

**From:** [hwbranch@aol.com](mailto:hwbranch@aol.com)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** rights of nature  
**Date:** Sunday, March 12, 2023 4:37:55 PM

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Dear Planners,

Too many destructive decisions have been based on standing rather than science. Please recognize the legal rights of nature.

Harry Branch  
239 Cushing St NW  
Olympia Wa 98502

**From:** [Mark Kaufman](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** County's Comprehensive Plan  
**Date:** Sunday, March 12, 2023 4:58:56 PM

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TO: Maya Teeple for the County Planning Commission

Please share my comments below regarding the Rights of Nature with the Planning Commission by March 15.

As citizens of our county and the larger world, we must support nature's capacity to provide resources for sustaining the livelihoods, needs, and wants of people, such as food and material goods. Also, we need to recognize the importance of nature as the setting for people's sense of place and identity and the natural world as a part of oneself.

The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life giving ecosystems which are on the point of catastrophic collapse. For this reason, there is a growing recognition that we must fundamentally change the relationship between humankind and nature. This will require deep changes to how people, government and business operate in Thurston County, including the pursuit and adoption of new laws which must represent the values and needs that will support and sustain a thriving and diverse Earth community. These Rights of Nature acknowledge our dependence on the natural world, and will secure the highest legal protection and societal value for nature through the recognition of nature's rights and associated human rights.

Sincerely,

Mark Kaufman, Olympia, WA

**From:** [Sandler & Seppanen](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#); [Christina Chaput](#)  
**Subject:** Optional Update Items, Request for a Mid-cycle Update  
**Date:** Sunday, March 12, 2023 5:45:23 PM

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Please share these comments with the Planning Commission ahead of the March 14 meeting. I request that the Thurston County Planning Commission consider two additional Optional Items for the Scope of Work for the Thurston 2045 project. I also request additions to the required development regulations list and that a mid-cycle update step be added to the Scope of Work.

**Additional Optional Update Items:**

- **Protect Agriculture:** Protecting local agricultures was the third highest community priority from the Thurston 2045 Survey. CPA 16, Community-Driven Review of Agricultural Policies and Program, on the 2022-23 Comp Plan Docket, is part of the effort to address this effort. That work, however, is limited in scope. Additional work is needed to frame a robust Ag Land Conservation goal so that county staff will no longer say the County does not have a clear overall goal for conservation of ag lands. The community needs the opportunity to consider requiring mitigation plans when development is approved on farmland. The county needs to adopt metrics that track farm acreage and loss of rural land to housing, commercial, and industrial uses rather than for natural resource industries (agriculture, timber, and minerals). The county's Agricultural Advisory Committee has shared with the BoCC other strategies that are outside the scope of CPA 16 project that could be folded into a Protect Agriculture Optional Update item.
- **Add Rights of Nature to Land Use Decision Making:** The current Comprehensive Plan supports the rights of landowners and of the community in land use decisions. The concept of Rights of Nature is that aspects of the environment like rivers, wetlands, and prairies also bear legal rights in the same, or at least a similar, manner as human beings. It is time to begin the process of framing a way to secure a level of legal protection for the environment in our land use decisions by adding Rights of Nature concepts to Chapter 9 of the Comp Plan.

**Recommended Priorities for Optional Updates:** I recommend using the limited staff, additional general fund support, and the community expertise and engagement to address only these optional update items: Climate Change Element, Implementation Plan, Protecting Agriculture, Rights of Nature, and Incorporating Countywide Industrial Lands Study Findings.

**Recommended additions to the Development Regulations listing:** Add Code 17 to the Draft Scope of Work on page 8. The development code needed for Code 17 relate to implementing the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan including new code language to protect assets such as wetlands, farms, woodlands in anticipation of climate change impacts and to require building in climate change resilience. Similarly, review of the county's approach to the Determination of Significance should be added to the required work.

**Mid-cycle Update:** The Comp Plan Periodic Update is a two-year project. Just as the two-year Comp Plan Amendment Docket includes an option to make mid-cycle docket changes, this project needs a check-in at the halfway point. The mid-cycle update is a way to consider additions to the scope of work. This is especially important in that the comprehensive look at the Comp Plan only happens once a decade.

Loretta Seppanen  
Olympia Resident

**From:** [K B Schaetzel-Hill](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Protection of our natural resources.  
**Date:** Sunday, March 12, 2023 6:26:38 PM

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Dear Maya Teeple:

Natural disasters such as fires, floods and storms are rising at an unprecedented rate, and the stability of our human civilization and our natural world is in grave jeopardy.

The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life giving ecosystems which are on the point of catastrophic collapse. For this reason, there is a growing recognition that we must fundamentally change the relationship between humankind and nature. This will require deep changes to how people, government and business operate in Thurston County, including the pursuit and adoption of new laws which must represent the values and needs that will support and sustain a thriving and diverse Earth community. These Rights of Nature acknowledge our dependence on the natural world, and will secure the highest legal protection and societal value for nature through the recognition of nature's rights and associated human rights.

I request that you share my comments with the Planning Commission on March 15, 2023.

Thank you for taking a solid leadership position to protect our home and natural environment.

