

**Agenda**  
**Board of Wahkiakum County Commissioners**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**December 6, 2011**  
**9:30 a.m.**

**Next Resolution No. 166-11**  
**Next Ordinance No. 152-11**

9:30 a.m. **Call to Order**  
9:31 a.m. **Flag Salute**  
9:32 a.m. **Approval of Regular Meeting Agenda**

---

9:33 a.m. **Consent Agenda**

*All matters listed within the Consent Agenda have been distributed to each member of the Board of Wahkiakum County Commissioners for reading and study, are considered routine, and will be enacted by one motion of the Board with no separate discussion. If separate discussion is desired, that item may be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda by request.*

- A. Minutes of November 22, 2011 Regular Meeting
- B. Resolution No. 163-11. A resolution authorizing the expenditure of funds from the county properties cumulative reserve fund for the payment of vouchers properly chargeable to said fund in the amount of \$1,408.79
- C. Resolution No. 164-11. A resolution authorizing the expenditure of funds from the interlocal cooperation cumulative reserve fund for the payment of vouchers properly chargeable to said fund in the amount of \$2,186.80
- D. Voucher Approval - \$55,268.21

---

9:35 a.m. **Public Comment** (*public comment is limited to three minutes per person*)

**Review Commissioners' Calendars**

9:40 a.m. **New Business**

- 1. Nicole Emery, LMT- Proposal in Courthouse Chair Massage Therapy (discussion)
- 2. Liquor License Application - Logan Britt Enterprises 1377 W SR4, Skamokawa (object/not object)
- 3. Funding for E. Birnie Slough Property (discussion/action) ~ Chuck Beyer

9:50 a.m. **Auditor**

- 1. Memorandum of Understanding - Deputy Auditor II (action)
- 2. Resolution No. 165-11 - Leave Buy-Out - Jeff Fithen (action)

10:00 a.m. **Assessor ~ Bill Coons**

- 1. REET Budget for Assessor and Treasurer Offices

10:10 a.m. **Sheriff**

- 1. Memorandum of Understanding - Dept. of Emergency Management Position (action)
- 2. Deputy Sheriff Pay Class (action)

10:20 a.m.      **Dept. of Emergency Management ~ Beau Renfro**

1. Region IV Homeland Security Grant (action)
2. Purchase of Sand Bags (action)

10:30 a.m.      **Public Works ~ Pete Ringen**

1. Engineering and Traffic Investigation – Elochoman Valley Road (action)
2. Notice for Public Hearing for Reduction of Speed Limit on Elochoman Valley Road (action)

**Executive Session ~ Potential Litigation**

*Prosecuting Attorney Dan Bigelow, Public Works Director Pete Ringen*

**Executive Session ~ Potential Litigation**

*Prosecuting Attorney Dan Bigelow*

Executive Session

(The Board may recess into Executive Session to consider employment or dismissal of personnel, to review the performance of a public employee, to consult with legal counsel, to consider the position to be taken in collective bargaining, to consider acquisition or sale of real estate, or other matters per RCW 42.30.110)

**Commissioners Reports**

**Other/Unfinished Business**

1. Discussions and Adoption 2012 Budget

**Adjournment**

Complete copies of the current Board of Commissioners Meeting agenda packets can be viewed at the Board of Commissioners Office.

This meeting is accessible to persons with disabilities. Please call 360-795-8048 if you require special accommodations to participate in this meeting.



NOTICE OF LIQUOR LICENSE APPLICATION

RETURN TO: WASHINGTON STATE LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD
License Division - 3000 Pacific, P.O. Box 43075
Olympia, WA 98504-3075
Customer Service: (360) 664-1600
Fax: (360) 753-2710
Website: www.liq.wa.gov

TO: WAHKIAKUM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
RE: NEW APPLICATION

DATE: 11/14/11

UBI: 603-157-253-001-0001

License: 408683 - 1K County: 35
Tradename: LOGAN BRITT ENTERPRISES
Loc Addr: 1377 W STATE ROUTE 4
SKAMOKAWA WA 98647-9740

APPLICANTS:
BRITT, LOGAN SEBASTIAN
1980-04-16

Mail Addr: 112 HARRISON AVE
CENTRALIA WA 98531-1322

Phone No.: 360-736-2828 LOGAN BRITT

Privileges Applied For:
SPIRITS/BR/WN REST LOUNGE +

As required by RCW 66.24.010(8), the Liquor Control Board is notifying you that the above has applied for a liquor license. You have 20 days from the date of this notice to give your input on this application. If we do not receive this notice back within 20 days, we will assume you have no objection to the issuance of the license. If you need additional time to respond, you must submit a written request for an extension of up to 20 days, with the reason(s) you need more time. If you need information on SSN, contact our CHRI Desk at (360) 664-1724.

