



SKAGIT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

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Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board (AAB) Meeting Minutes November 14, 2012 Skagit County Administration Building

Members in Attendance

Nels Lagerlund (Chair)	Kraig Knutzen (Vice Chair)
Randy Good (proxy for Jim Carstens)	Bill McMoran
Michael Hughes	Murray Benjamin

Others in Attendance

Linda Christensen, Skagit County Planning & Development Services
Dan Berentson, Skagit County Public Works
Will Honea, Skagit County Prosecuting Attorney Department, Civil Division
Mike Shelby, Western Washington Agriculture Association
Daryl Hamburg, Dike District 17

Call to Order

Nels called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Consent Agenda

There was one addition to the agenda to discuss the District 3 AAB vacancy.

Minutes

Randy motioned to accept the October 10, 2012 meeting minutes as presented and Murray seconded. The motion passed.

Farm, Fish, Flood Initiative (3FI)

Mike Shelby gave an overview of the 3FI. Small groups representing local agencies (The Nature Conservancy, Western Washington Agricultural Association, Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, NOAA, Skagit County and Dike District 17) have formed a committee to discuss and create an organized strategy that pulls together Chinook recovery, farmland, and flood protection priorities. This committee came together two years ago with a commitment to achieve the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery goals of estuary restoration and resource land protection through the formation of this Initiative. Their mission reads: *To create and advance mutually beneficial strategies that support the long-term viability of agriculture and salmon while reducing the risks of destructive floods.*

Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board Members:

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

This group formally agreed to achieve three goals:

Goal 1: Restore estuary habitats and functions in the Skagit Delta needed to meet the Skagit Chinook Recover Plan goal 9 (approximately 2,700 acres and/or 1.35 millions molts) consistent with the #FI mission.

Goal 2: Reduce the risk of destructive flooding in the Skagit Delta by implementing flood risk reduction alternatives consistent with the 3FI mission.

Goal 3: Protect and improve the agricultural land base and infrastructure consistent with the 3FI mission (secure 20,000 acres of agriculture easements and implement the Tidegate Fish and Drainage Fish Initiatives).

Moving forward, the 3FI members realize that these goals cannot be achieved without involvement of the community. Kevin said that this group received a grant through the Environmental Protection Agency to fund these initial initiatives. The grant is for developing strategies and also includes hydrodynamic modeling study, agriculture cluster study, and farmland preservation.

The 3FI group is working on a Memorandum of Understanding that will outline the involvement of all agencies. He also said that the timing of this project coincides with the GI Study, which is scheduled to be completed in the next two years.

Nels requested a quarterly project update.

Skagit River Basin Water Rights

Will Honea gave a complete overview of the water right issue, from the onset of the 1996 Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Ecology to the current status whereas the Washington State Supreme Court are hearing oral arguments from the Swinomish Indian Tribe for rural water usage. The AAB expressed concern over the final outcome of the court hearings; however, Will could not anticipate the outcome or when a decision would occur.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports other than a report from Nels who attended a recent TDR committee meeting. Nels said the subject matter consisted of a preliminary discussion about sending areas without specifics.

New Business

Jeanne Youngquist

Skagit County Auditor, Jeanne Youngquist was in attendance. She is a current member of the Agriculture Committee for the National Association of Counties (NACO). She desires to exchange information between NACO and Skagit County.

District 3 AAB Vacancy

There was a brief comment period to discuss the two applicants.

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Murray moved to recommend the favored applicant and Randy seconded. The motion passed. Linda will forward the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners for their approval.

Adjourn and Next Meeting

Today's meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. The next regular meeting will occur on Wednesday, December 12, 2012, 6 p.m.