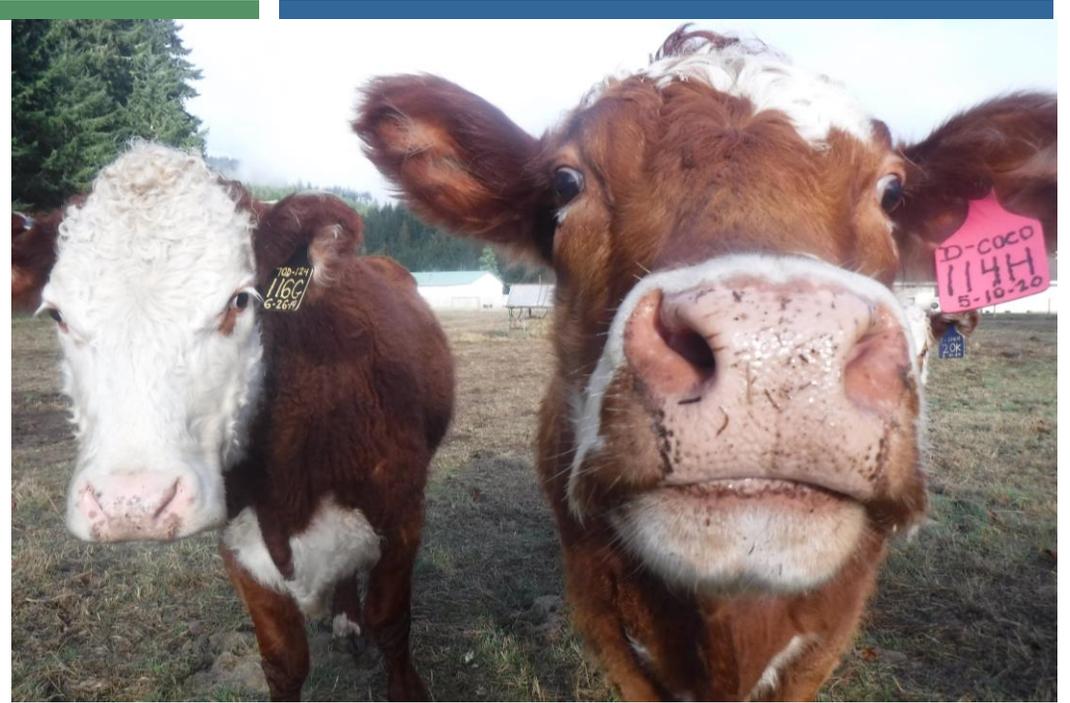
CLEMENTS

- The parcel under consideration totals 5.0 ac.
 - 4.0 acres proposed for the Open Space program



CLEMENTS APPLICATION

- Applying for **Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land Open Space**, no public access
- Deschutes Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA 13) and the McLane Creek basin.
- Formerly enrolled in the Assessor's Farm and Agriculture Land classification, but no longer eligible
- The majority of the property is open pasture with some areas of open-understory forest used for cattle grazing
- Applicants propose to continue grazing activities, maintain the land for use as pasture



CONSERVATION PROPOSAL

- Maintain open pasture for grazing (mowing, brush clearing)
- Maintain pasture fences
- Manage non-native plants within forested portion of property
- Conduct erosion control measures:
 - Rotational grazing; limit the # of cattle grazing at any point in time (to be regularly monitored)
 - Maintaining grass stubble height of at least 3,”
 - Exclude cattle from forest understory during wetter periods

CLEMENTS CRITERIA ANALYSIS

- The proposed 4 acres are eligible for **3 points** under the Thurston County Public Benefit Rating System, for a **50% reduction in market value**
- Meets the eligibility requirements for **Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land**
 - The property was formerly enrolled in the Assessor's Farm and Agriculture Lands classification but no longer eligible
 - The applicants are proposing continued agricultural use and maintaining for long-term ag activities
 - The applicants submitted a complete application including a Farm Conservation Plan



CLEMENTS ANALYSIS RESULTS

- Upon review of the application materials, the Clements application meets the eligibility for the classification of 4 acres qualifying at a 50% reduction as open-space land for current use assessment.

OPTIONAL MOTION TO SET A PUBLIC HEARING

- Move to set a public hearing for March 15, 2023, at 7:00 PM or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard to accept public comments for the Clements Open Space application.

QUESTIONS

- Open Space Staff Contact:
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