

CHELAN COUNTY PUBLIC BENEFIT RATING SYSTEM

Chelan County offers an incentive to property owners to preserve open space resources on private property in the county by providing a property tax reduction based upon **current use** of the property rather than the **highest and best use** of the property.

This incentive program is called the *Public Benefit Rating System (PBRS)* and allows property owners the opportunity to receive a reduction of their property taxes for preserving one or more open space resources on their property.

The amount of property tax reduction is based upon a point system allocated to different resources, grouped by priority.

Examples of public benefit open space resources include stream, lake and wetland buffers, groundwater protection areas, threatened or endangered wildlife habitat, farm land, rural lands close to urban areas, open space within designated urban growth areas, public lands buffers, historic and/or archeological landmarks or sites.

Lands that are used for agricultural or forest practices and assessed as open space agriculture or open space timber are not considered under the PBRS.

An open space contract must be signed between the property owner and Chelan County upon approval of the application. All taxes and related charges outstanding against a parcel must be paid in full prior to the open space agreement. The property owner agrees to maintain and protect the designated resource(s) for the public benefit.

Some useful information about the Public Benefit Rating System:

- PBRS is completely voluntary.
- Public access to private property is not a requirement.
- Tax relief can be from 50% to 100% of current assessed value.
- PBRS is a long-term (10+ years) commitment.
- Tax penalties for early withdrawal include back taxes, compensatory taxes, and a 20% additional penalty!

What you need to do to apply for the Public Benefit Rating System:

- Call the Chelan County Department of Building/Fire Safety & Planning at 509/667-6225 or stop by 411 Washington Street, Wenatchee, Washington 98801 and request the application materials.

- ❑ Fill out the application materials and deliver to the Chelan County Department of Building/Fire Safety & Planning at 411 Washington Street, Wenatchee, Washington 98801.
- ❑ Attend a public hearing.

Public Benefit Rating System application requirements:

- ❑ Complete application form (Department of Revenue form 64 0021-2);
- ❑ Legal description of the property to be rated, Assessor's parcel map, vicinity map and detailed site plan;
- ❑ Complete PBRS worksheet, with open space categories sought;
- ❑ A narrative statement, for each category of the PBRS sought, indicating why the property is eligible with supporting documentation, if required. Definitions and eligibility criteria for each PBRS category are found in the PBRS Final Draft handout. The applicant may need assistance from a qualified professional in the preparation of supporting documents for the application;
- ❑ Certification of payment (of all outstanding assessments against the property) from the Chelan County Assessor; and
- ❑ Applicable application fees.

For more information about the PBRS process, please contact **Ryan Walker**, at the Chelan County Department of Building/Fire Safety & Planning at 509/667-6225.

For information regarding property assessments, open space agriculture and open space timber, please contact Kelly Dorn at the office of the Chelan County Assessor at 509/667-6365.