K Burnell Schaetzel-Hill, DO  
Olympia, WA  
360-561-8608

**From:** [Madeline Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Scope of Work - optional items & priority  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 10:47:45 AM

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Name: Madeline Bishop  
Email: [mfbishop.bishop@gmail.com](mailto:mfbishop.bishop@gmail.com)  
Address: Olympia, WA 98513

Please accept these Scope of Work comments.

#### **Item #1**

Please **add** a new optional item: **Protecting Agriculture**.

We need a clear overall goal for conservation and protection of agricultural lands.

Our Comp Plan must include **metrics** that track farm acreage and loss of rural land to housing, commercial, and industrial uses rather than for natural resource industries (agriculture, timber, and minerals).

#### **Item #2**

Please **add** the **Rights of Nature** concepts to Chapter 9 of the Comp Plan.

Environmental health is essential for our quality of life and for the survival of birds, mammals, fishes, reptiles and amphibians that rely on riparian habitats. These are components of our commons, regardless of public or private ownership. We can and must be responsible for the health of all flora and fauna in order to maintain a sustainable quality of life in Thurston County.

### **Priorities**

The optional scope priorities should be:

- Climate Change Element
- Implementation Plan

- Protecting Agriculture
- Rights of Nature
- Incorporating Countywide Industrial Lands Study Findings

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**From:** [Madeline Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#); [Christina Chaput](#)  
**Subject:** Scope of Work - Mid-cycle Update  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 11:39:30 AM

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Name: Madeline Bishop

Email: [mfbishop.bishop@gmail.com](mailto:mfbishop.bishop@gmail.com)

Address: Olympia, 98513

Please add an update opportunity at the half-way point during the 2 year periodic update.

We need a point at which new laws can be incorporated and to give the community a second chance to weigh in on the scope of work. Since we only do this every 10 years, let's get it as right as possible. Please add a Mid-cycle Update to the Scope of Work.

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**From:** [Sue Langhans](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Rights of Nature  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 12:13:06 PM

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I am worried that the 10 year County Comprehensive Plan will not include mitigation of the degrading elements of nature that will surely cause a catastrophic collapse.

We are dependent on the natural world,

Please share these remarks from the citizens of Thurston County with others meeting on March 15,2023. We need deep changes to protect all living things from harm and even extinction.

Sincerely,

Judith Langhans

2908 Country Club Rd.NW

Olympia WA 98502



**From:** [Madeline Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#); [Christina Chaput](#)  
**Subject:** Scope of Work - Development Regulations  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 12:35:38 PM

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Name: Madeline Bishop  
Email: [mfbishop.bishop@gmail.com](mailto:mfbishop.bishop@gmail.com)  
Address: Olympia, 98513

## Scope of Work - Development Regulations

Please add to the scope of work an update to code of ordinances, [Title 17 Environment](#). Add new language relating to implementing the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan. Protect wetlands, farms, woodlands in anticipation of climate change impacts and require building in climate change resilience.

Also add to the scope of work an update and review of Determination of Significance. Is the current process the best process? Should the county make a determination before or after the Planning Commission advises?

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**From:** [Kathy Package](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 2:33:12 PM

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Dear Ms. Teeple,

As a Thurston County resident, I ask that protection of “Rights of Nature” is included in Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan.

Rights of Nature” is a legal and jurisprudential theory that describes inherent rights as associated with ecosystems and species, similar to the concept of fundamental human rights.

The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life-giving ecosystems and species, many of which are on the point of catastrophic collapse.

The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan should include language and policy that recognize the inherent, inalienable legal Rights of Nature– and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities– to exist, flourish, self-organize, evolve, and regenerate. It should further include language and policy to recognize the County’s responsibility for restoration, recovery, and preservation of these ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities, when harmed.

I ask that you share my comments with the Planning Commission at their March 15, 2023 meeting.

Sincerely,

**Kathy Package, Lacey 98516**

**From:** [hrileycaton@gmail.com](mailto:hrileycaton@gmail.com)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Rights of Nature  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 3:16:07 PM

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Dear Ms. Teeple,

As a Thurston County resident, I ask that protection of “Rights of Nature” is included in Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan.

Rights of Nature” is a legal and jurisprudential theory that describes inherent rights as associated with ecosystems and species, similar to the concept of fundamental human rights.

The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life-giving ecosystems and species, many of which are on the point of catastrophic collapse.

The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan should include language and policy that recognize the inherent, inalienable legal Rights of Nature– and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities– to exist, flourish, self-organize, evolve, and regenerate. It should further include language and policy to recognize the County’s responsibility for restoration, recovery, and preservation of these ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities, when harmed.

I ask that you share my comments with the Planning Commission at their March 15, 2023 meeting.

Sincerely,  
Hugh Caton  
Olympia, WA 98501

**From:** [Christine Wells](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan - please protect the "Rights of Nature"  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 3:28:52 PM

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Dear Ms. Teeple,

As a Thurston County resident, I ask that protection of "Rights of Nature" is included in Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan.

Rights of Nature" is a legal and jurisprudential theory that describes inherent rights as associated with ecosystems and species, similar to the concept of fundamental human rights.

