

Whatcom County Candidates

Candidate responses were not edited by Whatcom Watch.

Candidates were asked to keep their answers to 100 words or less.

Candidates reviewed their answers in the layout before the paper was sent to the printer.

Background: Fossil fuel projects (e.g., oil refineries, liquid natural gas transport facilities, movement of crude oil by rail) are attracting national attention because of spills, explosions, and other catastrophic events related to the transport and processing of these substances, as well as implications for atmospheric carbon dioxide. Preliminary data from Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii indicate that during May 2013 atmospheric CO₂ reached 399.76 parts per million. Most climate experts agree that 350 ppm or lower is the value that must be maintained to prevent catastrophic global warming.

Background: This year the Growth Management Hearings Board determined that the county is failing to protect the quantity of water available in rural areas. Agricultural activities are the primary source of Whatcom County water contamination, yet many farmers feel that environmental regulations are too costly and should be relaxed.

Background: Whatcom County has been found multiple times out of compliance with the Growth Management Act by the Growth Management Hearings Board. In 2013, the county failed to provide a variety of rural densities, failed to provide required protection for Lake Whatcom, did not establish rural boundaries, and created internal inconsistency regarding water transmission lines. Also, the County's rural element does not include measures to protect the rural character because they do not protect surface water and groundwater. The County Council, rather than spending money to bring the county into compliance, has chosen to spend taxpayer money to challenge these decisions in court.

What values and thinking would you apply to decisions relating to existing and proposed fossil fuel projects in Whatcom County?

What solutions would you favor to address these problems?

If you are elected, what efforts will you make during your term to resolve the long-standing problems of Whatcom County remaining out of compliance with the Growth Management Act?

Whatcom County Council — At-Large



Rud Browne

(360) 318-5220
rud@voterudbrowne.com

I built my life and career around caring for our environment. I founded Ryzex, a computer recycling and reuse company. Ryzex employed 360 people, 140 in Whatcom County. I have a proven record of providing family wage jobs with benefits while protecting our environment. I will bring that experience to the County Council. Whatcom County has a lot of opportunity to create jobs in eco-friendly areas such as tourism and high-technology. I believe we can have both a prosperous economy and healthy environment or we will have neither.

I've heard anecdotal stories of farmers being blamed for contaminates that actually don't originate from their farms. At the same time I have heard of fisherman who can't make a living because the shellfish beds are contaminated from agricultural run-off. I would focus on (a) education, (b) making sure the rules are easy to understand and follow, (c) rewarding and recognizing farmers that do the right thing, and (d) as a last resort I would penalize those that knowingly ignore their responsibilities to people who are downstream from their pollution.

We overlook how our lack of compliance with the GMA negatively affects everyone's property values. We must resolve the issue. There are a lot of opportunities to create a collaborative, rather than contentious, approach to the GMA. The time and effort spent to combat the GMA would be better spent finding ways to achieve compliance even if this means that the community has to step up and help the few property owners that have received unequal treatment under the GMA. In the end, everyone wants the same thing — a healthy and prosperous Whatcom County.



Bill Knutzen

(360) 410-2000
bill@knutzenforcouncil.com

Vigilance must be our primary approach to these projects. Whatcom County is in a unique position to serve as a watchdog on major fossil fuel facilities and I believe we have robust laws in place to guard against spills and explosions. My greatest concern is ensuring we enforce them. Increasing CO₂ emissions must continue to be addressed as a global effort and I support the efforts we have already made to reduce our local government's emissions.

The Board decision basically states that Whatcom does not have enough water to farm, work, and live at our current capacity. I believe the real issue is not that we have a water shortage; it's that we haven't come together in a collaborative fashion to quantify how much water each community in Whatcom needs. Regarding water quality, the problem is not whether there are too many or too few regulations; the problem is that farmers have not been involved in the rule-making process. This is why I first ran for office and my re-election to the Council is so important.

The problem we face with the Growth Management Hearing Board is that we have not been able to reach collaborative solutions within Whatcom County to the issues it raises. This issue has been compounded by interest groups bringing the issue outside the County to the state level through lawsuits rather than making the tough decisions locally to keep Whatcom green and farming. There are solutions to this problem and the solutions need to come from Whatcom, not outside groups.

Whatcom County Council — District 1, Position A



Barry Buchanan

(360) 224-4330
barrybuchanan46@aol.

The first value I would apply is focused on the global impacts of climate change and fossil fuels. I would also be looking at regional and local transportation impacts and potential costs to Whatcom County residents for mitigation. The third aspect would be economic viability with both the domestic and export market for some fossil fuels in decline.

All water users in Whatcom County need to recognize the responsibility for doing their part to protect both the quantity and quality of our water. We need to work to make sure all users are educated on the best practices with regard to their particular applications and use. Communication and leadership is the key to resolve our water rights issue. We must reach compromise.

Our Growth Management Act (GMA) is a great tool in protecting the character of our state and county. Blatantly ignoring the principles of the GMA and choosing to waste taxpayer money on litigation as the current council majority has done is irresponsible. I would work hard to make sure Whatcom County comes into compliance with the GMA. We have too much to lose here in Whatcom County. We need to reach compromises that can accommodate all stakeholders.

Kathy Kershner

(360) 220-7535
Advocations@comcast.net

Kathy Kershner declined to respond to candidate questions.

Whatcom County Candidates

Candidate responses were not edited by Whatcom Watch.

Candidates were asked to keep their answers to 100 words or less.

Candidates reviewed their answers in the layout before the paper was sent to the printer.

