



**SKAGIT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD**  
**1800 Continental Place**  
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**Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board (AAB) Meeting Minutes**  
**July 11, 2012**  
**Skagit County Administration Building**

**Members in Attendance**

Nels Lagerlund (Chair)	Kraig Knutzen
Randy Good	Bill McMoran
Mike Hulbert	Greg Lee
Lye Wesen	Michael Hughes

**Others in Attendance**

Carolyn Kelly  
Roger Knutzen  
Steve Omdal  
Henry Hash, Skagit County Public Works  
Dan Berentson, Skagit County Public Works  
Linda Christensen, Skagit County Planning & Development Services

**Call to Order**

Nels called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Consent Agenda**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**Minutes**

Mike motioned to accept the June 13, 2012 meeting minutes as presented and Bill seconded. The motion passed.

Randy motioned to accept the June 27, 2012 meeting minutes as presented Michael seconded. The motion passed.

**Public Works Discussion**

**General Investigated Study for the Skagit River (GI Study)**

Henry Hash reported the progress so far on the GI Study. In March of this year, Public Works met with the Army Corps of Engineers to discuss coming up with a plan for three alternatives. History tells us that this project has been delayed due to funding and other issues. Out of 68 studies, Skagit County is one of nine that were chosen to continue with funding.

*Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board Members:*

*Nels Lagerlund (Chair), Kim Mower (Vice Chair), Murray Benjamin, Jim Carstens, Randy Good, Bob Hughes, Kraig Knutzen, Greg Lee, Bill McMoran, Nate Youngquist, Lyle Wesen, Don McMoran, WSU Extension Mike Hulbert.*

Dan Berentson said that the newly appointed General has determined that the GI study will be done in an abbreviated manner and stay on a fast track to completion for the preliminary design phase. The goal is to narrow the study outcome to three alternatives at a 10% design phase. The three are: Joe Leary bypass/floodway; Avon Allen floodway; and levy setbacks. In the near future, meetings will be held to get a feel on what the community is comfortable with. Within 18 months staff will be able to narrow the alternatives to one preferred outcome which at that time a 35% design phase can be started. At this point the project can be presented to the Army Corp for a funding request. Dan said that he expects that 65% will be federally funded and the remaining 35% funded locally. This study must be complete by March 2015 in order to submit the final alternative to the Chief of Army Corp Engineer.

Dan spoke about the water storage behind the lower dam and the fact that Puget Sound Energy and the Army Corp have promised an increase in storage with any of the alternatives that are decided upon.

#### Drainage Utility

Dan reported that staff is working towards an effort to coordinate Interlocal agreements with various drainage utilities to provide improvements. Western Washington Ag is working in a cooperative manner by providing maps. Nels asked about maintenance for those ditches considered fish streams. Currently these streams are not maintained and consequently flooding can occur. Nels asked if there is a possibility of a mitigation program so maintenance can be performed. Dan responded that the county needs to make progress in this area. Dan also said that it is the county's responsibility to maintain ditches in the county right-of-way.

#### Clean Samish Initiative

Dan reported that the big rain events have increased the pollution numbers. Carolyn said that she recently met with Environmental Protection Agency officials and Skagit County Public Works staff, Rick Haley, to focus on areas where there are high pollution areas. Rick will be providing extra emphasis on testing in those areas. There was discussion among staff and the AAB that the pollution source could be further upstream from usual testing sites. The adequacy of sampling and DNA testing was discussed. Kraig emphasized that sampling sites may need to be widened to access possible pollution sending sites.

Dan asked that he would like to bring a report of current issues to the AAB on a quarterly basis.

### **Committee Reports**

#### Flood & Drainage

Roger Knutzen spoke about his concern for the farm ditches that run parallel to property lines. He also spoke about getting approval to modify the ditches to allow additional flow for a 2 to 1 slope. He mentioned his concern that the Corp of Engineers control the ditches identified as "yellow" without a permit. He is frustrated that farmers can clean and maintain these ditches, but can't increase the rate of flow and further mentioned that he would like the Corp to exempt these ditches from their control. Randy asked Henry Hash to investigate the legality of

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navigable waters and if these ditches are included in the Corp's control. The Corp indicates that a ditch is theirs even though may not be navigable. Roger suggested that a letter, written by Western Washington Ag be sent to Washington D.C. agencies requesting that the yellow ditches be exempt from the Corp's control. This letter must be sent soon so it can be presented during this current legislative session.

### Shorelines

Kraig reported that the Shoreline Master Plan Update is still in draft form and expressed his concern that documentation for review is not received in a timely manner. He said there are various issues that need to be discussed and clarified.

### **New Business**

#### Barley Crop Update

Steve Omdal gave an update on new barley crops that are currently being tested at the WSU Extension Center. The Port of Skagit County is funding this research to study what variety grows well here.

### Adjourn

The next regular meeting will occur on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.