Having just finished reading "The Age of Resilience", I have learned that these principles will be vital in saving our planet going forward.

Current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life-giving ecosystems and species, many of which are on the point of catastrophic collapse.

The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan should include language and policy that recognize the inherent, inalienable legal Rights of Nature— and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities— to exist, flourish, self-organize, evolve, and regenerate.

The County has a responsibility for restoring, recovering and preserving these ecosystems, habitats and natural communities when harmed.

I ask that you share my comments with the Planning Commission at their March 15, 2023 meeting.

Sincerely,  
*Christine Wells*  
Seattle 98105

**From:** [Garrett Tatsumi](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Rights of Nature  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 3:33:47 PM

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Dear Ms. Teeple,

As a Thurston County resident, I ask that protection of “Rights of Nature” is included in Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan.

Rights of Nature” is a legal and jurisprudential theory that describes inherent rights as associated with ecosystems and species, similar to the concept of fundamental human rights.

The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life-giving ecosystems and species, many of which are on the point of catastrophic collapse.

The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan should include language and policy that recognize the inherent, inalienable legal Rights of Nature– and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities– to exist, flourish, self-organize, evolve, and regenerate. It should further include language and policy to recognize the County’s responsibility for restoration, recovery, and preservation of these ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities, when harmed.

I ask that you share my comments with the Planning Commission at their March 15, 2023 meeting.

Sincerely,  
Garrett Tatsumi  
Olympia 98501

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

**From:** [Peggy Dreyfus](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Rights of Nature Advocacy  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 3:34:46 PM

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Dear Ms. Teeple,

As a Thurston County resident, I ask that protection of "Rights of Nature" is included in Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan.

"Rights of Nature" is a legal and jurisprudential theory that describes inherent rights as associated with ecosystems and species, similar to the concept of fundamental human rights.

The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life-giving ecosystems and species, many of which are on the point of catastrophic collapse.

The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan should include language and policy that recognize the inherent, inalienable legal Rights of Nature— and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities— to exist, flourish, self-organize, evolve, and regenerate. It should further include language and policy to recognize the County's responsibility for restoration, recovery, and preservation of these ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities, when harmed.

I ask that you share my comments with the Planning Commission at their March 15, 2023 meeting.

Sincerely,  
*Margaret L. Dreyfus*  
*Olympia, WA 98506*

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"We are determined... to work and fight until justice rains down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream." - Martin Luther King, Jr.

**From:** [Kathy Pruitt](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Rights of Nature  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 3:35:11 PM

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Dear Ms. Teeple,

As a Thurston County resident, I ask that protection of “Rights of Nature” is included in Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan. This concept is new to me and an important legal direction I believe is helpful to include in our county planning.

Rights of Nature” is a legal and jurisprudential theory that describes inherent rights as associated with ecosystems and species, similar to the concept of fundamental human rights.

The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life-giving ecosystems and species, many of which are on the point of catastrophic collapse.

The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan should include language and policy that recognize the inherent, inalienable legal Rights of Nature– and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities– to exist, flourish, self-organize, evolve, and regenerate. It should further include language and policy to recognize the County’s responsibility for restoration, recovery, and preservation of these ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities, when harmed.

I ask that you share my comments with the Planning Commission at their March 15, 2023 meeting.

Sincerely,  
Kathleen Pruitt  
Olympia, WA

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

**From:** [Lisa Ornstein](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Please include Rights of Nature in the Thurston Comprehensive Plan  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 3:35:17 PM

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Dear Ms. Teeple,

As a Thurston County resident, I ask that protection of “Rights of Nature” is included in Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan.

Rights of Nature” is a legal and jurisprudential theory that describes inherent rights as associated with ecosystems and species, similar to the concept of fundamental human rights.

The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life-giving ecosystems and species, many of which are on the point of catastrophic collapse.

The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan should include language and policy that recognize the inherent, inalienable legal Rights of Nature— and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities— to exist, flourish, self-organize, evolve, and regenerate. It should further include language and policy to recognize the County’s responsibility for restoration, recovery, and preservation of these ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities, when harmed.

I ask that you share my comments with the Planning Commission at their March 15, 2023 meeting.

Lisa Ornstein  
[lisa.ornstein@icloud.com](mailto:lisa.ornstein@icloud.com)  
3010 28th Ave. SE  
Olympia, WA 98501



**From:** [Kim Murillo](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Vision for the future-legal rights for all  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 3:35:30 PM

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Dear Ms. Teeple,

As a Thurston County resident, I ask that protection of “Rights of Nature” is included in Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan.

Rights of Nature” is a legal and jurisprudential theory that describes inherent rights as associated with ecosystems and species, similar to the concept of fundamental human rights.

The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life-giving ecosystems and species, many of which are on the point of catastrophic collapse.

The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan should include language and policy that recognize the inherent, inalienable legal Rights of Nature— and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities— to exist, flourish, self-organize, evolve, and regenerate. It should further include language and policy to recognize the County’s responsibility for restoration, recovery, and preservation of these ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities, when harmed.

I ask that you share my comments with the Planning Commission at their March 15, 2023 meeting.

