

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
WALLA WALLA COUNTY, WASHINGTON

**IN THE MATTER OF ELECTING TO  
PARTICIPATE IN THE  
VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP  
PROGRAM**

**RESOLUTION NO. 12 015**

**WHEREAS**, during the 2011 Legislative Session, the Washington State Legislature enacted, and the Governor signed, Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1886; and

**WHEREAS**, Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1886 created the Voluntary Stewardship Program, an alternative program to protect critical areas where agricultural activities are conducted, as recommended by the William D. Ruckelshaus Center to the Legislature; and

**WHEREAS**, Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1886 was codified as RCW 36.70A.700 *et seq*; and

**WHEREAS**, RCW 36.70A.710 states that a County must adopt an ordinance or resolution by January 22, 2012, electing to participate in the Voluntary Stewardship Program and identifying the watersheds that will participate in the program; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 5, 2011 the Board of County Commissioners sent letters requesting comments to 50 different representatives of tribes, environmental groups, agricultural interests, municipalities, state agencies, and other interested parties; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 8, 2011 notice of a public hearing was published in the Waitsburg Times, Tri-City Herald, and Walla Walla Union Bulletin; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 11, 2011 the County published a box advertisement in the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin, giving additional notice of the public hearing; and

**WHEREAS** on October 3, October 31, and November 7, 2011 and January 3, 2012, the Board of County Commissioners held workshops, open to the public, regarding the decision to participate in the program; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 19, 2011, the Board held a public hearing on whether to elect to participate in the program; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 3, 2012, the Board of County Commissioners voted to elect (or "opt-in") to participate in the Voluntary Stewardship Program for all watersheds in the County; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board makes the following Finding of Fact and Conclusions of Law:

1. Walla Walla County contains the following watersheds: (1) the Walla Walla River and its tributaries, including, but not limited to the Touchet River, Mill Creek and Dry Creek; (2) the Columbia River and its tributaries; and (3) the Snake River and its tributaries.
2. These watersheds have been grouped into Water Resource Inventory Areas 32 and 33, which are mapped at WAC 173-500-990. Portions of Water Resource Inventory Areas 32 and 33 are outside of Walla Walla County.
3. As stated in the Walla Walla County Comprehensive Plan, at section 6.3.3, most of the County's unincorporated land, approximately 741,165 acres, is in agricultural use, including both crop and rangeland.
4. Walla Walla County has a diverse agricultural base, including grain, livestock, onions, orchards and vineyards. These crops and products are spread throughout the County.

5. Approximately 717,474 acres have been designated as agricultural land of long-term commercial significance. Of those, approximately 23,000 acres have been designated as Agricultural Lands of Primary Significance. *Id.*
6. In 2002, the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service Census of Agriculture reported that there were 890 farms and 700,560 acres in agricultural production in Walla Walla County. *Id.*
7. In 2002, the value of agricultural production in the County was \$339,093,000, ranking the County at fifth among all counties in the State. *Id.*
8. Risk of conversion of farmland to other uses could increase, if Critical Area regulations make agricultural production cost prohibitive.
9. The overall likelihood of completing a successful program in the County is high. Farmers have routinely cooperated with voluntary programs such as those offered through the Walla Walla County Conservation District. The Conservation District has shown a willingness to assist and possibly lead any program established under the Voluntary Stewardship Program.
10. Unique local programs such as the Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council (in Oregon), and the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board provide a strong base of existing watershed programs to provide input into a program established under the Voluntary Stewardship Program.
11. As noted in the Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan, "the future of the County's economy will continue to be inextricably tied to the fortunes of the agricultural sector." *Id.* at 6-26.
12. Because agriculture is equally important to all areas of the County, it is appropriate that all watersheds within the County participate in the Voluntary Stewardship Program.

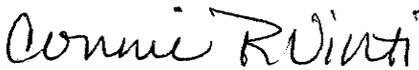
NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, by this Board of Walla Walla County Commissioners, Walla Walla County does hereby elect to participate in the Voluntary Stewardship Program as provided in RCW 36.70A.710.

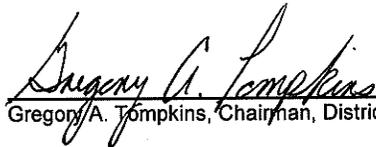
All watersheds in Walla Walla County, which are all watersheds within those portions of WRIs 32 and 33 that are located in Walla Walla County, including but not limited to the Walla Walla River and its tributaries, the Columbia River and its tributaries and the Snake River and its tributaries, shall participate in the Voluntary Stewardship Program.

Passed this 17<sup>th</sup> day of **January, 2012** by Board members as follows: 2 Present or 0 Participating via other means, and by the following vote: 2 Aye 0 Nay 0 Abstained 1 Absent.

Attest:



Connie R. Vinti, Clerk of the Board

  
Gregory A. Tompkins, Chairman, District 3

  
Gregg C. Loney, Commissioner, District 1

  
Perry L. Dozier, Commissioner, District 2

Constituting the Board of County Commissioners  
of Walla Walla County, Washington