- 1. Do you approve of applicant ?
2. Do you approve of location ?
3. If you disapprove and the Board contemplates issuing a license, do you wish to request an adjudicative hearing before final action is taken?
4. If you disapprove, per RCW 66.24.010(8) you MUST attach a letter to the Board detailing the reason(s) for the objection and a statement of all facts on which your objection(s) are based.

DATE SIGNATURE OF MAYOR, CITY MANAGER, COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OR DESIGNEE

**Board of Wahkiakum County Commissioners**

**Date: December 1, 2011**

**By: Charles J. Beyer**

---

**Issue:**

Funding for 320 E. Birnie Slough property and determine what fund will pay for electricity and water. Determine who is responsible for the maintenance of the property.

---

**Background Information:**

Wahkiakum County Sheriff and Prosecuting Attorney confiscated the property and residence at 320 E. Birnie Slough through legal proceedings. The property is now owned by Wahkiakum County. Power is required for the residence to keep a minimal level of heat and adequate function of the Engineered Septic System.

---

**Recommendation:**

None

---

**Alternatives:**

None

---

**Financial Impact:**

One time \$20.00 reconnect fee for water and electricity.

Monthly Electricity determined by use  
Water monthly basic of \$36.09.

---

**Funds Available:**

None until sale of property

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**THIS AGREEMENT** is entered into between Wahkiakum County, hereinafter known as the County, and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, hereinafter known as the Union.

It is the purpose of this Agreement to amend the 2010 Working Agreement to provide for the transfer of the present Deputy Treasurer II to the position of Deputy Auditor II with certain benefits commensurate with her experience.

Therefore the County and the Union agree as follows:

I. Lateral Transfer

The present Deputy Treasurer II may transfer to the position of Deputy Auditor II commencing at pay step 5. This allows the candidate to remain at her current rate of pay.

II. Non-Precedent-Setting

This action is based on non-recurring factors and shall not be considered as precedent or for the purpose of calculating past practices by either party in any subsequent dealings.

III. Effective Date

Time being of the essence in this matter, this agreement shall take effect immediately upon last signature thereon.


**DATED this** \_\_\_\_ day of November, 2011.

**FOR THE UNION:**

**FOR THE COUNTY:**

  
Katie Whittier, Staff Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa M. Marsyla, Chairman

  
Diana Plampin, Union President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dan L. Cothren, Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Blair H. Brady, Commissioner

# Board of Wahkiakum County Commissioners

Date: 6 December 2011

By: Bill Coons

---

## Issue:

**Modify the budget of the REET Electronic Technology Fund (171) to allow:**

- 1) The Assessor to hire a part time, limited duration Deputy Assessor I who will input property characteristics required for the operation of an annual revaluation system for property tax valuation and,**
- 2) The Treasurer to add additional hours to the Foreclosure Deputy Treasurer position in order to operate an electronic processing and reporting system for real estate excise tax affidavits.**

---

## Background Information:

See the attached opinion from the Prosecuting Attorney.

The Assessor estimates that the effort to input the data required for each parcel (on at least 6 different screens and scanning 6 to 10 documents) will consume at least 0.5 hours (DOR personnel familiar with our paper records estimate at least 1 hour) per parcel. At 89.5 hours per month it will take approximately 24 months to input data for 4,351 taxable real property parcels.

The Treasurer wishes to add 223 hours at \$15.84/hour to the hours budgeted for the Foreclosure Deputy Treasurer in Current Expense - Treasurer (001.290) and in Treasurer's O & M (170). This time (approximately 18.6 hours per month) will be used to process REETs.