Sincerely,  
*Kim, Great White Owl Murillo*  
*Olympia, WA 98502*

**From:** [Mark Collins](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Rights of Nature  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 3:35:30 PM

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Dear Ms. Teeple,

As a Thurston County resident, I ask that protection of “Rights of Nature” is included in Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan.

Rights of Nature” is a legal and jurisprudential theory that describes inherent rights as associated with ecosystems and species, similar to the concept of fundamental human rights.

The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life-giving ecosystems and species, many of which are on the point of catastrophic collapse.

The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan should include language and policy that recognize the inherent, inalienable legal Rights of Nature— and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities— to exist, flourish, self-organize, evolve, and regenerate. It should further include language and policy to recognize the County’s responsibility for restoration, recovery, and preservation of these ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities, when harmed.

I ask that you share my comments with the Planning Commission at their March 15, 2023 meeting.

Sincerely,  
*Mark S. Collins*  
*Olympia, 98502*

**From:** [Karen Caton](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Thurston County Comprehensive Plan  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 3:35:41 PM

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Dear Ms. Teeple,

As a Thurston County resident, I ask that protection of “Rights of Nature” be included in Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan.

Rights of Nature” is a legal and jurisprudential theory that describes inherent rights as associated with ecosystems and species, similar to the concept of fundamental human rights. The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life-giving ecosystems and species, many of which are on the point of catastrophic collapse.

The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan should include language and policy that recognize the inherent, inalienable legal Rights of Nature – and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities – to exist, flourish, self-organize, evolve, and regenerate. It should further include language and policy to recognize the County’s responsibility for restoration, recovery, and preservation of these ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities, when harmed.

I ask that you share my comments with the Planning Commission at their March 15, 2023 meeting.

Thank you,  
Sincerely,  
Karen Caton  
Olympia, WA

**From:** [Phyllis Farrell](#)  
**To:** [thurston2045](#)  
**Subject:** Comp Plan Scoping comments  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 2:44:34 PM

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Greetings,

I have suggestions for the Mid Cycle Update on Comprehensive Plan for 2045:

Inasmuch as climate change was a major priority on the citizen survey, I would like to suggest that the element of **Climate Change** be included in the planning for the 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update. I realize that is an optional element, but inasmuch as Thurston County has adopted the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (TCMP), including climate change in planning would be required in order to meet the adopted goals of the TCMP.

Protecting agriculture was an important priority for citizens completing the survey. Clear goals for agriculture conservation should be established as well as metrics measuring ag loss. There should be mitigation for ag loss due to mining, housing or industry.

Also, planning should reflect the findings of the Industrial Lands Study.

The Comp Plan should strengthen tree policies. We are increasingly aware of the sequestration properties of trees as well as benefits for air quality, stormwater management, energy conservation, aesthetics and property values.

The Implementation Plan should add metrics for agriculture lands and trees in addition to housing metrics.

Add Rights of Nature in Land Use decision making as a way to secure legal protection for the environment.

Regarding Land Use...there should be no changes in land use designations or zoning without formal amendments.

Please review the County's policy on SEPA determinations. It is obvious many proposals and projects have environmental impacts, yet the frequent DNS designations appear counter intuitive to the public.

Prioritize staff and resources to focus on the required elements plus Climate Change, the Industrial Lands Study, Tree Protections and the Implementation Plan.

Respectfully,

Phyllis Farrell

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

**From:** [Eliane Wilson](#)  
**To:** [Maya Treadle](#)  
**Subject:** Rights of Nature  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 4:02:23 PM

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Maya,

As a Thurston County resident, I ask that protection of "Rights of Nature" be included in Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan.

Rights of Nature is a legal and jurisprudential theory that describes inherent rights as associated with ecosystems and species, similar to the concept of fundamental human rights. The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life-giving ecosystems and species, many of which are on the point of catastrophic collapse.

The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan should include language and policies that recognize the inherent, inalienable legal Rights of Nature– and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities– to exist, flourish, self-organize, evolve, and regenerate. It should further recognize the County's responsibility for restoration, recovery, and preservation of these ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities, when harmed.

I ask that you share my comments with the Planning Commission at their March 15, 2023 meeting.

Thank you !

Eliane  
[denisemorro14@gmail.com](mailto:denisemorro14@gmail.com)

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**From:** [Leah Davis](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Thurston 2045  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 4:22:24 PM

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Dear Ms. Teeple,

As a Thurston County resident, I ask that protection of “Rights of Nature” is included in Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan.

Rights of Nature” is a legal and jurisprudential theory that describes inherent rights as associated with ecosystems and species, similar to the concept of fundamental human rights.

The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life-giving ecosystems and species, many of which are on the point of catastrophic collapse. We must stop treating the planet, and all things on it, as a single-use, disposable item.

The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan should include language and policy that recognize the inherent, inalienable legal Rights of Nature– and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities– to exist, flourish, self-organize, evolve, and regenerate. It should further include language and policy to recognize the County’s responsibility for restoration, recovery, and preservation of these ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities, when harmed. People must take up the rights of the natural world since it doesn't have a voice of its own.

I ask that you share my comments with the Planning Commission at their March 15, 2023 meeting.

