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Dear Port of Port Townsend County Commissioners:

I would like to submit these comments in response to the planned future use of Radio-Controlled (RC) Seaplanes at the Short's Family Farm in Chimacum, WA, as described in the draft Public Access Plan published in March 2025.

As a wildlife biologist, avid birder, and member of the Puget Sound Observatory's Secretive Wetland Bird Survey team for the past couple of years, I have had the pleasure of exploring the wetland habitat present on the newly acquired Port property known as the Short's Farm. This is one of the highest quality wetland areas in E. Jefferson County, home to over 149 species of birds, several of which breed there, and is the wintering ground for around one hundred Trumpeter Swans and thousands of waterfowl.

Even though the small group of seaplane enthusiasts wishing to use the area for much of the year define themselves as the "Port Townsend Quiet Flight Association", the touch & go flights proposed on and over this wetland complex would obviously involve noise, along with physical disruption to sensitive bird species currently seeking sanctuary on the property.

While there are few other places where these birds could go once they were displaced (and if not actively displaced, certainly compromised in their normal breeding, feeding and resting behaviors, which ultimately impacts their ability to thrive in the long term), it seems to me that there would be several other options where the seaplane enthusiasts could go to enjoy their pastime. I do not have first-hand experience with these planes, but in watching several videos of their flights, it seems to me that our area has several viable venues for recreation of this type that would not involve disrupting sensitive wildlife species. Would it not be possible for the RC Seaplane group to use one of the several public or private marinas in our region for their activities, instead of adding another layer of disturbance to an already struggling wetland bird population?

I would ask you to deny the use of this area to RC Seaplanes, along with that of all other new activities proposed for the area which could undermine the future viability of this important wetland ecosystem.

Thank you for your time and consideration-  
Debaran Kelso