



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Cathy Wolfe  
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**RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP DEPARTMENT**

*Creating Solutions for Our Future*

Cliff Moore  
Director

**CULTIVATING AGRITOURISM IN THURSTON COUNTY**  
**June 2, 2012**

**AGRITOURISM OVERLAY DISTRICT OVERVIEW**

The Agritourism Overlay District (AOD), conceived by Commissioner Sandra Romero over two years ago, was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on March 13, 2012. The district is located primarily in south Thurston County and encompasses about 40% of the non-forestry zoned acreage in all of the rural county. It imposes no additional requirements, permits or review processes on agricultural uses within the affected area. To the contrary, the AOD, along with the county-wide Farm Stand Ordinance adopted by the Board on November 15, 2011, serves to relax the permitting requirements on agricultural uses, and even adds some new allowed uses. All this is in an effort to support the agricultural industry of Thurston County as a viable economic activity.

The Board has determined that the AOD ordinance be revisited in 18 to 24 months to determine if adjustments are warranted based on experience in implementation.

Following is a summary listing of allowed agritourism uses and review processes in the AOD, and as noted, outside the AOD, that are permitted under the two new ordinances. Most are required to be located on an active farm, with the notable exception of wineries, breweries, cider mills, distilleries, country inns and farmers markets.

**\*ALLOWED BY RIGHT WITH NO MINIMUM LOT SIZE**

1. Roadside farm stands up to 700 square feet. These are permitted in most of rural Thurston County.
2. Accessory commercial or retail sales of products with structures up to 700 square feet, in which 75% of the product is grown or produced in the Pacific Northwest.
3. Farmers Markets with no permanent structures.
4. Seasonal uses related to crop harvest, such as you pick fruits and vegetables, pumpkin patches, corn mazes and hay rides.

5. Short term events up to 10 days per year involving fewer than 100 individuals daily, such as weddings and similar gatherings, wine, beer and/or harvest festivals, and art exhibits.
6. Cottage food operations in a residence that produce and sell jam, jelly, preserves, fruit butters and other nonhazardous foods.
7. Direct sale of agricultural products grown or produced on site in most of rural Thurston County.
8. Farm tours, clinics, classes, seminars.
9. Other low intensity agritourism activities where no structure is involved, such as fee fishing, animal feeding, petting zoo, crop art installations, and an archery range.

*\* Means no land use permit required from the Resource Stewardship Department. However, permits may be required by other departments including Environmental Health, Public Works and Building.*

#### **\*STAFF REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

1. Farm stands up to 2,000 square feet in most of rural Thurston County.
2. Country Inns up to 4,500 square feet.
3. Agricultural home stays with up to eight guest units.
4. On-going group camping, reunions, corporate events, nature tourism, eco-tourism and culinary tourism.
5. Wineries, Breweries, Cider Mills and Distilleries up to 8,000 square feet.
6. Farmers Markets involving permanent structures.
7. Accessory commercial or retail sales with structures between 701 – 6,000 square feet, in which 75% of the product is grown or produced in the Pacific Northwest.
8. Short term events up to 21 days per year, such as weddings and similar gatherings, wine, beer and/or harvest festivals, and art exhibits.

*\* Some uses require a 10-acre minimum lot size, although a specified exception or a variance may allow proposals on smaller parcels.*

#### **HEARING EXAMINER REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

1. Farm stands up to 3,000 square feet in most of rural Thurston County.
2. Country Inns between 4,500 – 8,000 square feet.
3. Wineries, Breweries, Cider Mills and Distilleries between 8,001 – 20,000 square feet.
4. Accessory commercial or retail sales in structures over 6,000 square feet, in which 75% of the product is grown or produced in the Pacific Northwest.
5. Short term events over 21 days per year, such as weddings and similar gatherings, wine, beer and/or harvest festivals, and art exhibits.