---

## Recommendation: Within REET Electronic Technology Fund (171):

**Transfer \$14,631 from Professional Fees to Deputy Assessor I Limited Duration.**

**Transfer \$3,532 from Professional Fees to Foreclosure Deputy Treasurer/REET.**

**Transfer \$2,906 from Professional Fees to Personnel Benefits (@16%, \$2,341 for Assessor and \$565 for Treasurer).**

**Balance remaining in Professional Fees will be \$36,931 (was \$58,000) after a total transfer of \$21,069.**

---

## Alternatives:

- 1) Leave Budget as is. This will result in the Assessor being unable to perform Annual Revaluation in 2014 and additional burden on the Treasurer's staff.

---

## Financial Impact:

None. These funds are already in hand and can not be allocated to any other purpose.

---

## Funds Available:

The REET Electronic Tech Fund has received a total of \$120,000 from 2005 through 2010. Approximately \$17,300 has been spent in 2010. The Assessor & Treasurer have been charging the True Automation SW maintenance fees among other items in 2011. The current balance is \$88,500.

## Bill Coons

---

**From:** Daniel Bigelow [DBigelow@wapa-sep.wa.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 27, 2011 10:11 PM  
**To:** Bill Coons  
**Subject:** Re: Help Me Get \$

The question before me has to do with the five-dollar fee on "all transactions required by this chapter [RCW 82.45]."

Pursuant to RCW 82.45.180(4), the treasurer presently collects five dollars on each real estate transaction and sends the money to the state, which puts the money in the annual property revaluation grant account. (That's where the fee will go until 2014.)

But up until June 30, 2010, that five-dollar fee was distributed monthly to the various counties by a formula set in RCW 82.45.180(3)(b), and county treasurers (including ours) put the money into the "Real Estate Excise Tax Electronic Technology Fund" pursuant to RCW 82.45.180(3)(c). According to the same subsection, the money in that account has to be spent "to make the system compatible with the automated real estate excise tax system developed by the department and compatible with the processes used in the offices of the county assessor and county auditor." Id.

By that same law, once "the county treasurer is utilizing an electronic processing and reporting system for real estate excise tax affidavits compatible with the department and compatible with the processes used in the offices of the county assessor and county auditor" (or in 2015 even if the treasurer hasn't caught up), that money - the money collected before June 30, 2010 that's in our REET Elec-Tech Fund - "reverts to the special real estate and property tax administration assistance account in accordance with subsection 5(c) of this section." Id.

That section - RCW 82.45.180(5)(c) - allows (and requires) such funds to be used for: "(i) Maintenance and operation of an annual revaluation system for property tax valuation; and (ii) Maintenance and operation of an electronic processing and reporting system for real estate excise tax affidavits."

That means the commission can allocate any funds collected before June 30, 2010, that remain in our Real Estate Excise Tax Electronic Technology Fund, to operating "an annual revaluation system."

There is nothing anywhere in chapter 82.45 requiring that the system be technological. In fact, by calling some things "electronic systems" throughout the chapter and not using the word "electronic" in RCW 82.45.180(5)(c), the legislature is being pretty explicit that they're not limiting the system to electronics. I see no reason the money could not be allocated towards any organized set of activities that has the effect of annually revaluating real estate.

Conclusion:

The essential elements of this opinion are:

1. We're only talking about money that was collected from the \$5 real estate transaction fee and distributed to counties before June 30, 2010. Money collected after that date is going into another fund and being used for grants.
2. For that money to be available right now for anything but systems interoperability between the treasurer, assessor, and auditor, that goal already has to have been achieved: the treasurer must already be "utilizing an electronic processing and

reporting system for real estate excise tax affidavits compatible with the department and compatible with the processes used in the offices of the county assessor and county auditor.”

3. If that goal has been achieved, the remaining money may, at the Board’s discretion, be used for ““(i) Maintenance and operation of an annual revaluation system for property tax valuation; and (ii) Maintenance and operation of an electronic processing and reporting system for real estate excise tax affidavits.” It would be like any other dedicated fund: the Board would decide how much to devote to which purpose and for how long, within the limits provided by law.

4. I don’t know how much money that is, but it does appear that however much it is can be spent on personnel involved in “an annual revaluation system for property tax valuation.”

I hope this has been useful. If you require further elaboration, please contact me with questions.

