

**Skagit County Conservation Futures Program Advisory Committee  
(CFAC)**

**Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, August 13, 2013

**Members in Attendance:**

Keith Wiggers	Carolyn Kelly	Mike Hulbert
Alan Merritt	Andrea Xaver	Scott DeGraw

**Staff in Attendance:**

Kendra Smith, Program Director Contractor  
Linda Christensen, Skagit County  
Dan Berentson, Skagit County

**Others in Attendance:**

Allen Rozema, Skagitionians to Preserve Farmland  
Eric Nelson, Skagit County Monitoring Contractor  
Jennifer Aylor, Eldred & Associates

**Open**

Meeting opened at 7:10 a.m.

**Meeting Minutes**

The CFAC had a discussion regarding the VanderVeen impervious surface decision made at the July meeting. Alan Merritt was concerned about the 5% dairy provision and wanted clarification as to when it is awarded to applicants. Carolyn noted that dairies have typically been given this amount verses the typical 2%. Sometimes applicants can justify the need for more impervious surface and it may be given up to the 5%. Discussion continued about USDA funding. Additional language was added to the June meeting minutes to ensure the full intent of the discussion was portrayed.

Keith Wiggers moved to approve the June 11, 2013 meeting minutes as amended and Alan seconded. The motion carried.

**Member Update**

Allen Rozema provided an update on the Buffers and Beaver tour recently held in the valley. Many federal, state and local officials and representatives attended.

Andrea Xaver continued the discussion about how beavers are damaging our creeks. She also shared her concern about poo sniffing dogs detecting human fecal matter vs. other sources.

She does not consider this adequate or real science. Further, there has been a lack of science and consistent monitoring at Brown's Slough, according to the SV Herald. If this is also the case in other fish habitat, how does anyone know how much is needed or what's in it? She also expressed concerns over Reed Canary Grass which has stalks that are very tall, dense, and spread quickly. She feels it can be harmful to – and, difficult to control or remove from - wetlands, fish habitat, and farmland.

### **Wetland Mitigation Discussion**

Jennifer Aylor, Principal of Eldred Associates was present to provide information on the Skagit Environmental Bank (Clear Valley). Jennifer consults with two wetland mitigation companies. One is the Nookachamps Wetland Mitigation Bank, a 282-acre site located along the Skagit River in Skagit County. The other is the Skagit Environmental Bank, a 396-acre site located 1.5 miles northeast of the Mount Vernon urban center.

Her role is to spread the word about these mitigation banks. She also said that credits will be for sale in the near future and the permitting and design is complete for the Skagit Environmental Bank. The Nookachamps bank has sold a few credits.

Under a settlement agreement there is to be a certain amount of money set aside from each credit sold in the Skagit Environmental Bank that will go towards the Skagit County Farmland Legacy Program. Partners to the agreement included Skagitians to Preserve Farmland and the owners of the Clear Valley. Specifics about the settlement distribution are currently being worked on.

### **Financial Report**

Kendra Smith distributed a financial spreadsheet showing the pending easement accounts payables and how the cash flow projection picture looks with the funding from the grant from the State's Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) and USDA funding. She said that she was just informed at a meeting with USDA staff and the State Conservationist, Roylene Rides At The Door, that the 2012 properties-will be approved as per the 2011/12 contract, pending updated appraisals.

### **2013 USDA Agreement**

USDA informed Kendra that they will move forward with a contract for the 2013 applications reviewed by the CFAC earlier this year. The new contract will require the easements to have additional language regarding buffers for all properties with waterways, including those that have drainage ditches. The buffers will be a minimum of 35 feet on each side of the ditch, and will increase in size depending on the size and function of the waterway. Additionally, there are other specifics about buffers which can be found in the USDA technical note #14, guidance developed and implemented by NRCS. Conservation Plans are an alternative to the strict

technical provision. Provisions will most likely require the installation of a riparian buffer. Kendra said that this policy recommendation for the change has been reviewed at the national level and was told it will be implemented both at the state and national level.

### **Old Business**

#### Skagitians to Preserve Farmland Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Allen asked the group for their comments about the MOU. Carolyn Kelly asked the CFAC to read the MOU draft and send their comments and mark-ups to Linda.

### **New Business**

#### Monitoring Non-Compliance Report

Eric Nelson provided handouts on three non-compliance properties he found during his recent monitoring visits.

- FLP #17: A landscape Hedge-was planted that encroached on parcel #48072, which has a conservation easement. The CFAC recommended that the owner of this parcel relocate the hedge. Keith recommended that the county legal department review initially and then Kendra will write a letter to the landowner.
- FLP #25: There was a property subdivision which may have violated the easement. Kendra said that this violation-may be addressed and solved with a boundary line adjustment, which is still being addressed.
- FLP#28: There was a property subdivision, which may have violated the easement. The county legal department is currently reviewing this situation.

### **CFAC Member Renewal**

The terms for Scott DeGraw, Keith Wiggers, and Mike Hulbert expired 12/31/2012. Scott and Keith desire to stay on for another 4-year term and Mike is thinking about it. Linda will notify Dan Berentson about Scott and Keith so he may ask the Board of Commissioners if they will reappoint for another term.

Due to Alan Merritt's resignation, there will be an opening for a member to be appointed for District 1. All thanked Alan for his nearly 14 years of service on the CFAC Board and as an original member. All present were reminded that there would be a presentation to Alan following the CFAC meeting by the Board of County Commissioners.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Linda Christensen

Approved by the CFAC Board on:

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Chair Carolyn Kelly