

## What Can You Do?

### Lesson Description

Most people who purchase a small-acreage property have an idea of the eventual look and use they want for their property. Unfortunately, this vision is sometimes nebulous, incomplete, or unrealistic. In this lesson, you are encouraged to focus on the human, financial and community issues that may constrain your ability to achieve the goals you have set for your property. Additionally, there may be further constraints on your property in the form of federal, state, county, city and/or local regulations. These regulations can seriously limit or curtail the short-term and long-term goals you have for your property. It is important for you to understand the limits and constraints on your property in order to develop realistic and obtainable goals.

### Objectives

1. Gain an understanding of human and financial resources.
2. Gain an understanding of community issues.
3. Inventory the human and financial resources and community issues that affect your property.
4. Gain an understanding of the federal, state, county, city and/or local regulations that may affect use of your property.
5. Revise your goal assessment worksheets and physical inventory maps.
6. Inventory potential limitations on your property and create a working list of possible solutions, mitigations or compromises to minimize the effects of the federal, state, county, city and/or local regulations.
7. Maintain a list of contacts or referrals for various land-use issues.



## Module 1, Lesson 2

### What Can You Do?

#### Activity Sheets

1. Photodocumentation Information Sheet
2. Revised Goals Assessment Activity Sheet
3. Revised Physical Inventory Map
4. Identifying Constraints Activity Sheet

#### Supplemental Resources

Frequently Asked Questions: What Can You Do With Your Property?, WSU Clark County Extension  
Current Use Taxation, WSU Clark County Extension  
Water Rights Information, Washington State Department of Ecology



## Photodocumentation Information Sheet



The camera is one of the most powerful tools you have for tracking the condition of your property. Photos allow you to easily track the initial conditions on your property, or monitor improvements or changes that occur on your property.

### Reasons for keeping photo records:

**Personal satisfaction:** Implementing changes to your property can sometimes seem to be a never-ending battle. Taking photos helps you document your progress and keep your outlook positive.

**Track changes:** You will be able to track the progress of management changes you make. It can also be part of a plan to make and evaluate changes to your current plan.

**Show value-added features:** Photo records can be used to show improvements to your property, such as weed management. This can translate into higher property values later.

**Document property additions for insurance purposes:** This is self-explanatory.

**Permit application:** In applying for permits, photos help the process along. You are able to show current and past conditions to permitting agencies.

**Photo records are inexpensive:** This is a low-cost way to document your property and the improvements you've made.

### Some photo hints:

**Make sure your photos have dates and descriptions:** Many cameras have a date feature on them. You may also want to write a description on the back, i.e. "pasture with spotted knapweed infestation 1999 – before spraying." The next photo might be "pasture with weed infestation after spraying 2000." This involves a little time on your part, but it will be worth it in the long run.

**Store the photos in a photo album or some other easily accessible system:** A shoe box of photos can be an enormous source of frustration. If you use a digital camera, store the photos in a series of dated directories, or use photo album software. Many photo developers offer a set of prints and a CD of your photos. If you select this option, organize your printed photos into an album for easy viewing.

**Photo reference points:** If you are going to take comparison photos, it is a good idea to take each photo from the same permanent vantage point, such as a fencepost, a gate, the corner of a building, etc.. Photos taken from different reference points may not allow easy comparison. Establishing photo stations or reference points ensures consistent record-keeping. Note the date and the established photo point on the photo.

**Time:** The time of year and day the photo is taken can be important. Make sure you take photos at appropriate times to use for record-keeping or comparison.

*Start soon: Remember, the oldest picture you take is the one you take today.*



## Module 1, Lesson 2

### Financial and Human Resources Assessment Activity Sheet

#### Financial resources

How much can you realistically afford to spend on your property right now? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

During the next year? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

During the next five years? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Can your goals or improvements be completed in phases? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Can you set annual goals to accomplish your long-term goals over the next few years?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have adequate funds for ongoing yearly maintenance? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have money set aside for management emergencies (a failed septic system, for example)?

\_\_\_\_\_

What will property taxes and added insurance cost for any new structures?

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Human resources

How many hours per week **can** you put toward the labor required to achieve your property goals?

\_\_\_\_\_

How many hours per week do you **want** to put toward the labor required to achieve your property goals?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do your family members share your goals and aspirations for the property? \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours per week **can** they put toward the labor required to achieve your property goals?

\_\_\_\_\_

How many hours per week do they **want** to put toward the labor required for your property goals?

