

Skagit County Conservation Futures Advisory Board
Meeting Summary
April 8, 2025

Members Present | Advisory Rep. Affiliation

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott DeGraw (chair) District 3 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Margery Hite Skagit Conservation District |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Andrea Xaver (vice chair) District 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Keith Morrison At Large |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jim Glackin Skagit Land Trust | <input type="checkbox"/> Owen Peth District 1 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audrey Gravley Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Stoner <i>ex officio</i> Skagit County |

Others Present—Affiliation

Alan Chapman, Whatcom County Ag Advisory
Galen Priest, Swinomish Tribal Community
Jenn Johnson, Skagit County Public Works
Kai Ottesen, Belle Bean Services, LLC

Scott called the meeting to order at 7:30AM.

Review Agenda, Introductions

Agenda approved. Quorum present with minimum of four voting members.

Review February 11 & March 11 Meeting Summaries

Jim made a motion to approve February and March's minutes; Andrea seconded. All in favor.

Property Updates

The group discussed updates on the properties currently in queue for agricultural conservation easements. The queued applicants encompass 357 acres and 10 development rights.

Application Property Scoring/Review

FLP 260

The group reviewed and scored FLP property #260, comprising of 40 acres and 1 development right in greater La Conner area off LaConnerWhitney Road.

The property scored as follows: *Core Criteria 57, Edge Criteria 28*. The property scored highest in Core Criteria, which emphasizes the protection of a critical mass of farmland protecting agricultural viability.

Marketing & Application Process

Small Heritage Farms' Ag Land Protection (CFAB Committee)

The Small Heritage Farms Protection survey is open and collecting responses, 80+ participants so far. The survey closes April 30, 2025. Survey intro text is as follows:

Skagit County values all its farmland, whether the parcels are large or small.

Current regulations within Skagit's primary agricultural zone (Ag-NRL) designate farmland lots of 40 acres as the minimum lot size required to be eligible to be considered for development permits. If your farm is less than 40

acres in the designated agricultural Ag-NRL zone it is considered a "non-conforming" lot. That means its current land use protections could be phased out at some point in the future.

Skagit County is exploring whether there is interest in a preservation program for small heritage farms. Our county has a long history of protecting its farmland through zoning, land use restriction code and its Farmland Legacy Program. Would you be interested in protecting your small farm for agricultural use now and into the future? We value your input on the future of small farms in Skagit County.

Annual Report 2024

Sarah discussed distribution plans for the 2024 Farmland Legacy Annual Report, which include inserts into the following local newspapers: Skagit Valley Herald insert (May 3); Anacortes American (May 6); La Conner Community News (May 7); Skagit Valley Food Co-op newsletter (July 2025).

Monitoring Updates

Kai reported that monitoring work is in process for existing easements, with no issues to report.

Sarah noted the addition of “Easement Stewardship: Amendments” to the queued list of easements in process. This will help her track FLP stewardship efforts and projects.

The group discussed fractional ownership of existing easements, existing and future. Scott and Audrey both suggest that amendments should have a processing fee. Jim shared that Skagit Land Trust figures in cost of stewardship plan for each easement, with specific cost associated with what it will take to monitor and manage 25 to 50 years into the future.

Member Updates

Sarah made mention of the new ag-beat report for The Skagit Valley Herald, Cameron Martinez. Plus, local ag in the news:

- 1. “WA ranchers turn to new crop: Solar power” article, Seattle Times, March 9, 2025.
- 2. Washington farmers brace for impact of trade tariffs article, King5 News, March 5, 2025—featuring Skagit dairy farmer Jason Vander Kooy.
- 3. Trump’s funding freeze puts Skagit County farms on slippery slope article, Seattle Times, March 6, 2025.

Financial Summary

The financial summary is updated for April 2025 and reflects easement properties closed and recorded. The group reviewed 2024 revenues and expenditures which finalized April 2025.

2024 Conservation Futures revenues totaled \$1,095,770-, as follows:

Taxes

Real & Personal Property Tax	\$1,017,416-
Leasehold Excise Tax	\$5,785-
Timber Excise Tax	\$12,365-

Intergovernmental Revenues

DNR—ALEA	\$899-
State Land & Timber Sales	\$19,938-

Miscellaneous Revenues

Investment Interest	\$31,485-
Other Interest Earnings	\$1,809-
Space Facility Lease LT&DNR	\$371-
Private Contributions	\$735-
Misc. Revenue	\$4,967-

For comparison, 2023 Conservation Futures revenues totaled \$1,188,095-, as follows:

Taxes

Real & Personal Property Tax	\$987,691-
Leasehold Excise Tax	\$6,336-
Timber Excise Tax	\$8,267-
Sale of Tax Title Property	\$772-

Intergovernmental Revenues

DNR—ALEA	\$951-
State Land & Timber Sales	\$16,040-

Miscellaneous Revenues

Investment Interest	\$28,545-
Other Interest Earnings	\$68-
Space Facility Lease LT&DNR	\$349-
Private Contributions	\$137,835-
Other Misc. Revenue	\$1,241-

Administrative**CFAB 2025 Meeting Dates**

May 13	August 12 (enx)	November 18 (3 rd Tues)
June 10	September 9	December 9
July 8 (enx)	October 14 (tbd)	

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 AM