Sincerely,  
*Leah Davis*

**From:** [Esther Grace Kronenberg](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#); [Christina Chaput](#)  
**Cc:** [Gary Kline](#)  
**Subject:** Optional Update items for the Comprehensive Plan - CBLA  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 6:54:40 PM

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Dear Maya Teeple,

Please share these comments with the Planning Commission before their March 15 meeting.

The Clean Black Lake Alliance (formerly Citizens for a Clean Black Lake) has previously submitted comments regarding water testing and water quality concerns in the County. We are requesting that the Commission consider two additional Optional Items for the Scope of Work for the Thurston 2045 project.

1. The Comprehensive Plan currently in effect primarily supports the rights of property owners to use their properties within the bounds of certain regulations meant to prevent the worst environmental damage. However, environmental degradation continues to accelerate here in Thurston County and around the world. The United Nations has warned that we are heading toward “major planetary catastrophe.” For this reason, there is a growing recognition that we must fundamentally change the relationship between humankind and nature.

Making this fundamental shift means acknowledging our dependence on nature and respecting our need to live in harmony with the natural world. It means securing the highest legal protection and the highest societal value for nature through the recognition of nature’s rights and associated human rights.

**We therefore request that the County add Rights of Nature to Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan.**

This would recognize the inherent, inalienable legal Rights of Nature and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities to exist, flourish, evolve and regenerate, and to restoration, recovery and preservation when harmed.

It would ensure that the Rights of Nature are free from violation, regulation and subordination to other laws, economic priorities and legal and financial liabilities.

It would apply the precautionary principle and restrictive measures, including local prohibitions, for activities that may lead to the extinction of species, the destruction of ecosystems, or the permanent alteration of natural cycles.

It would recognize that Nature includes human beings as a constituency, and that the very existence of humanity is inevitably tied to that of Nature, and that the Rights of Nature necessarily encompasses the right of humanity to its existence as a species, and the right to dwell unmolested in their natural habitat.

It would guarantee the ecosystem has legal standing to appear as the real party of interest in administrative proceedings and legal actions affecting its rights.

It would authorize residents of communities to represent the ecosystem in which they

physically dwell, and ensure that they do so in the name of that ecosystem for the sole purpose of advancing its rights, in any and all legal proceedings to do so.

2. We support the comments of the Agricultural Advisory Board and others (protection of agricultural lands was the third highest priority of the Thurston 2045 survey) who request that there be a clear measurable goal for conservation of these critical local agricultural lands. The County needs to track the amount of farm acreage and any loss of rural lands to housing, commercial and industrial uses rather than for use as farmland, and to allow the community the opportunity to consider requiring mitigation plans when development is approved on farmland.

We also support that, due to limited staff and resources, priorities for optional updates be limited to the Climate Change Element, Rights of Nature, Implementation Plan, Protecting Agriculture and Incorporating the Countywide Industrial Lands Study Findings.

We also support adding Code 17 to the Draft Scope of Work on page 8 which relates to implementing the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan to protect natural resources in anticipation of climate change impacts and to require building in climate change resilience. The use of a Determination of Significance should be used in accordance with SEPA policy that requires it for any project with adverse environmental impacts.

We also support a mid-cycle update to consider additions to the scope of work.

Thank you for including these comments as part of the Scope of Work for the 2045 Thurston project.

Gary Kline and Esther Kronenberg on behalf of  
the Clean Black Lake Alliance



**From:** [Esther Grace Kronenberg](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Include Rights of Nature in the Scope of Work for the Comp Plan update  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 6:58:16 PM

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As a Thurston County resident, I ask that protection of “Rights of Nature” is included in Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan.

Rights of Nature” is a legal and jurisprudential theory that describes inherent rights as associated with ecosystems and species, similar to the concept of fundamental human rights.

The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life-giving ecosystems and species, many of which are on the point of catastrophic collapse.

The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan should include language and policy that recognize the inherent, inalienable legal Rights of Nature— and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities— to exist, flourish, self-organize, evolve, and regenerate. It should further include language and policy to recognize the County’s responsibility for restoration, recovery, and preservation of these ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities, when harmed.

I ask that you share my comments with the Planning Commission at their March 15, 2023 meeting.

Thank you.

Jerry Dierker  
Olympia WA

**From:** [Bette Shultz](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Sunberg Property  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 9:49:11 PM

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The Sunberg property and other like properties are a good example of why laws are need to be provided protection to our environment.

The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life giving ecosystems which are on the point of catastrophic collapse. For this reason, there is a growing recognition that we must fundamentally change the relationship between humankind and nature. This will require deep changes to how people, government and business operate in Thurston County, including the pursuit and adoption of new laws which must represent the values and needs that will support and sustain a thriving and diverse Earth community. These Rights of Nature acknowledge our dependence on the natural world, and will secure the highest legal protection and societal value for nature through the recognition of nature's rights and associated human rights.

Thank you for helping with this issue,  
Bette Shultz

**From:** [Marian M](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Comments for the Planning Commission Meeting on March 15  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 10:39:13 PM

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As part of the planning effort taking place for Thurston 2045, the two highest ranking priorities identified by community respondents in the Community Priorities Survey Report should drive the vision for Thurston County over the next twenty years.

