

Skagit County Conservation Futures Advisory Board
Meeting Summary
February 11, 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keith Morrison At Large |
| <input 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
Jenn Johnson, Skagit County Public Works
Kai Ottesen, Belle Bean Services, LLC
Taylor Scott, Skagit County Public Works

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

Review Agenda, Introductions

Agenda approved.

Review January 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 357 acres and 10 development rights.

Application Property Scoring/Review

FLP 259 (A&B)

The group reviewed and scored FLP property #259, comprising of 107 acres and 2 development rights in greater La Conner area off LaconnerWhitney Road.

The property scored as follows: *Core Criteria 80, Edge Criteria 48*. The property scored highest in Core Criteria, which emphasizes the protection of a critical mass of farmland protecting agricultural viability.

The group discussed including notes along with future appraisal requests, highlighting any potential discretionary notes for the appraiser awareness.

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. This is the working title for a possible additional regulatory-compensation option

for farmland owners who have an existing residence on a non-conforming lot in the Ag-NRL zone; and who prefer to keep their home part of their farmland.

Margery notes that most "heritage" small farms in Skagit were built well before Comp plan regulations. The home sites on these older farms can't often be segregated into one acre, as required by the ALP (the Ag Land Preservation code that allows a legal subdivision with requirement that home site be one acre.)

Draft survey was circulated to CFAB members for input.

FLP 'Protected Farmland' Signs in Key Visible Locations

Sarah displayed three proposed locations for 'Protected Farmland' signs. These three signs will mimic the existing Protected Farmland sign at the Conway roundabout (Wylie property, installed 2010). Meyer Sign will print the signs, Skagit County roads crew will install.

Five 30" x 30" *FLP Protected* signs are installed around the county:

- Three on Gardner Road (63110): Mile Post 0.105, Mile Post 0.934, Mile Post 1.05
- Two on Cook Road (63000): Mile Post 2.368, Mile Post 2.84

One 48" x 96" *Protected Farmland* sign is installed at the Conway roundabout, a partnership sign between FLP-SPF-TNC for the jointly funded Wylie farmland protection project in 2010, FLP-140.

The group discussed additional location options, and alternate smaller signs.

Annual Report 2024

Sarah discussed distribution alternative for the upcoming 2024 Farmland Legacy Annual Report.

Skagit Succession Support (Land Transfer Navigator Grant)

February 26, 2025—Wednesday

Sarah shared that she's convening a stakeholder roundtable, ideally no more than 20 people each representing an ag viability, food security or land access group in Skagit County. 3-5 PM at the new Mount Vernon Library Commons. Groups represented include:

- WWAA, Skagit Farm Bureau, Viva, Ag Advisory Board, SPF, NWABC (Ag Business Center), SCD, WSU Extension, Puget Sound Food Hub, EDASC- Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County; Skagit County Food Policy Council.
- As a reminder: County succession and land access news release from October 2024:
 - [Skagit County Farmland Legacy Program Part of National Focus to Help Farmers Protect, Transfer, and Access Land](#)

Monitoring Updates

Kai reported that easement monitoring work for the year has begun, with no issues to report. He and Sarah are working on tracking system improvements for existing easements.

Member Updates

Scott shared that he reviewed the appraisal of the recent Skagit Land Trust acquisition.

Sarah made mention of loss of Skagit Valley Herald's agricultural-beat reporter Racquel Muncy.

Plus, Sarah shared two recent news articles:

1. SVH, February 7, 2025 article "[Skagit County agriculture community participates in annual Ag Summit](#)"
2. Jan 22, 2025 article from Capitol Press "[Foreign investment in U.S. ag land increased in 2023](#)" states that foreign-held agricultural land represents 3.6% of all privately owned agricultural land in the U.S.

Financial Summary

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

Administrative

CFAB 2025 Meeting Dates

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 AM