>>> On 10/27/2011 at 4:48 PM, in message  
<3F346226FDE6474CAC3720840D08593C011581C3@wahk5.co.wahkiakum.wa.us>,  
"Bill  
Coons" <coonsb@co.wahkiakum.wa.us> wrote:  
> My question is: given that County Resolution 098-05 establishes the  
REET  
> ET Fund to receive \$ pursuant to RCW 82.45.180.  
>  
> And RCW 82.45.180 (2)(c) provides that remaining funds in the REET  
ET  
> Fund upon the earlier of 7/1/2015 or at such time the county  
treasurer  
> is utilizing an electronic processing and... revert to the Special RE  
&  
> PTAA Account in accordance with subsection (5)(c).  
>  
> And subsection (5)(c) provides that funds in the Special RE & PTAA  
> Account be used for (i) M&O of an annual revaluation system... ;and  
(ii)  
> M&O of an electronic processing and reporting system...  
>  
>  
>  
> Then could the Treasurer and Assessor pay for staff to operate the  
> aforementioned systems out of this Special RE & PTAA Account?  
>  
>  
>  
> Please let me know, if possible, by 10AM tomorrow. If not then,  
ASAP.  
>  
>  
>  
> Thanks a \$1M.  
>  
>  
>  
> Bill Coons  
>

# Board of Wahkiakum County Commissioners

Date: 11/30/11  
By: Sheriff Dearmore

---

**Issue:**

**Hiring Lateral Deputy at Class 7, step 3**

---

**Background Information:**

Lat. Deputy has 7 yrs. Experience in L.E. and meets all the training/pre-requisites for this level.

---

**Recommendation:**

---

**Alternatives:**

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

---

**Financial Impact: Wage at \$3650/mo.**

---

**Funds Available:**

# Board of Wahkiakum County Commissioners

## Agenda

Meeting Date: 12/6/2011\_\_\_\_\_

Department/Staff Member Attending: Beau Renfro\_\_\_\_\_

**Agenda Subject: Review and Acceptance of the Region IV Homeland Security Grant # E11-108 in the amount of \$38,000.00**

---

### Background Summary:

This grant is a yearly grant will help pay for the DEM position and associated expenses.

---

### Financial Impact: *(include fund number and balance in fund)*

This is a 100% grant there is no match needed.

---

### Alternatives:

- 1) You could not accept this grant.
- 2)

---

### Recommended Action:

Approve/Adopt                       Schedule Public Hearing/Meeting  
 Information/Discussion             Continue Public Hearing/Meeting  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

---

### SUGGESTED MOTION:

To approve for the chair signature on the Region IV Homeland Security Grant contract # E11-108 in the amount of \$38,000.00.

---

*(BELOW TO BE COMPLETED BY CLERK OF BOARD)*

### BOCC ACTION:

Approved                       Denied                       Tabled/Deferred/No Action Taken  
 Continued to Date: \_\_\_\_\_                       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

REGION IV  
 WASHINGTON STATE OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
 CLARK REGIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICES AGENCY  
**STATE HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM – CFDA# 97.067**

***GRANT AWARD CONDITIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS***

---

PROGRAM NAME:	FFY10 SHSGP	GRANT NO:	#E11-108
SUB - GRANTEE:	Wahkiakum County Sheriff's Office PO Box 65	FY 2010 AWARD:	\$38,000.
ADDRESS:	Cathlamet, WA 98612	AWARD PERIOD:	Sept 30 <sup>th</sup> 2011 – Nov 30, 2012
PROGRAM CONTACT:	Sheriff John Dearmore	TELEPHONE:	(360) 795-3242
		FAX:	()
FISCAL CONTACT:	Beau Renfro	TELEPHONE:	(360) 751-8999

---

**BUDGET**

**REVENUE**

Federal Grant Funds \$1,258,178.

**TOTAL REVENUE: \$1,258,178**

**EXPENDITURES**

Administration	\$
Citizen Corps Program	\$
Exercises	\$
<b>Planning</b>	<b>\$38,000.</b>
Training	\$

EQUIPMENT PROGRAM

CBRNE Incident Response	\$
CBRNE Logistic Support	\$
CBRNE Reference Materials	\$
CBRNE Search & Rescue	\$
Decontamination	\$
Detection - TIC	\$
Explosive Devise	\$
Interoperable Communications	\$
Medical Supplies & Pharmaceuticals	\$
Personal Protective	\$
Terrorism Incident Prevention	\$



# Board of Wahkiakum County Commissioners

Date: 12/06/11

By: Pete Ringen, PWD/County Engineer

---

**Issue:** Present engineering and traffic investigation, Elochoman Valley Road, and set hearing date for ordinance.

---

**Background Information :**

In response to citizen request, the Board ordered an engineering and traffic investigation of Elochoman Valley Road between SR-4 and Family Camp Road at milepost 5.48. This process is consistent with RCW 46.61.415.

