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## COMMUNITY PLANNING

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### SURFACE MINING OVERLAY OUTLINE

April 3, 2014

**Counties must identify and classify mineral resource lands (MRL) from which extraction of minerals occurs or can be anticipated.**

- A. **Classification Criteria** – Counties must classify MRL based on:
- (1) Geologic factors;
  - (2) Environmental factors;
  - (3) Economic factors;
  - (4) Existing land uses; and
  - (5) Land ownership.
- B. **Designation Guidelines.**
- (1) Counties must approach designation as a county-wide or regional process, except for owner-initiated requests.
  - (2) Counties must designate known mineral deposits so that access to mineral resources is not knowingly precluded.
  - (3) Counties must consider that mining may be a temporary use at any given mine and that other land uses can occur on the mine site after mining is completed.
- C. **Definitions.**
- (1) **Mineral Resource Lands (MRL)** means lands primarily devoted to the extraction of minerals or that have known or potential long-term commercial significance for extraction of minerals.
  - (2) **Long-Term Commercial Significance (LTCS)** includes the growing capacity, productivity and soil composition of the land for long-term commercial production, in consideration with the land's proximity to a population area, and the possibility of more intense uses of land.
  - (3) **Precluding Incompatible Uses and Development** does not mean a prohibition of all uses or development. It means governing changes in land uses, new activities, or development that could adversely affect natural resource lands or critical areas.
  - (4) **Natural Resource Lands** means agricultural, forest and mineral resource lands which have long-term commercial significance.

## **Certain factors must be considered and evaluated in designating MRL.**

### **A. Classification Criteria.**

- (1) County should classify lands with potential LTCS for extracting, at least, sand, gravel and other valuable metallic substances; other materials may be included.
- (2) Counties should use maps and other information on mineral resources from DNR, USGS and any other relevant information from property owners.
- (3) Classifying MRL should be based on geology and distance to market, including:
  - a) Physical and topographical characteristics of the mineral resource site, including, depth and quantity of resource and depth of overburden;
  - b) Physical properties of the resource, including quality and type;
  - c) Projected life of the resource;
  - d) Resource availability in the region; and
  - e) Accessibility and proximity to the point of use or market.
- (4) Other factors to consider should include:
  - a) The ability to access needed minerals may be lost if suitable MRL are not classified and designated;
  - b) The effects of proximity to population areas and the possibility of more intense uses of the land in both the short and long-term, including availability of public utilities, public roads, other public services, zoning, and parcel sizes.
  - c) Energy costs of transporting materials.

### **B. Designation Guidelines.**

- (1) The county should determine if adequate mineral resources are available for projected needs from currently designated MRL.
- (2) Counties may consult with WSDOT and other regional planning organizations to determine future mineral resource needs for large transportation projects planned in their area.

### **C. Other considerations.**

- (1) One type of natural resource land category may overlap another type. If multiple natural resource land designations apply, the County should examine criteria to determine which has the greatest LTCS and that use should be assigned to the lands being designated.

- (2) If both critical area and natural resource land use designations apply to given land, both or all designations must be made.
- (3) Counties should allow existing and ongoing resource management operations that have long-term commercial significance (LTCS) to continue. Future operations or expansion of existing operations should be done in consideration of protecting critical areas, particularly where protection is needed to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries.
- (4) Priority land use for mineral extraction should be retained for all MRL.