

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

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 8, 2014

Members in Attendance

Carolyn Kelly, Chair Scott DeGraw, Vice-Chair
Steve Sakuma Andrea Xaver

Staff in Attendance

Kendra Smith, Farmland Legacy Program Director
Linda Christensen, Skagit County
Ryan Walters, Skagit County

Open

Meeting opened at 7:00 AM

Member Update

Andrea Xaver will be sending out Skagit County/WA State earthquake fault line information in order to educate CFAC people re any potential dangers.

Carolyn Kelly said there are meetings happening with NRCS about the needs in Skagit Valley resource areas. There is special initiative grant money allotted for farmland preservation which is described as a program that will be creative with flood plains by design money.

Kendra Smith received a request from Whatcom County asking her to assist them with their farmland preservation program. She is pleased that farmland preservation is active in our part of the state.

Meeting Minutes

The March meeting minutes are tabled due to a lack of quorum.

Financials

Kendra Smith reviewed the cash flow statement and explained that this document is a fluid working document tool. The program is still waiting for USDA reimbursement for the easements that closed in December 2013. This is due to a request from USDA that the farmstead envelope be included as part of the recorded easement. Kendra is working with the county's legal department on how to accurately document the farmstead envelope.

Kendra said that she is working on the reimbursement paperwork for RCO and is negotiating the need for a 3rd party appraisal review. It could cost the FLP nearly \$25K if the county hires

this service. Scott was concerned that the appraisal reviews are very expensive and other reviewers should be considered. It would be best to use the review of RCO/NRCS and eliminate duplication of costs. IF the process takes too long then one should consider paying for the reviews to insure we get our money.

Old Business

USDA 2013 Contract Status

USDA has not yet provided Kendra with a draft for an amendment to the 2013 contract. They had told her that the State office was waiting for National to review it before they could send it on the Skagit County for their review. In a conversation with Roylene Rides At The Door and Jeff Harlow, Roylene indicated that if the water courses adjacent to or within a property had been permitted by the USACOE (Corp) for maintenance work then they could be exempted them from any buffer requirement. Kendra got the permit numbers from Western Washington Ag and sent them to the NRCS office. Kendra was told that Monica, NRCS staff, would be accompanying an NRCS fish biologist to look at each of the 2013 properties and determine what would be needed. Carolyn said she had a map that was more accurate than the “salmonscape” map that Public Work uses to identify the presence of salmon. It was put together by the Conservation Commission and the Conservation District. She would like that map used. Other maps that show fish presence include the DNR water typing map.

USDA 2014 Contract Status

USDA has not provided any information on the status of the 2014 contact.

Global Easement Template

Ryan Walters asked the CFAC to send him their comments. He also mentioned that USDA needs to approve the new format. Scott DeGraw expressed his concern to have the legal documents verified by at least two staff members before the easement is executed by the Board of Commissioners. It is possible an error is missed if only one person checks the documents.

Miller Easement

Ryan reported that this issue is still under discussion by legal staff and has now reached a congressional review level.

New Business

Ranking

Scott requested that the email containing scoring sheets be put in one PDF document. In one scanned document he is suggesting the following: one document that has all the properties listed and each scoring sheet have an overhead map, plat map, and FLP map. Carolyn is asking

for critical area detail on a map. There was some discussion as to what defines a critical area. Carolyn said there are really only two critical areas to consider, a riparian buffer and wetlands. She said that if a dike is next to a river than there is not a critical area; also, if a wetland is being activity farmed then it is not a critical area. Scott is also requesting that Kendra provide backup information for each category. Additionally, addresses or location points (road names) need to be added to the maps. Kendra will provide everything needed to simplify the ranking process for the CFAC.

Kendra Smith gave the CFAC specific background information for some of the ranking categories. She will re-configure the ranking scores and bring this information to the CFAC at the May meeting.

Next Meeting

The following topics were not discussed today and will be added to the May meeting agenda: review March meeting minutes, elect a new chair, and fees to change an easement.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

Submitted by: _____
Linda Christensen

Approved by the CFAC Board on: May 19, 2014

Chair Carolyn Kelly