These were noted as:

1. Protect sensitive areas like wildlife habitat, flood areas, landslide areas, and surface and ground water (57%), and,
2. Prepare for climate change and take actions towards reducing impacts (47%).

Presently, the continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life giving ecosystems, which are on the point of catastrophic collapse. Critical changes must be taken in how people, government and business operate in Thurston County. These changes include the pursuit and adoption of new laws that represent the values and needs to support and sustain a thriving and diverse community,

To ensure ecosystems flourish and evolve and priorities address community environmental priorities, I support the effort of the Local Good Governance Coalition for the inclusion of the Rights of Nature in Thurston 2045, the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Thank you,

Marian Mehegan

*Κύριε ἐλέησον*

**From:** [northbeachcomm@cs.com](mailto:northbeachcomm@cs.com)  
**To:** [Tye Menser](#); [Carolina Mejia-Barahona](#); [Gary Edwards](#)  
**Cc:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** THURSTON COUNTY..... Comprehensive Plan - 2023  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 8:24:30 AM

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March 13

Dear Thurston County Commissioners,

The "Scope of Work" for the Thurston 2045 project is important. It needs to be linked to the Thurston Planning Commission work. We need more contractors or staff for this work. It is a huge job.

The Thurston Comprehensive Plan currently in effect primarily supports the rights of property owners to use their properties within the bounds of certain regulations meant to prevent the worst environmental damage.

**We therefore request that the County add Rights of Nature to Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan.**

Rights of Nature and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities to exist, flourish, evolve and regenerate, and to restoration, recovery and preservation when harmed, are important.

It would ensure that the Rights of Nature are free from violation, regulation and subordination to other laws, economic priorities and legal and financial liabilities.

It would apply the precautionary principle and restrictive measures, including local prohibitions, for activities that may lead to the extinction of species, the destruction of ecosystems, or the permanent alteration of natural cycles.

It would recognize that Nature includes human beings as a

constituency, and that the very existence of humanity is inevitably tied to that of Nature, and that the Rights of Nature necessarily encompasses the right of humanity to its existence as a species, and the right to dwell unmolested in their natural habitat.

It would guarantee the ecosystem has legal standing to appear as the real party of interest in administrative proceedings and legal actions affecting its rights.

It would authorize residents of communities to represent the ecosystem in which they physically dwell, and ensure that they do so in the name of that ecosystem for the sole purpose of advancing its rights, in any and all legal proceedings to do so.

Thank you,

Lisa Riner

2103 Harrison

OLY., WA 98502

**From:** [holly BARNES](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Thurston County Comprehensive Plan update  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 12:15:46 PM

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**Dear Maya,**  
**The following comments are offered as you update the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan. We need to change our relationship to the planet and all living things, i.e. plants, animals, fish, etc. because we are all connected.**  
**We should heed the timeless and wise words of a local great Indian Chief Seattle.**

**‘Teach your children**

**what we have taught our children-**

**that the earth is our mother.**

**Whatever befalls the earth**

**befalls the sons and daughters of the earth.**

**If men spit upon the ground,**

**they spit upon themselves.**

**This we know.**

**The earth does not belong to us,**

**we belong to the earth.**

**This we know.**

**All things are connected**

**like the blood which unites one family.**

**All things are connected.**

**Whatever befalls the earth**

**befalls the sons and daughters of the earth.**

**We did not weave the web of life,**

**We are merely a strand in it.**

**Whatever we do to the web,**

**we do to ourselves....**

## **CHIEF SEATTLE**

**The continued degradation of our environment shows that current law is not protecting the carrying capacities of life-giving ecosystems which are on the point of catastrophic collapse. For this reason, there is a growing recognition that we must fundamentally change the relationship between humankind and nature. This will require deep changes to how people, government and business operate in Thurston County, including the pursuit and adoption of new laws which must represent the values and needs that will support and sustain a thriving and diverse Earth community. These Rights of Nature acknowledge our dependence on the natural world, and will secure the highest legal protection and societal value for nature through the recognition of nature's rights and associated human rights.**

**We need to change our relationship with the land and God's creatures so all may thrive. "Salmon connect the land to the sea. How we treat and take care of our forests and water ultimately determines the fate of our salmon populations." We cannot afford to lose the battle for this iconic species. Our urban and community forests temper extreme temperatures, shade salmon streams, create wildlife habitat, boost air quality, improve people's well being and make cities and communities more comfortable and livable for all. We should adopt policies and protections so there is no net loss of canopy coverage in our County.**

**We need to ask and demand that our State agencies do better. Our thinking and actions need to be multigenerational. Preserving legacy and old growth forests is an imperative. Recently the DNR allowed the logging of a legacy forest in Olympia (Cooper Crest) that will take decades to recover without the ability for timely community input. They are also responsible for managing our rivers, streams, wetlands, and riparian buffers that so much of life depends on. They must do a better job and think long term.**

**The Washington State Department of Transportation promised to restore the Crosby Interchange on US 101 following completion of construction. They have not followed through. This was an EIS commitment and is just above the Capitol Lake where the State will invest millions of dollars to restore an estuary. It is all connected. Another example is the Nisqually River. This was crossed by**

