



**SKAGIT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD**  
**1800 Continental Place**  
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**Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board (AAB) Meeting Minutes**  
**April 8, 2015, 6 p.m.**  
**Skagit County Administration Building**

**Members in Attendance**

Murray Benjamin	Barbara Cleave	Mike Hulbert
Michael Hughes	Kraig Knutzen	Nels Lagerlund
Terry Sapp		

**Members Absent**

Jim Carstens	Ty Clark	Brian Duquaine
Scott Hanseth	Greg Lee	

**Others in Attendance**

Linda Christensen, Skagit County Planning	Don McMoran, WSU
Ron Wesen, Skagit County Commissioner	Andrew Wargo, WDOE
Steve Omdal, Skagit County Port Commissioner	

**Call to Order**

Chair Nels Lagerlund called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm

**Agenda Review**

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

**Meeting Minutes**

Murray Benjamin moved to approve the March 11, 2014 meeting minutes and Michael Hughes seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**WSDOE Water Quality Report – Andrew Wargo**

Andrew Wargo is the new Water Quality Field Inspector for the Department of Ecology in Skagit County. He has been employed in the position for about 6 months. Presently Andrew is getting to know the community and involved with the Clean Samish 90-day Initiative. He is available for water quality technical assistance to Skagit County, Department of Ag, and property owners. Ninety percent of his work is in the Samish Basin. Steve Omdal questioned what the baseline fecal counts are in the Samish, and Andrew said the Department of Health would have the answer. The State Department of Health and Ecology is in charge of the baseline fecal count

*Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board Members:  
Nels Lagerlund (Chair), Kraig Knutzen (Vice Chair), Murray Benjamin, Jim Carstens, Ty Clark,  
Barbara Cleave, Brian Duquaine, Scott Hanseth, Mike Hulbert, Michael Hughes, Greg Lee, Terry Sapp*

numbers. Andrew's work focus is watersheds, but can be on-call for other areas of concern. Kraig offered Andrew historical information and said a tour of some areas would be beneficial.

### **GI Study Update – Kara Symonds**

Kara brought the AAB up-to-date on the GI Study status since the last time she attended a meeting in 2014. In October 2014 the Corps of Engineers vertical team concurred on a recommended plan. In early 2015 the Corps indicated they would need a waiver to their 3x3x3 rule to allow them additional time and money to move the project forward. Skagit County declined the waiver and asked the Corps to focus on Baker Dam storage. Kara spoke about the cost of extra storage at Lake Shannon and Baker Lake. The AAB and Kara discussed flood levels and how the plan for more water storage would help farming and how it affects fish.

### **Farmland Legacy Program Update – Kara Symonds**

Kara reported on April 7 she presented an update on the Program to the Board of County Commissioners. The Program has approximately 9,500 acres conserved. She spoke about the 2013 USDA Agreement buffer clause and how the clause would affect landowners.

### **Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Update – Kara Symonds**

Kara gave an overview of the Program.

Ty Clark was not available, but provided the following information in an e-mail to Linda.

*Two main items were discussed at the recent advisory committee meeting: 1) Existing watershed programs, educational programs and work by the Skagit Conservation District, US Soil Conservation, WSU Cooperative Extension, Dike and Drainage Districts, and others. There are over 20 watershed programs alone. The programs are good for salmon and also good for improving water quality. 2) The VSP Approach: Buffers are good. More Stream Buffer = Progress, Losing Stream Buffer is Bad. First, it is important to understand that the strategy to make the VSP approved is being developed by the county. The VSP committee is more or less a sounding board to bounce ideas off of. To the credit of the Planning Department, Ty writes that they have worked very hard to come up with a plan that is measurable and should be easy to implement in some areas.*

### **Farm Worker Housing Update**

Linda shared a report from Dale Pernula, Planning Department Director. The City of Burlington, county officials, and the developer are currently in discussions on how to connect sewer to the property considered for development and have no net loss of farmland. Nels said he will check on having Mayor Sexton attend a future AAB meeting to discuss this development. Michael Hughes was concerned that the development will become year round residences on the AG NRL land and is this best use of the land?

### **Marijuana Update**

Nels received an inquiry from a Skagit County Planning Commission member that she is concerned about unexpected consequences as a result of ordinance changes. She asked the AAB to consider comments during the open public comment period. As a whole, the AAB will not submit a letter; rather Nels encouraged each AAB member to submit their own comment letter.

### **Other Business**

Don McMoran gave an update on WSU Extension activities.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13, 2015, 7 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.