The investigation is now complete, and includes recommendations. The most significant recommendation is a reduction in the speed limit from 50 miles per hour to 45 miles per hour along the study segment. If the Board chooses to act on this recommendation, a public hearing must be held, after which an ordinance adjusting the speed limit may be adopted by the Board.

---

**Recommendation:**

Approve Notice of Hearing for reduction in Speed Limit on Elochoman Valley Road from 50 miles per hour to 45 miles per hour between SR-4 and Family Camp Road.

---

**Alternatives:**

- 1) Take no action
- 2) Set Hearing date

---

**Financial Impact:**

The cost of purchasing and installing new signs is estimated to be about \$2,000.00, including adding slippery condition advisory signs.

---

**Funds Available:**

There are sufficient funds in the Road Fund to pay for the new signs and road crew labor/equipment time.

***ENGINEERING AND TRAFFIC  
INVESTIGATION***

***ELOCHOMAN VALLEY ROAD***

***FAMILY CAMP ROAD TO SR 4***

***December, 2011***

***Submitted to:***

***Wahkiakum County***

***Board of County Commissioners***

***Submitted by:***

***Pete Ringen, P.E., County Engineer***

## **Background:**

On October 18, 2011, the Wahkiakum County Commissioners ordered an Engineering and Traffic investigation of Elochoman Valley Road, between SR 4 and Family Camp Road, consistent with RCW 46.61.415.

Elochoman Valley Road runs northeasterly from its intersection with SR 4 just west of Cathlamet, and is designated under the federal functional classification system as a collector route. It is also designated as a T3 freight and goods route under the study authorized by the State legislature in the year 2000. As a T3 collector route, it carries 300,000 to 4 millions tons annually. There may be significant variation in this freight traffic from year to year, as timber harvest levels vary.

In September 1990, a road jurisdiction study was submitted to the State legislature recommending jurisdictional transfers of a number of routes from the State to local authority. Soon thereafter, SR 407, now known as Elochoman Valley Road, was transferred to Wahkiakum County by the State of Washington. The State retained maintenance responsibility for the Elochoman Bridge, also known as Kent's Bridge, on this route.

The road begins in the lower Elochoman River Valley, and traverses northeasterly through farmland and residential areas before entering forest lands. A large area of commercial forest lands is served by the road, with seasonally high volume of harvested timber products transported over its length. Over the past 20 years, increased residential subdivision development has occurred along the road, primarily in the section between Family Camp Road and SR 4. The road is a school bus route, and school buses stop at intervals along the study segment of the road. The existing posted speed limit on Elochoman Valley Road is 50 miles per hour, consistent with RCW 46.61.400.

## **Characteristics:**

The horizontal alignment varies from some relatively lengthy tangent sections to occasional curves. The more significant curves have advisory signs. The number of intersecting driveways and private roads in the study area is approximately 118, most field entrances are omitted from that number. The average is 21.5 road access locations per mile. Suburban road conditions exist when the number of driveways or street entrances on one side is ten or more per mile.

Elochoman Valley Road in the study section has crossed the threshold from rural to suburban conditions.

Elochoman Valley Road has operational striping controls for passing zones. These length of passing zones are calculated as the sum of 1) distance traveled during perception/reaction time 2) distance traveled while vehicle occupies the left lane 3) distance between the passing vehicle at the end of its maneuver and the opposing vehicle and 4) distance traversed by an opposing vehicle for two-thirds of the time the passing vehicle occupies the left lane. Elochoman Valley Road has no passing lanes under the terminology used in engineering for passing lane. A passing lane would be a third lane constructed for the purpose of allowing passing while traveling in lanes designed for travel in the same direction. The Elochoman Valley Road is a two-lane road throughout its length.

