

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

Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2016

Members Attendance

Scott DeGraw	Mike Hulbert	Wendy Pare	Owen Peth
Steve Sakuma	Keith Wiggers	Andrea Xaver	

Staff and Others in Attendance

Kara Symonds, Skagit County Public Works
Linda Christensen, Skagit County Planning & Development Services
Allen Rozema, Skagitationians to Preserve Farmland
Carolyn Kelly, Skagit Conservation District
John Schuh, Skagit Conservation District

Scott called the meeting to order at 7:00 a.m.

Member Update

There were no member updates.

Agenda Review

There were no changes to the agenda.

October 11, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Steve moved to approve the October meeting minutes and Mike seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Financial and Property Update

Kara announced that the four Knutzen properties closed and money was disbursed in the past month. The State Recreation Office has reimbursed the County for the Thulen properties. Skagit County will request state reimbursement for Knutzen once the final title policy is received.

Kara spoke about Conservation Futures fund balances, including cash, temporary investments, and taxes yet to be collected this year. These funds are enough to cover the two highest ranked properties in the hopper in the first half of 2017. The other two properties in the hopper would be covered by 2017 tax revenue.

There was a discussion that CFAC member, Steve Sakuma, will recuse himself from any discussion relating to his application. This has been discussed in previous meetings.

Farm Plans and Agricultural Land Easement Plan

John Schuh and Carolyn Kelly from the Skagit Conservation District (SCD) were present to discuss farm plans. The reason to do a farm plan is for best management land practices. SCD follows the USDA/NRCS

nine-step planning processes. Before a farm plan is complete, staff will learn the landowner goals, make a land resource analysis and make note of any concerns. There are several workshops the landowner can attend regarding soil, wildlife habitat, water quality, pasture management, and nutrient management. Through the nine-step process, SCD comes up with alternatives to the landowners concerns and develops a Record of Decision document. The landowner then implements the farm plan and SCD conducts follow-up. If the farm plan isn't going as originally planned, then an adaptive management plan will be developed. A discussion ensued between SCD and the CFAC.

Carolyn distributed a handout, Agricultural Land Easement Plan (ALEP) template written by the Washington State USDA/NRCS office. This handout gives an overview and requirements for ALEP.

The County, Skagitionians, and the Conservation District will continue to meet to discuss a potential cooperative project and conditions associated with funding.

Allen stated several other agencies have funding products and each product has unique attributes that could be attractive to the landowner. Ultimately, it's the landowner's choice to accept funding outside the FLP. Many factors play a part in their decision such as estate planning among others.

The CFAC will meet with the board from Skagitionians to Preserve Farmland to discuss further funding strategies at a no host bar meet and greet at Max Dale's Steak and Chop House on December 8.

FLP Annual Report

Kara reported that half of the articles have been written and she has gathered great photos. She hopes to publish the report by end of this year.

Agricultural Easement Conservation Plan (AECP)

Keith briefly spoke about the new AECP ruling through USDA/NRCS which includes monitoring requirements. This topic will be discussed at a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.