

Skagit County Conservation Futures Advisory Board
Meeting Summary
December 10, 2024

Members Present | Advisory Rep. Affiliation

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| ☒ Scott DeGraw (chair) District 3 | ☐ 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 |
| ☒ Margery Hite Skagit Conservation District | ☒ Andrea Xaver District 2 |

Others Present—Affiliation

Jenn Johnson, Skagit County Public Works
Kai Ottesen, Belle Bean Services, LLC
Galen Priest, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

Quorum present with minimum of four voting members.
Scott called the meeting to order at 7:30AM.

Review Agenda, Introductions

Agenda approved.

Review November 14 Meeting Summary

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

Property Updates

The group discussed updates on the properties currently in queue for agricultural conservation easements. The queued applicants encompass 585 acres and 13 development rights.

Farmland protection 2024 year in review:

- 460 acres farmland protected (four FLP CF\$ easements and one ALP code provision easement)
- Protected properties were in Burlington (80 acres), Conway (66 acres), Sedro-Woolley (267 acres, 38.5 acres), and Mt Vernon (8.5 acres).
- 10 development rights extinguished.
- \$985,000 in Conservation Futures capital expenditures for purchase of conservation easements;
 - with additional \$185,000 from Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland

Marketing & Application Process

Small Heritage Farms' Ag Land Protection (CFAB Committee)

Margery is working with Sarah to explore a possible third mechanism to protect farmland in the County: Small Heritage Farms. Most small farms in Skagit were established well before Comprehensive Plan regulations; hence, the concept of referring to them as small heritage farms.

Many of these small farmstead lots have home sites that are also somewhat irregular and non-conforming (i.e. sewer quite a distance from the house). The home sites on these older farms can't often

be segregated into one acre, as required by the ALP (the Ag Land Preservation (ALP) code that allows for this legal subdivision requires that the home site be one acre (*no more than an acre, no exceptions*) Margery and Sarah are creating a survey to gauge interest in this preservation route.

Monitoring Updates

Kai reported that monitoring work is wrapping up county easement monitoring by year-end for the program's total 207 easements. Monitoring for USDA-partner funded easements was completed earlier this year; receipt of these reports was confirmed from USDA staff.

Member Updates

Jim shared that Skagit Land Trust recently closed and recorded a conservation easement in Edison.

Sarah made mention of Skagit agriculture and agritourism issues were covered recently in High Country News, [Is a farm that hosts weddings still a farm?](#)

Also, she made note of an article on first inaugural Skagit Farm Circle for county 3rd graders sponsored by WWA. [Students learn about local agriculture](#), Skagit Valley Herald, November 14, 2024.

The Fairgrounds hosted the first annual **Skagit Farm Circle**, where 340 third grade students from around Skagit County learned about agriculture and the importance of Skagit Farming world-wide.

Students visited six stations to learn about dairy, potatoes, water conservation, entomology, wildlife on farms and how the world needs Washington agriculture products.

Sarah mentioned a Washington State Food Policy Forum report that addresses ag land loss that might be of interest, [“Land Use Policy Solutions to Stem Agricultural Land Loss.”](#)

Financial Summary

The financial summary was updated for December 2024 and reflects easement properties closed and recorded.

Administrative

Officer Elections, Chair & Vice Chair (2025-26)

Jim made a motion for the nomination of Scott DeGraw as board chair and for Andrea Xaver is vice chair—for the 2025-26 officer term. Audrey seconded the motion. All were in favor.

CFAB 2025 Meeting Dates

January 14	May 13	September 9
February 11	June 10	October 14 (tbd)
March 11	July 8	November 11
April 8	August 12 (tbd)	December 9

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 AM