**Interstate 5 in the 1960's before the Department of Ecology was established and permitting requirements. Dikes were created to restrict the river and a huge cut above Medicine Creek has left a scar that has remained for over 60 years. This needs to be restored to forest to protect water quality for Medicine Creek and the Salish Sea.**

**We all need to do a better job of protecting the planet and creating a right relationship to our environment. It begins with each one of us and the responsibility extends to helping each other to take care of our Mother Earth. "For we are the keepers of the seven generations. Our ancestors are watching to see if we will make a life for those yet unborn and teach the care of Mother Earth to all races of man."**

**I hope through the Planning Commission process and the updating of the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan that we can create holistic requirements where our communities and nature can thrive. Our future may depend on it. Please share these comments with the Planning Commission and our Thurston County Commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.**

**Sincerely,**

**Robert B. Barnes**

**2201 59<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW**

**Olympia, WA 98502**

**360-915-4599**



**From:** [Lynn Fitz-Hugh](#)  
**To:** ["Esther Grace Kronenberg"](#); [Maya Teeple](#); [Christina Chaput](#)  
**Cc:** ["Gary Kline"](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Optional Update items for the Comprehensive Plan - CBLA  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 12:35:14 PM

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Restoring Earth Connection agree with these comments submitted by Clean Black Lake Alliance. The Rights of Nature is an important concept for not just Black Lake but to align us better with the bodies of waters, and trees that are part of a living network of which we are only one part. Climate change is already showing us that if we don't start caring for these bodies we will die. So please do include them in the comprehensive plan.

Thanks,

*Lynn Fitz-Hugh*

Executive Director

She/Her pronouns

206-713-0497

Friends of Trees Action group of



<https://www.restoringearthconnection.org/>

FB: restoring Earth Connection

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**From:** Esther Grace Kronenberg <wekrone@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 13, 2023 3:54 PM  
**To:** Maya Teeple <maya.teeple@co.thurston.wa.us>; christina.chaput@co.thurston.wa.us  
**Cc:** Gary Kline <gary@blossomera.com>  
**Subject:** Optional Update items for the Comprehensive Plan - CBLA

Dear Maya Teeple,

Please share these comments with the Planning Commission before their March 15 meeting.

The Clean Black Lake Alliance (formerly Citizens for a Clean Black Lake) has previously submitted comments regarding water testing and water quality concerns in the County. We are requesting that the Commission consider two additional Optional Items for the Scope of

Work for the Thurston 2045 project.

1. The Comprehensive Plan currently in effect primarily supports the rights of property owners to use their properties within the bounds of certain regulations meant to prevent the worst environmental damage. However, environmental degradation continues to accelerate here in Thurston County and around the world. The United Nations has warned that we are heading toward “major planetary catastrophe.” For this reason, there is a growing recognition that we must fundamentally change the relationship between humankind and nature.

Making this fundamental shift means acknowledging our dependence on nature and respecting our need to live in harmony with the natural world. It means securing the highest legal protection and the highest societal value for nature through the recognition of nature’s rights and associated human rights.

**We therefore request that the County add Rights of Nature to Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan.**

This would recognize the inherent, inalienable legal Rights of Nature and its constituent ecosystems, habitats, and natural communities to exist, flourish, evolve and regenerate, and to restoration, recovery and preservation when harmed.

It would ensure that the Rights of Nature are free from violation, regulation and subordination to other laws, economic priorities and legal and financial liabilities.

It would apply the precautionary principle and restrictive measures, including local prohibitions, for activities that may lead to the extinction of species, the destruction of ecosystems, or the permanent alteration of natural cycles.

It would recognize that Nature includes human beings as a constituency, and that the very existence of humanity is inevitably tied to that of Nature, and that the Rights of Nature necessarily encompasses the right of humanity to its existence as a species, and the right to dwell unmolested in their natural habitat.

It would guarantee the ecosystem has legal standing to appear as the real party of interest in administrative proceedings and legal actions affecting its rights.

It would authorize residents of communities to represent the ecosystem in which they physically dwell, and ensure that they do so in the name of that ecosystem for the sole purpose of advancing its rights, in any and all legal proceedings to do so.

2. We support the comments of the Agricultural Advisory Board and others (protection of agricultural lands was the third highest priority of the Thurston 2045 survey) who request that there be a clear measurable goal for conservation of these critical local agricultural lands. The County needs to track the amount of farm acreage and any loss of rural lands to housing, commercial and industrial uses rather than for use as farmland, and to allow the community the opportunity to consider requiring mitigation plans when development is approved on farmland.

We also support that, due to limited staff and resources, priorities for optional updates be limited to the Climate Change Element, Rights of Nature, Implementation Plan, Protecting Agriculture and Incorporating the Countywide Industrial Lands Study Findings.

We also support adding Code 17 to the Draft Scope of Work on page 8 which relates to implementing the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan to protect natural resources in anticipation of climate change impacts and to require building in climate change resilience. The use of a Determination of Significance should be used in accordance with SEPA policy that requires it for any project with adverse environmental impacts.