\_\_\_\_\_



**Revised Goals Assessment Activity Sheet, page 1 of 2**

**How have your goals changed?**

Now that you've learned some of the basic limitations that may affect your ability to reach your goals, how have they changed? Use the table below to rewrite your goals, resource list, and timeline or priority based on what you've learned to date. As you continue through this class series, it is normal for your goals to continue to change.

<b>Your Goals for Your Property</b>	<b>Resources Needed to Achieve Goals</b>	<b>Priority/ Time line</b>	<b>Date Finished</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			



## Module 1, Lesson 2

### Revised Goals Assessment Activity Sheet, page 2 of 2

Your Goals for Your Property	Resources Needed to Achieve Goals	Priority/Time line	Date Finished
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			



## Revised Physical Inventory Map – Proposed Changes Activity Sheet

*Sketch your goals or proposed changes for your property. This may be done as a series of maps showing the progressive stages of property development. Again, keep in mind the location of your neighbors' buildings and facilities in relation to your property.*













Legal description: \_\_\_\_\_

Total acres: \_\_\_\_\_ Types and numbers of animals: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of pastures: \_\_\_\_\_ Months animals are grazed: \_\_\_\_\_ Soil types: \_\_\_\_\_

Grasses present: \_\_\_\_\_

Weeds present: \_\_\_\_\_

-  Bare
-  Weeds
-  Trees
-  Fence
-  Gate
-  Water trough
-  Manure pile
-  Well
-  Septic
-  Stream
-  Pond
-  Marshy

## Module 1, Lesson 2

### Identifying Limitations Activity Sheet, page 1 of 4

Identify as many constraints as you can on your property. Identify the way each constraint limits the usability of your acreage. Identify any mitigation available to eliminate or limit the constraint. Remember this is an ongoing process. Your goals may change, or new ideas, mitigations, and techniques will also come to light as you complete the remaining Living on the Land modules.

1. Limitation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does this change or limit your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What can you do to adapt your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Limitation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does this change or limit your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What can you do to adapt your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





**Identifying Limitations Activity Sheet, page 2 of 4**

3. Limitation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does this change or limit your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What can you do to adapt your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Limitation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does this change or limit your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What can you do to adapt your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Module 1, Lesson 2

### Identifying Limitations Activity Sheet, page 3 of 4

5. Limitation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does this change or limit your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What can you do to adapt your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Limitation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does this change or limit your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What can you do to adapt your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Identifying Limitations Activity Sheet, page 4 of 4**

7. Limitation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does this change or limit your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What can you do to adapt your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Limitation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does this change or limit your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What can you do to adapt your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Module 1, Lesson 2

### What Can You Do? Glossary

**Buffer zone, buffer strip:** Neutral area that acts as a protective barrier separating two conflicting forces. An area that acts to minimize the impact of pollutants on the environment or public welfare. For example, a buffer zone is established between a composting facility and neighboring residents to minimize odor problems. A buffer strip is a grassed or planted zone that acts as a protective barrier between an area which experiences livestock grazing or other activities and a water body. Buffer strips can be streamside features to protect streams and streambanks or features built on slopes to slow water runoff velocities.

**Covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs):** A series of regulations set up by neighborhoods or housing developments that govern various construction features, such as setbacks, fence heights and types, house paint colors, etc.

**Easement:** A right to use the land of another for a specific purpose, such as for a right-of-way, access to water or utilities; an incorporeal interest in land.

**Footprint:** The amount and dimension of property a building actually sits on. The “footprint” the building makes on the property.

**Photo reference point:** Well-defined landmark from which photos are taken to document changes over time. The best photo reference points are permanent structures or features.

**Regulation:** A rule, law or order that regulates or limits an action.

**Right-to-farm ordinance:** This type of ordinance allows agricultural producers that were in business in their location prior to development to maintain approved farming and ranching practices without fear of lawsuits relating to the normal conduct of operations.

**Setback:** The amount of space local zoning regulations require between a lot line and a building line.

**Zoning:** Governmental regulations that determine how land may be used, the minimum size of lots, the height of structures, the setbacks required from the road and from property lines, and other features. The intent of zoning is to provide for orderly development and coordinated land uses.



## What Can You Do?

### Web sites for further information

Country Acres: A Guide to Buying and Managing Rural Property

<http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3309.pdf>

Living on a Few Acres, <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/news/fewacres06.pdf>

Siskiyou County, CA. 2005. The Code of the West...the Realities of Rural Living,

<https://www.co.siskiyou.ca.us/sites/default/files/docs/CodeoftheWest12-05.pdf>

Clark County Code <http://www.codepublishing.com/wa/clarkcounty.html>

