

Skagit County Conservation Futures Advisory Board
Meeting Summary
May 14, 2024

Members in Attendance

Scott DeGraw Andrea Xaver Audrey Gravley Margery Hite Owen Peth Sarah Stoner

Members Absent

Jim Glackin
Keith Morrison

Staff and Others in Attendance

David Hedlin, Hedlin Farms
Bob Rose, Conservation Consultant for Hedlin Farms
Jenn Johnson, Skagit County Public Works
Kai Ottesen, Belle Bean Services

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

Review Agenda, Introductions

Agenda approved.

Review April 9 Meeting Summary

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

Guests—Overview & Discussion: Hedlin Farms Protection Project

The group welcomed former CFAB member and owner of Hedlin Farms in La Conner, David Hedlin. David wanted to speak about the various elements at play regarding the current and future protection of his farmland property in La Conner. Also in attendance is Bob Rose, former executive director for Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland (1995-2006), who is working with the Hedlin family as a consultant on the protection project. The project is in the assessment phase.

David shared with the group six of their family’s desired outcomes, including: easements to protect Hedlin Farm holdings for the long term; long-term availability of drainage and irrigation water. Innovative projects have happened on Hedlin land, including a [Farming for Wildlife](#) project.

Property Updates

The group discussed updates on the properties currently in queue for agricultural conservation easements. The queued applicants encompass 575 acres and 13 development rights.

Sarah shared that this week, a Notice of Assignment circulated for Commissioner signature as a supporting document for the FLP-252 conservation easement. The notice document is intended to facilitate the landowner’s interest in using IRS code under section 1031 for a tax deferred exchange.

Instead of receiving the funds directly, the landowner is using the easement payment funds in the purchase of another farm property. The landowner works at the direction of their own financial advisors and attorneys in this tax deferral process.

Marketing & Application Process

Annual Report

Discussion of Farmland Legacy annual report with distribution that begins with May 25, 2024, as an insert into *Skagit Valley Herald's* weekend edition. Inserts the next Wednesday in *Anacortes American*, *La Conner Weekly News*, *Concrete Herald* (June edition) follow, depending on the papers' publication.

Social media and email pushes will also be part of the 2024 distribution of the annual report.

Operating Procedures for Advisory Board: Draft

The group discussed items for the operating procedures drafted in process for the Conservation Futures Advisory Board. These include policies around absences, meeting attendance expectations, and the use of proxy voting, among other procedural items. The procedures are based on established operating procedures of the Ag Advisory Board.

Applicant Property Scoring/Review

FLP 254

The group reviewed and scored FLP property #254, comprising of 247 acres and 6 development rights in Sedro-Woolley.

The property scored as follows: *Core Criteria 65, Edge Criteria 73*. The property scored highest in Edge Criteria, which emphasizes mitigation against development pressures.

FLP 255

The group reviewed and scored FLP property #255, comprising of 8.5 acres and 1 development right in Mount Vernon.

The property scored as follows: *Core Criteria 29, Edge Criteria 37*. The property scored highest in Edge Criteria, which emphasizes the protection from non-agricultural development.

Monitoring Updates

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

Member Updates

Margery shared that Emmet Wild, Skagit Conservation District, has made note that more and more operations in Skagit County are farming small acreages—three or four acres—and making a living.

Financial Summary

The financial summary is updated for May 2024 and reflects easement properties closed and recorded.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 AM