September 1, 2015

Dear Town of La Conner Resident:

The flood time of year is approaching. Be sure to take precautions, and be prepared. The following information may be helpful.

Reduce risk of damage to homes: Practical and cost-effective methods for reducing or eliminating the risk of flooding are available to property owners whose homes have experienced damage from flooding in the past, or may experience damage in the future. Such techniques include elevation of the home, relocating the home to higher ground, constructing floodwalls or berms, flood-proofing and protecting utilities. For further information, contact John Doyle with the Town of La Conner Planning Department at (360) 466-3125 and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region X at (425) 487-4600. During times of flooding, homes that have not been retrofitted can be protected during emergencies by the installation of sandbags. For further information about sandbags and the locations of sites where sandbags are available during flooding, contact Skagit County's Department of Emergency Management at (360) 428-3250, or visit their web site at: http://www.skagitcounty.net . In case of an emergency, call 911.

Town of La Conner Floodplain Information Services: The Town can determine the relationship of a particular property to the floodplain, including: 1) whether the property is located within the Special Flood Hazard Area; 2) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Zone for the property; and 3) Base Flood Elevation for property, if available. The Town of La Conner provides site-specific flood and flood related data and makes site visits to review flood, drainage and sewer problems, as well as advising and assisting on retrofitting techniques. Contact John Doyle with the Town of La Conner Planning Department at (360) 466-3125, or email administrator@townoflaconner.org for further information.

Flood Safety Tips

The following is a list of important considerations that should be followed during times of flooding:

Prepare an evacuation plan: Before the floodwaters hit, develop an evacuation plan among all members of a household that includes a meeting place outside of the house, as well as an escape route out of the floodplain and away from floodwaters.

Do not walk through flowing water: Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths, mostly during flash floods. Currents can be deceptive; six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. If you walk in standing water, use a pole or stick to ensure that the ground is still there.

Do not drive through a flooded area: More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Don't drive around road barriers; the road or bridge may be washed out.

Stay away from power lines and electrical wires: The number two flood killer after drowning is electrocution. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to Puget Sound Energy or the County Emergency Management Office.

Shut off gas and electricity and move valuable contents upstairs: Be prepared in advance with a detailed checklist because warning of an impending flood may provide little time for preparation prior to evacuation.

Look out for animals, especially snakes: Small animals that have been flooded out of their homes may seek shelter in yours. Use a pole or stick to poke and turn things over and scare away small animals.

Look before you step: After a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris including broken bottles and nails. Floors and stairs that have been covered with mud can be very slippery.

Be alert for gas leaks: Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Don't smoke or use candles, lanterns or open flames unless you know that the gas has been turned off and the area has been ventilated.

If the Planning Department can be of assistance, please contact John Doyle, Town Administrator, at (360) 466-3125, or forward an email to administrator@townoflaconner.org.