Elochoman Valley Road has an asphalt concrete surface, and varies in width from 30-feet including shoulder width at milepost 0.217, to 20-feet including shoulder at milepost 3.473. Shoulder width in the study segment varies from approximately 4-feet on each side of the travel lanes at milepost 0.217, to 0.5-feet on each side at milepost 3.473. In general, the first two miles have shoulders, and there are minimal shoulders beyond Kent's bridge.

Climate characteristics that may affect road conditions in the Cathlamet area of Elochoman Valley Road tend to range between that of the coastal city of Astoria, and the interior city of Portland, as measured at the airport. Data from the National Weather service indicates Astoria has a normal daily maximum temperature of 58.3 degrees Fahrenheit, and Portland has a normal daily maximum of 62.6 degrees. Normal daily minimum temperature for Astoria is 43.4 degrees and 44.5 degrees for Portland. The mean number of days with greater than 0.1 inch of snow, ice pellets or hail is 1.4 per year in Astoria, and 2.1 per year in Portland. The record low temperature for Astoria was 6 degrees Fahrenheit in December 1990, and the record low at the Portland Airport was -3 degrees in February 1950.



The shoulder width northerly of the bridge across the Elochoman River, known as Kent's Bridge, is more narrow than the road segment in a southerly direction toward SR 4.

The road climbs from the Elochoman River valley floor at an elevation just above sea level in a northeasterly direction to approximately 150 feet in elevation at Family Camp Road.

Some locations have topography contributing to a shadow effect on the road surface which reduces pavement drying and promotes ice formation in late fall, winter, and early spring.



Elochoman Valley Road, approx. milepost 1.25  
Note hillside to left, a source of winter shadow during the a.m.

Public intersecting roads in the study segment include Family Camp Road, Beaver Creek Road, and Foster Road. Of these intersecting roads, Beaver Creek Road has the highest traffic volume. Beaver Creek Road and Foster Road are federally classified collector routes, Family Camp Road, also known as C.Z. Camp Road or Crown Camp Road, is a local access road. Monroe Drive is a private road intersecting Elochoman Valley Road between Foster Road and Beaver Creek Road at approximate milepost 1.9.

Sight distance is typically evaluated for stopping sight distance and entering sight distance. Stopping sight distance comes into play for design of vertical curves and horizontal curves along a road. Entering sight distance can be a factor resulting in potential conflicts from turning movements at access points. Entering sight distance is typically evaluated in detail for intersecting roads at the time of their construction. Roadside vegetation management is an important

component of maintaining both stopping and entering sight distance. Locations where the entering sight distance or stopping sight distance is inadequate due to a sharp curve radius and roadside obstructions is often described as a "blind curve". The design stopping sight distance for a 50 mile per hour design speed is 425 feet as per the American Association of Highways and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guidelines for Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets. North of Beaver Creek Road, the road traffic volume drops off considerably, and the applicable criteria is AASHTO Guidelines for Geometric Design of Very Low-Volume Local Roads. The recommended design sight distance for very low-volume roads is 350 feet. The entering sight distance recommended by AASHTO for a stopped left-turning vehicle and a 50 mile per hour design speed is 405 feet. For low volume roads this recommendation drops to 255 feet.

Field measurements of stopping sight distance were taken using a Bushnell Yardage Pro range finder and a 1-foot high object. The method used is not precise, or in exact conformance with design criteria, however it provides a reasonably accurate estimation of sight distance availability.

The curve at approximate milepost 0.50 had a measured stopping sight distance of 252 feet on the northbound lane. This distance is less than the 425 feet recommended by AASHTO for a 50 mile per hour design speed. This available sight distance is consistent with a design speed of 35 miles per hour as per AASHTO. This curve has a curve warning advisory sign posted.



Limited sight distance at approximate milepost 5.03  
Elochoman Valley Road

The curve at approximate milepost 5.03 had a measured stopping sight distance of 246 feet in the northbound lane, which is less than the distance recommended by AASHTO for 50 mph design speed on low-volume roads of 350 feet. The available sight distance would be consistent with a 40 mile per hour design speed.

The curve at milepost 5.23 had a measured sight distance of 243 feet, which again falls short of the recommended sight distance for 50 mph design speed. It is nearly consistent with the recommended distance for a 40 mph design speed. This curve has curve advisory sign posted.

