

Skagit County Conservation Futures Advisory Board
Meeting Summary
October 14, 2025

Members Present | Advisory Rep. Affiliation

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| ☒ Scott DeGraw (chair) District 3 | ☒ Margery Hite Skagit Conservation District |
| ☒ Andrea Xavier (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

Chris Elder, King County Farmland Preservation
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.

Chris Elder introduced himself to the group. Chris is the new Farmland Preservation Program Manager for King County. He hails most recently from Whatcom County where he worked as a farmer and then moved into farmland protection for the county.

Review June 10 & September 9 Meeting Summaries

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

To date, 15,402 acres are protected. Project total acreage by year-end 2025: 15,445 acres. This includes 290 development rights extinguished by year-end.

Keith noted that 290 fewer houses on Skagit farmland has a significant impact on ag land preservation. The group discussed housing pressures, especially affordable housing pressures in Skagit County.

Marketing & Application Process

Application Property Scoring/Review FLP 262

The group reviewed and scored FLP property #262, 44 acres and 1 development right east of Hamilton.

The property scored as follows: *Core Criteria* 35; *Edge Criteria* 52. The property scored highest in Edge Criteria, which emphasizes the protection of land with higher development pressures.

Monitoring Updates

Kai reported that monitoring work is wrapping up for existing easements. Physical monitoring should be complete by end of this month; with all county monitoring reports for 2024 complete by end of year.

Kai and Sarah shared that they have been working to select easement management software from available options across the nation—to manage FLP’s current 215 easement holdings. The software management research is in anticipation of continued growth in number of easements in the FLP portfolio. As well, growing complexities of executed easements (divisions of ownerships, transfers of ownership, impervious surface tracking, boundary line adjustments, etc.) will be better served with a consolidation of data and files now stored across various Excel sheet tabulations, Word and PDF file folders. This move is proactive and in service of our easement holders.

Sarah shared that in researching easement management software, she spoke with the [Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust](#), a statewide NGO that uses one of the three easement management programs being considered by Skagit County. For context, the CO land trust manages 180K acres of protected ag land (500+ easements), with 12 easement monitors on contract spread across the state.

Chris shared that King County Farmland Protection program has “no Kai.” Chris’s role is tasked with easement monitoring (approx. 16K acres protected), which is handled on complaint-based approach due to resource allocation. Chris also noted that Snohomish city council hired a prosecutor and two enforcement officers for land use code enforcement. The group concurred that enforcement/monitoring must be staffed and funded in some capacity.

Member Updates

Andrea shared the article, “Farming Under Pressure.” The group discussed how hard farming work is.

Sarah made mention of recent ag articles in the news:

1. [“Small Farmers Seek Skagit’s Big Magic”](#) (Salish Current, September 19, 2025)—highlighting the vulnerability of small farms and land access issues for small farmers.
2. [“Report shows Washington ag income has dropped to 43rd place”](#) (Capitol Press, October 6, 2025)

In response to the second article, several members noted their increased operation costs: fuel line item doubled from last year, for example, and labor costs are the highest across the country. Keith shared that commodity prices are the same today as 52 years ago.

Financial Summary

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

Administrative

CFAB 2025 Meeting Dates

July 8 (enx)	September 9	November 18 (3 rd Tues)
August 12 (enx)	October 14	December 9

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 AM