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Green Building

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Partnerships enhance green development

More housing is needed even in the crowded Puget Sound area. But developers can demonstrate environmental sensitivity by working with communities to improve their natural surroundings.

By **WILLIAM BOUCHER**

Quadrant Corp.

The full article can be found below.

Another way for developers to restore the environment is through the donation of "fish logs." Also known as "large woody debris," fish logs are the large bases of trees that still have the tree's root system attached. When strategically installed in stream beds, the logs and root systems provide salmon with protection from predators, as well as refuge during storms for both young fish and returning adults. Fish logs also help maintain the flow of the stream and create natural pools which serve as spaces for the fish to thrive.



The Resource Action Council connects developers and landowners with nonprofit environment groups to provide tools and resources for preservation projects.

Quadrant contributed "fish logs" for several fish restoration sites in the Snoqualmie River.

Because the root systems must be in place for the logs to be effective, the only time fish logs can be collected is when a project site is being cleared. There is a huge demand for fish logs from nonprofit and government organizations that

restore streambeds because the logs are so expensive and scarce. According to David Burger, executive director of the Resource Action Council, fish logs are typically valued between \$300 and \$500 each.

The Resource Action Council acts as a catalyst to connect developers and landowners with nonprofit environment groups to provide the tools and resources necessary for preservation projects. For example, the Resource Action Council received 45 logs via the Redmond Ridge development for use by local community-based organizations for several fish restoration sites in the Snoqualmie River. The developer of Redmond Ridge, Quadrant, has also donated hundreds of other logs to King County, local environmental groups and the city of Kent.

Burger points out the irony that about 20 years ago, paid crews were removing logs from stream beds because large woody debris was perceived as destructive to streams and accused of trapping waste. Now that theory has come full circle and many groups are working to return streams to their natural form. Damaged streams that have been restored with the fish logs have quickly sprung back to life, validating the positive impact recycled fish logs have on the environment and the health of our local streams.

Perhaps the most important action a developer can take is working closely with local entities prior to beginning a project to clearly assess the needs of the greater area. If armed with enough foresight, a community's infrastructure can be molded to incorporate green features.

For example, before the first home was even started at Snoqualmie Ridge, the planned community partnered with the city of Snoqualmie to construct one of Washington state's only Class A wastewater treatment plants. Now, in its third year of operations, the plant treats more than 70 percent of water consumed daily in the city of Snoqualmie and reuses it for landscaping irrigation.

The pairing of interests between Snoqualmie Ridge and the city of Snoqualmie created a working conservation tool for the entire community. The collaboration is a primary reason that the city of Snoqualmie is not facing the water shortage conditions that many communities are dealing with today.

The homebuilding industry plays a very important role in our economy. In the past decade, King County gained 300,000 new jobs but less than 100,000 new homes — about half of what was needed. New homes, especially affordable homes, are needed to not only support new jobs, but to also provide for the housing needs of future generations. As builders we must remember that how we build today will affect not only the physical landscape of the Puget Sound region but also the health of its physical environment.

William Boucher is assistant vice president of community marketing for Quadrant Corp., a subsidiary of Weyerhaeuser Real Estate Co. (WRECO). Boucher oversees all marketing efforts for WRECO's three planned communities in Washington: Redmond Ridge outside Redmond, Snoqualmie Ridge in Snoqualmie and Northwest Landing in DuPont.

Begining of original article

The natural beauty and surroundings of the Pacific Northwest are some of the

primary reasons why so many of us choose to call this area home. But as the Puget Sound region continues to mature and the population grows, developers are presented with the important challenge of balancing growth while preserving our environment.

As new homes are built, it is critical that developers administer green-building practices at construction sites to maximize environmental preservation opportunities. Green building not only supports a healthy environment, it also demonstrates to homebuyers that the developer is sensitive to the issue — something that is becoming more and more important to today’s environmentally conscious consumer.

Partnerships between public and nonprofit organizations help facilitate this process. For example, King County’s Department of Natural Resources coordinates a successful plant salvage program that works closely with local developers. When an area needs to be cleared for future schools or homes, the plant salvage program (with support from hundreds of volunteers) collects and recycles plants, shrubs and trees to other areas of King County. The vegetation is used to restore stream banks, which in turn improves salmon habitat, controls stream erosion and provides shade to keep water cool for fish. In addition, the plants attract insects which help pollinate plants and provide a food source for fish.

“The plant salvage program is a successful model for developers seeking a public-private partnership that will support environmental preservation,” notes Greg Rabourn, a community stewardship specialist for King County.

“It’s a win-win situation for everyone involved,” Rabourn adds. “The county is given a valuable resource for vegetation that can be used to restore local streams that are in jeopardy. The developer avoids wasting the plants and has the opportunity to demonstrate to the public and prospective homebuyers that they are committed to green building and preservation.”

According to Rabourn, approximately 10 developers in King County volunteer their projects as plant salvage sites every year. In 2000, approximately 5,600 shrubs and plants valued at \$30,000 were donated to the program. Another \$35,000 worth of vegetation was donated to King County homeowners to use in natural landscaping projects.

Redmond Ridge, an Eastside planned community under development by Quadrant Corporation, has been heavily involved with the salvage program. Since construction began in the community more than two years ago, Redmond Ridge has donated more than 15,000 plants, trees and shrubs. Port Blakely Communities and Pacific Properties are also major participants with the salvage program in their own projects.

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