We also support a mid-cycle update to consider additions to the scope of work.

Thank you for including these comments as part of the Scope of Work for the 2045 Thurston project.

Gary Kline and Esther Kronenberg on behalf of  
the Clean Black Lake Alliance

**From:** [Melinda Hughes](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#); [Christina Chaput](#)  
**Subject:** TCAT Comp Plan Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 5:43:41 PM

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Good Afternoon,

Please share these comments with the Planning Commission ahead of the March 14 meeting, and that this is also shared with the Board of Commissioners.

First off, the Thurston Climate Action Team (TCAT) requests, given the County's commitment to climate action, that 1) climate change is woven throughout the entire Comprehensive Plan as the effects touch every aspect of our lives, and 2) that the resulting Comprehensive Plan also matches the County's commitment to the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan with implementation strategies for mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency. Sequestration should be a top priority from protecting forests and tree canopy to healthy soils preservation.

TCAT also requests that the Thurston County Planning Commission consider two additional Optional Items for the Scope of Work for the Thurston 2045 project:

1. Protecting Agriculture
2. Add Rights of Nature to Land Use Decision Making: The current Comprehensive Plan supports the rights of landowners and of the community in land use decisions. The concept of Rights of Nature is that aspects of the environment like rivers, wetlands, and prairies also bear legal rights in the same, or at least a similar, manner as human beings. It is time to begin the process of framing a way to secure a level of legal protection for the environment in our land use decisions by adding Rights of Nature concepts to Chapter 9 of the Comp Plan.

TCAT also supports that priorities for optional updates be limited (if necessary) due to staffing, to adding the Rights of Nature, Implementation Plan, Protecting Agriculture and Incorporating the Countywide Industrial Lands Study Findings.

Finally, we also request additions to the required development regulations list and that a mid-cycle update step be added to the Scope of Work.

Thank you for including our comments as part of the Scope of Work for the 2045 Thurston project.

Sincerely,

Melinda

**Melinda Hughes, Executive Director  
Thurston Climate Action Team**

PO Box 13324

Olympia, WA 98508

(360) 977-1509

[melinda@thurstonclimateaction.org](mailto:melinda@thurstonclimateaction.org)

<https://thurstonclimateaction.org>

LinkedIn - [www.linkedin.com/in/melinda-hughes-melp](https://www.linkedin.com/in/melinda-hughes-melp)

**From:** [maureen.canny](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** County's Comprehensive plan update  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 7:18:41 PM

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Dear Ms. Teeple,

Please ensure that our County's new Comprehensive Plan update includes the recognition and legal protection of our vital ecosystems. Humankind's future is innately dependent upon the natural world, its species and its life-giving ecosystems. Please make sure our critical resources of air, land and water, as well as the immense diversity of flora and fauna that live here, are legally recognized as critical to sustaining a thriving Thurston County.

Thank you,

Maureen and Kent Canny

**From:** [Dio-Peter Lewis](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Add Rights of Nature to Comprehensive Plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 9:21:20 PM

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Hello, My name is Dio Lewis and I'm a resident of Thurston County.

I know the county's 10 year plan is currently being updated. Rights of Nature must be included. What will we be without true environmental justice? Certainly no longer the "Evergreen State". Please commit to climate justice *now*.

Sincerely, a concerned citizen.

**From:** [Tony Usibelli](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Comprehensive Plan Update - Rights of Nature  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 9:26:37 PM

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Dear Maya Teeple,

My wife and I have been residents of Thurston County for more than 35 years. One of the major reasons we moved to Thurston County and why we continue to live here is because of our amazing natural resources.

We are writing you and the Planning Commission to strongly urge you to include the Rights of Nature as a critical component in any plan update. Jurisdictions in the United States and throughout the world have begun to adopt those rights as a key measure to allow stronger legal standing for natural and ecosystem preservation.

Thank you for consideration of my comments

Sincerely,

Tony and Heidi Usibelli  
Cell # (360) 561-8942  
[tusibelli@gmail.com](mailto:tusibelli@gmail.com)  
Olympia, WA (Nisqually/Squaxin lands)

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows



**From:** [Lazlo Helen Skelton](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Rights of nature in the comprehensive plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 9:28:09 PM

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Dear Ms. Teeple,

I am writing to request the that you add the Rights of Nature to the new comprehensive plan. As we will be stuck with this plan for the next decade, it is crucial to add the Rights of Nature to it. We must not hesitate any longer then we already have. Thank you,

- Lazlo Skelton

**From:** [Noel Marshall](#)  
**To:** [Maya Teeple](#)  
**Subject:** Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan Planning Council  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 9:44:56 PM

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Greetings,

This is a message to the Comprehensive Plan Planning Council.

Please include reference to the 'Rights of Nature' to ensure that our local ecosystem has legal representation under the plan.

Too often the 'rights' of those who seek financial gain over public benefit override the silent systems that support and protect us, the individual citizens of Thurston County.

Please read this linked article that outlines the designation of those rights:  
<https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2021/04/22/rights-of-nature-lawsuits/>

Noel Marshall  
Citizen of Thurston County, WA