

Eagles, Trees, and Development in Yarrow Point

Many residents have expressed concern about how the Town of Yarrow Point accommodates new development while also protecting existing eagle nests in trees on private property. The intent of this newsletter is to provide general information regarding these topics; please call or email Town Hall if you'd like to discuss any of these topics in more depth.

1. Several trees on private properties in Yarrow Point are long-term residences for eagles.
2. Currently, eagle trees and habitat are regulated only by Federal laws.
3. Yarrow Point Town staff notified the buyers of a property with an eagle nest and a property across the street from that eagle nest, that the eagle nest existed, and informed them of Federal Eagle Regulations associated with eagle protections.
4. Both property owners followed the required regulations and worked with the US Department of Fish & Wildlife to secure the proper permits for developing their properties.
5. At this point, both property owners have completed their tree removal work in accordance with their required permits.

Culturally Significant Tree

During the tree removal process on one property, someone (not a Yarrow Point resident as far as we are aware) alerted the Snoqualmie Tribe that the Town had authorized the removal of a Culturally Modified Tree ("CMT"). The Town was not aware of the CMT until the Tribe contacted the Town and informed the Town of the status of the CMT.

CMT designations are given by the Tribe and State and obligate the owner of the land under the tree to undertake additional permit requirements prior to removing the tree. Given that the tree at issue is located on private property, this issue only involves the property owner, Tribe and State. The Town is not involved in any aspect of the CMT designation or permitting process for CMT trees on private property.

Updating our Tree Code

The recent removal of trees, all lawfully permitted under the current Town Tree Code, has generated concern among residents. The Town Council heard those concerns and tasked the Town's Planning Commission with reviewing and revising the current Town Tree Code. All meetings of the Town Council and Planning Commission are open to the public, and you can find out more information regarding each meeting at the Town's website. We welcome your comments because your input can inform the outcome.

I also encourage you to talk with neighbors, and your elected and appointed officials. If balancing the rights of private property owners and the public good were easy, I wouldn't be writing you this letter.

Best,
Mayor Katy Kinney Harris
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