### **Accident History:**

There were zero recorded fatalities on the study segment of Elochoman Valley Road in the last ten years. Over a 10 year period there were twelve property damage and seven personal injury accidents recorded.

Within the study segment 63 % of the recorded accidents in the last 10 years were southerly of the intersection with Monroe Drive. 95 % of the recorded accidents were southerly of Beaver Creek Road. There was one recorded accident in the last 10 years between Beaver Creek Road and Family Camp Road. The included vicinity map points out the location of recorded accidents over the last 10 years.

The number of recorded accidents will not reflect total accidents, as accidents which do not reach the monetary damage threshold or do not involve injury, will not be included in the recorded accident data base. The Wahkiakum County Sheriff's office reports 40 accident responses on Elochoman Valley Road in the last 5 years. Level of damage to a vehicle or property must be at least \$750.00 for the accident to be a reportable accident under the Washington State Patrol system. For some responses, the vehicle may have simply slid from the road surface, and is no longer at the scene when a deputy arrives.

From the accident data, it appears a pavement condition of ice is a contributing factor to many accidents. At such times ice is prevalent, vehicles involved in accidents may have been traveling at a speed too fast for conditions.

### **Speed Studies:**

Traffic speed data was collected by Public Works during the period beginning October 19 and ending October 27, 2011. The data was collected at four locations, mile 0.380, mile 1.001, mile 2.015, and mile 5.026, as measured from the intersection with SR 4.

85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds ranged from a high of 54.2 miles per hour to a low of 49.6 miles per hour. The average of measured speeds ranged from a high of 47.7 miles per hour to a low of 41.9 miles per hour.

Taking the average of the measured data from the 4 locations results in an 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed of 51.2 miles per hour and an average speed of 44.8 miles per hour. Recorded speeds of 65 mph or greater were noted in the speed study tabulation.

## **Discussion:**

The approach prescribed in the Traffic Engineering discipline is to use the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed as the indicator of maximum reasonable speed. The determination of the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile provides for a bell-shaped distribution of measured speeds, whereby the speed ranges measured for 70% of the drivers on the road tells us how most drivers will operate their vehicles. At the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed we obtain a measure that sets aside the slowest 15% and the fastest 15% as out of the range of normal driver behavior. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile sets the upper limit of reasonable speed for most drivers and is often used to set the maximum speed or speed limit. Setting a speed limit higher than the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed may result in liability concerns for the County. Setting a speed limit lower than the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile may result in an enforcement problem. However a speed limit lower than the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile may be justified by other factors that contribute to reduced safety by the traveling public.

The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed was measured for one full week at 4 separate locations along the study segment. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed average ranged from 49.7 miles per hour to 53.7 miles per hour.

The average speed in the study segment was measured at between 43.0 and 47.3 miles per hour, depending on location. While average speed is an interesting statistic, it is not considered to be as useful in determining maximum reasonable speed as the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed.

One factor affecting road safety is the number of turning movements on to, or from the road to intersecting roads and driveways. These turning movements present opportunities for conflict with through traffic. A desirable attribute for collector roads such as Elochoman Valley Road is partially controlled access, with infrequent access to abutting properties. Newer subdivisions such as the one at Monroe Drive help reduce the number of access points, however there has been a historical development of numerous points of access for individual tracts along the road. While the number of access points on Elochoman Valley Road does not approach that of an urban residential area, there is increased concern about road safety as the number of access locations along the road increases.

Potential for conflict with turning movements increases as the amount of traffic increases. The average daily traffic volume on the study segment of Elochoman Valley Road was measured at between 272 and 908 vehicles per day. The higher traffic volume of 908 vehicles per

day, at the southern-most location of the counts, drops off significantly as one travels to the northern-most location, beyond Beaver Creek Road. This is considered to be relatively low volume for a two-lane road, a condition in which free flow of traffic is typical.

A few locations have sub-standard stopping sight distance. The presence of curve advisory signs at these locations should help alert drivers that a lower speed is appropriate as they negotiate the curve.