Background: Fossil fuel projects (e.g., oil refineries, liquid natural gas transport facilities, movement of crude oil by rail) are attracting national attention because of spills, explosions, and other catastrophic events related to the transport and processing of these substances, as well as implications for atmospheric carbon dioxide. Preliminary data from Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii indicate that during May 2013 atmospheric CO2 reached 399.76 parts per million. Most climate experts agree that 350 ppm or lower is the value that must be maintained to prevent catastrophic global warming.

What values and thinking would you apply to decisions relating to existing and proposed fossil fuel projects in Whatcom County?

Background: This year the Growth Management Hearings Board determined that the county is failing to protect the quantity of water available in rural areas. Agricultural activities are the primary source of Whatcom County water contamination, yet many farmers feel that environmental regulations are too costly and should be relaxed.

What solutions would you favor to address these problems?

Background: Whatcom County has been found multiple times out of compliance with the Growth Management Act by the Growth Management Hearings Board. In 2013, the county failed to provide a variety of rural densities, failed to provide required protection for Lake Whatcom, did not establish rural boundaries, and created internal inconsistency regarding water transmission lines. Also, the County's rural element does not include measures to protect the rural character because they do not protect surface water and groundwater. The County Council, rather than spending money to bring the county into compliance, has chosen to spend taxpayer money to challenge these decisions in court.

If you are elected, what efforts will you make during your term to resolve the long-standing problems of Whatcom County remaining out of compliance with the Growth Management Act?

Whatcom County Council — District 2, Position A



Ken Mann

(360) 483-6020
ken@votekenn.com

I accept the science of climate change and we must incorporate that knowledge into our long-range planning. Denial will leave us unprepared for potentially disastrous environmental and economic consequences. As a nation, we need to develop a coherent global strategy. As a County, we must reduce our use of fossil fuels. Whatcom County will not prevent climate change unilaterally. I would not consider shutting down existing companies that operate legally and provide some of the best jobs in Whatcom County. It is a priority to support local jobs — including the vitally important, existing, industrial neighbors around Cherry Point.

Whatcom County is working to develop a "water budget" to establish exactly how much water is needed throughout the year by different user groups, including Salmon and First Nations. The water budget will be the starting point of negotiations. On the topic of water quality, nobody has the right to pollute — not even farmers. We are aware of several pollution pathways from different sources and are working to address all of them. From livestock, to buffers, to failing septic systems, to manure, we have to ensure that nobody infringes on anybody else's right to clean, safe, water.

When I am RE-elected, I will continue to argue against these foolish land-use decisions by the Council majority. At every stage, I have voted against litigation and against implementing these illegal land-use rules. This has been a source of tremendous frustration and a waste of County resources — not to mention, poor land use planning! I will work vigorously to manage growth so that we avoid sprawl, conserve natural resources, and use existing infrastructure. My ability to influence changes on this issue will depend on who else is elected this November.

Ben Elenbaas

(360) 595-4130
ben@elenbaasforcouncil.com

Ben Elenbaas replied to an email inquiring if he was going to respond to the questions with a question about the deadline. He was told the deadline was past and to please send the answers as soon as possible. He did not send the answers in the eight days he had to respond before the paper went to the printer.

Whatcom County Council — District 3, Position A



Carl Weimer

(360) 223-2636
electcarl@voteweimer.com

Whatcom County sits at the crossroads of all sorts of fossil fuel transportation including trains, pipelines, and tankers for everything from crude oil to natural gas to coal. The county government's authority on these transportation issues has been quite limited by the federal government, but we need to make sure we are using our planning, zoning and permitting authority as much as possible to protect people and the environment along these transportation corridors. I also believe we need to do whatever we can to encourage the transition from these types of climate changing fuels to more sustainable renewable energy sources.

The large dairies are already under careful regulations and for the most part are doing a good job. The bigger problem are the hundreds of less regulated beef cattle and "hobby farm" operations where people are raising a few cows or horses or llamas. The County already has highly praised model shoreline and critical area ordinances. These rules give these small farmers much flexibility and assistance through farm planning to meet the water quality requirements, but the County needs to provide clear outreach about these requirements, and ongoing enforcement to make sure people are doing what is needed and required.

I have not supported the Council majority's waste of taxpayer money on outside lawyers challenging the legal findings of the Growth Management Hearings Board. We should be doing all we can to transfer undeveloped housing potential out of rural areas, where services are much more expensive, and into our cities. We also need to take the over-allocation of water in many parts in the county into consideration before we allow more water use for additional development. This over-allocation robs water from our agricultural needs and salmon, putting the short-term profit of a few landowners over the broader long-term community benefits.

Michelle Luke

(954) 220-7358
michelle@votemichelleluke.com

Michelle Luke replied to an email inquiring if she was going to respond to the questions with the following. "In an effort to be more effective and efficient, with the volume of questionnaires addressing the same issues I will be posting questions and answers on my web site. I will include your questions. Thank you."

<p>ROFMANN BUILDERS</p>	<p>Rofkar & Heitmann Company</p>
<p>Rofmann, Inc. P.O. Box 5792, Bellingham, WA 98227 (360) 961-8963 www.rofmann.com</p>	<p>Additions Remodel ROFMANN 018C3</p>

We love your Volvo as much as you do

Our services include diagnosis, repairs, part sales and pre-purchase inspections. We sell late model and vintage pre-owned Volvos. Internet cafe and barista on site. Located just four miles east of Bellingham in beautiful Whatcom County. Locally owned and environmentally conscious. Taking care of you and your Volvo since 1986.

**RAINBOW
AUTO
SERVICE
& SALES**

Your VOLVO is my specialty!

Phone 360.734.6117
Monday thru Thursday 8 am to 6 pm.
RainbowAutoService.com