

Skagit County Conservation Futures Advisory Board
Meeting Summary
May 13, 2025

Members Present | Advisory Rep. Affiliation

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

Others Present—Affiliation

Jenn Johnson, Skagit County Public Works
Kai Ottesen, Belle Bean Services, LLC
Taylor Scott, Skagit County Public Works

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

Review Agenda, Introductions

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

Review April 8 Meeting Summary

Audrey made a motion to approve minutes; Jim seconded. All in favor.

Property Updates

The group discussed updates on the properties currently queued for agricultural conservation easements. The queued applicants encompass 355 acres and 7 development rights.

The group reviewed the title company's answer to Sarah's question regarding the difference in closing costs between two recently closed property protection transactions. The two differences:

- Document pages. The recording fee for the grant easement is affected by the number of pages of each grant easement.
- Owner's title insurance premium. A protected property transaction may qualify for a short-term rate while another may not. To qualify for the short-term rate the underwriter needs to have insured the transaction within a certain number of years. For example, if the property was previously insured within the last 10 years by Old Republic it qualifies for the short-term rate.
 - Title insurance is a contractual obligation that protects against losses that occur when title to a property is not free and clear of defects (e.g. liens, encumbrances, mistakes, forgeries and other defects that were unknown when the title policy was issued). Title insurance also guarantees loan priorities, proves the seller has legal authority to sell the property.

Committee Reports

Small Heritage Farms' Ag Land Protection: (FLP Enrollment Criteria Review & Recommendations)

The group discussed the [survey results](#) on the Small Heritage Farms Protection Survey, which closed on April 30 with 101 participants. Seventy percent of the respondents consider themselves farmers.

Seventy-five percent of respondents would be interested in a program that protects their small farm. The group discussed possible protection mechanisms.

Easement Terms Review & Recommendations

The group discussed water rights, including the functions of rural water associations and topics of interest for our upcoming Water Master speaker from Washington State Department of Ecology.

Marketing & Application Process

Annual Report 2024

Sarah discussed the follow-up for distribution of the 2024 Farmland Legacy Annual Report. Print copies were made available to members and staff in attendance.

FLP's updated [annual report](#) distributed Saturday, May 3, as an insert in the Skagit Valley Herald. Inserts into Anacortes American and La Conner Community News followed. 17,700 copies via newspaper insert distributed across our fair land at 15 cents/piece for print and delivery cost. 18,250 reports were printed in total for use throughout the year.

Monitoring Updates

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

Member Updates

Keith shared that he celebrates 50 years of farming this season.

Owen shared that Western Washington Ag Association has hired a new Executive Director, Kim Matthews. Kim comes with an extensive ag background.

Audrey shared that the Skagitians to Preserve Farmland executive team met recently, with agritourism as an ongoing topic.

Financial Summary

The financial summary is updated for May 2025 and reflects easement properties closed and recorded.

Administrative

CFAB 2025 Meeting Dates

June 10

~~July 8 (enx)~~

~~August 12 (enx)~~

September 9

October 14

November 18 (3rd Tues)

December 9

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 AM