The width of the driving lanes and width of roadside shoulders are also safety considerations. Roadside hazards such as steep slopes or obstructions also present added danger. The traveled way width of Elochoman Valley Road at milepost 3.473 is more narrow than recommended by AASHTO. Under AASHTO guidelines, the recommended width of the traveled way for a rural collector with a 50 mile per hour design speed and average daily traffic more than 400 vehicles per day, is 22-feet. Traffic volumes are lower on the more narrow segments of the Elochoman Valley Road.

A factor to take into consideration is the limited nature of the data set used in the evaluation. For example if the data set were to have been gathered during a period of ice and snow, adjusted driver behavior for prevailing conditions could be expected to result in much lower measured speeds than the data set from the month of October. The data set was also limited in that it captured information from 4 locations along the study segment, more data from more locations along the road over a longer time period could influence the trends in the data. In selecting locations for speed studies, it is important to remember we are studying the appropriate speed limit, or maximum speed to be allowed under the law in the study segment. The speed on curves which are posted with advisory signs are not the best locations to examine the maximum speed to be allowed by law for the total road segment.

Another factor to consider is the accident history. The number of recorded accidents on Elochoman Valley Road over the past 10 years equates to an accident rate of 142 collisions per million vehicle miles traveled (mvmt). As per the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), the accident rate on County roads in 2010 was 147 collisions per mvmt. In 2009 the rate on County roads was 159 per mvmt, and in 2008 the rate was 168 per mvmt. Therefore the accident rate on the study segment is slightly lower, but near the norm for County roads in the State of Washington. The accident rate for

State highways and city streets is higher, while the accident rate for the Interstate System is lower.

Some curves on this road require a lower speed than the prevailing speed, for both safety and comfort, curve advisory signs are utilized. The pavement condition for the majority of accidents in the study segment was ice. Seasonal slippery road conditions as a predominant causal factor for accidents are not normally addressed with a speed limit reduction. While intermittent periods of ice formation in the late fall and winter months may occur, it is not the prevailing road condition for most of the year. Adjustment of driver behavior in response to snow and ice is the single most important step toward improved safety during winter driving conditions. Use of studded tires is allowed under State law after November 1.

The curves at milepost 0.5 and 1.2 have higher accident incidents than other locations along the road. These curves tend to have greater frequency of ice formation, as the adjacent hillside reduces the hours of sunlight reaching the pavement when accumulated moisture can evaporate. Runoff from driveways and ground water rising to the surface can also contribute to ice formation. This ice hazard at these curves is known to the County road crew, and proactive application of brine to the road surface is frequent in the winter months to reduce ice formation. This winter preventative measure is not always successful, as temperatures may dip rapidly and unexpectedly after a rain storm that has washed away the brine treatment.



Curve northerly of County Road shop with a.m. shade in winter  
Elochoman Valley Road, approx. m.p. 0.5

### **Recommendations:**

The current speed limit of 50 miles per hour is very consistent with the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed of vehicles measured during October 2011. The average speed of drivers on this road is well over 40 miles per hour. Based on speed study data alone, the maximum speed or speed limit for Elochoman Valley Road should remain at 50 miles per hour.

In consideration of: 1) the increasingly suburban characteristics with a large number of intersecting driveways and other access points, 2) the sub-standard width of the road along part of the study segment, 3) the presence of school buses which stop to discharge passengers along the road, 4) occasional hazardous winter driving conditions, and 5) limited sight distance available on some curves in the study segment, I recommend a reduction in the speed limit in the study segment.

A) The maximum speed limit on the study segment of Elochoman Valley Road should be reduced to 45 miles per hour.

B) A reduced speed ahead sign should be posted on the southbound lane prior to the Family Camp Road intersection.

C) Additional signing should be added to mark the curves at mileposts 0.5 and 1.2. Advisory sign W8-5 will help warn drivers of the potential for slippery conditions on these curves. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of motor vehicle operators to refrain from driving too fast for road conditions.

D) The curve advisory sign approaching the curve at milepost 0.5 should include a speed advisory of 35 mph, because of the limited sight distance available in the northbound lane.

E) A curve advisory should be added in the northbound direction prior to the curve with limited sight distance at approximate milepost 5.03.

Appendices:           Vicinity Map-Accident Locations  
                              10-year accident summary-Elochoman Valley Road  
                              Road Usage and Safety-WSDOT  
                              Graphic of typical W8-5 advisory sign  
                              Letter to County Commissioners from Mike Mouliot  
                              Speed study tabulations