

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

**Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, September 10, 2013

**Members in Attendance:**

Keith Wiggers	Carolyn Kelly
Andrea Xaver	Scott DeGraw

**Staff in Attendance:**

Linda Christensen, Skagit County  
Dan Berentson, Skagit County

**Others in Attendance:**

Allen Rozema, Skagitationians to Preserve Farmland

**Open**

Meeting opened at 7:10 a.m.

**Agenda Review**

It was suggested that the member updates be moved towards the end of the meeting today and for upcoming meetings giving county staff the opportunity to excuse themselves earlier in the meeting if necessary.

**Meeting Minutes**

Minor corrections were made to the August 13 meeting minutes. Linda will e-mail a final copy to all and upon approval via e-mail these can be final. Keith Wiggers moved to approve the August 13, 2013 meeting minutes upon approval of the final corrections and Andrea Xaver seconded. The motion carried.

**Financial Report**

Linda Christensen reported that two easements have closed recently. Several others will be processed in the coming weeks.

**Old Business**

NRCS New Easement Criteria

It was suggested that a letter be written coming from the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to USDA/NRCS informing them that prior to closings, the county needs to be formally notified if any new easement criteria language is required. The CFAC is asking Kendra Smith to write the letter for BCC approval.

### CFAC 2014 Budget

Andrea asked that the CFAC receive a copy of the draft 2014 budget document for the Farmland Legacy Program.

### Skagitians to Preserve Farmland (SPF) MOU

Several comments were provided on hard copy materials. This material is available upon request.

Keith felt that the Farmland Legacy Program (FLP) could carry forward without the MOU. Executed agreements should be based on individual projects. The FLP already works cooperatively with SPF and other agencies without formal agreements.

Andrea is concerned about future change regarding who will be future board of commissioners where the goals of the program may change or not. We don't want to lock ourselves into an agreement. A pledge would be easier, perhaps, and more succinct.

Scott DeGraw said the MOU draft language can be narrowed.

Carolyn Kelly strongly feels the FLP needs help with its Strategic Plan and that the county does not have the staff or money to move forward on many aspects of this plan. She also mentioned that the signs should be installed prior to winter. It was suggested that perhaps instead of a MOU, it could be titled a cooperative working agreement.

It was suggested that a statement of intent or a pledge statement might be more appropriate and keep the document simple.

Scott and Andrea and Keith agreed that FLP and SPF should have an agreement regarding placing of signs.

Allen Rozema will revise the MOU and draft a new document based on the CFAC comments.

### USDA Easement

Carolyn said that some 2013 applicants are wondering why their easements are not being processed and thought there was direction give to Kendra earlier in the year to go forward without USDA funding. Carolyn would like an easement cash flow document to be presented at the next meeting. Dan Berentson would like to invite Trisha Logue, the county's Budget & Finance Director to also attend the next meeting to present an overview on how the county budget works and cash flow requirements. The CFAC Board supported this idea.

**New Business**

CFAC Membership

Board of Commissioner, Ron Wesen, made a recommendation to appoint Owen Peth to replace Allan Merritt from District 1. The CFAC Board felt Owen would make a strong addition to the Board. Dan will ask Commissioner Wesen to notify Mr. Peth and a resolution and letter of recommendation will be forthcoming.

**Member Update**

Andrea announced that Carol Ehlers is no longer a Skagit County Planning Commissioner and that Kevin Meenaghan is the replacement for District No. 1. Andrea also said that several dump trucks loaded with soil have been seen coming out of the wetland mitigation bank at the Wildland Bank. She said that the purpose for wetland mitigation bank is to protect wetland creatures and there could be harm done by removing this material.

Allen reported on behalf of the Farm, Fish, Flood Initiative, (FFI) subcommittee that is taking a close look at the current health of the agriculture industry. They are working on a strategy on how to protect farmland by using a hydrodynamic model tool, identifying funding sources, develop public policy, and seeking ways to improve stewardship and take advantage of volunteer programs. It will take an estimated \$3 million to move forward with a strategic plan to protect 20 thousand acres in the next 25 years. Approximately \$1 million already is funded through the county’s Farmland Legacy Program.

Carolyn reported that the Skagit Watershed Council Executive Director interviews were conducted last week. A candidate has been selected and Commissioner Dahlstedt will speak with that person today. Carolyn also gave a beaver update in regards to restoration projects. Whatcom Conservation District recently was in a legal situation for flooding on a golf course due to a restoration project.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Linda Christensen

Approved by the CFAC Board on:

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Chair Carolyn Kelly