



## THURSTON COUNTY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

# OPEN SPACE TAX PROGRAM

## THE PUBLIC BENEFIT RATING SYSTEM HOW IT WORKS

The assessed value of properties classified as open space is determined by a formula using a point-rating system. Here's how it works: Thurston County has established a list of Priority Resources, based on the definition of open space in the State Open Space Tax Act (RCW 84.34). Each Priority Resource on the list provides either 1, 2 or 3 points for a property's "rating." The more points a property has, the larger reduction it gets in assessed value. The following thresholds are used to determine the amount that the assessed value will be reduced:

Total Points	% Reduction in Market Value
0 – 2	0%
3 - 6	50%
7 - 11	70%
12 - 13	90%
At least 1 Priority Resource AND Conservation or Historic Easement	90%

### MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY

- A Property must be five acres or larger, except where Eligibility Criteria indicate otherwise. Property must have at least 1 priority resource and receive at least 3 points.**

## **THE POINT SYSTEM**

There are two ways to accumulate points:

1. Document the property's eligibility for up to three Priority Resources, for a maximum of nine points (refer to the blue "Eligibility Criteria Checklist"); and
2. Enhance your point-rating by:
  - a. Allowing public access (there are three types described below)
  - b. Donating a conservation or historic easement to a qualified organization (automatically results in 90% reduction in assessed value).

## **TYPES OF PUBLIC ACCESS**

<u>Partial Access:</u>	<b>1 Point</b>	Seasonal or members only;
<u>Substantial Access:</u>	<b>2 Points</b>	Members and the public upon special arrangements;
<u>Unlimited Access:</u>	<b>4 Points</b>	The public may enter at any time without special arrangements.

## **INELIGIBLE LANDS**

1. Lands not containing a listed priority resource
2. Open space areas that are associated with, and which contribute to a development's receiving its maximum development potential under land use regulations (for example, a "resource use parcel" that is created as part of a planned rural residential development).