



SKAGIT COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

GARY ROWE, County Administrator

KENDRA SMITH, Natural Resources Coordinator

Minutes October 3, 2005

Meeting opened 7:00 a.m. October 3, 2005

Present: Dave Chamberlain, Dick Whitmore, Aubrey Stargell, Lisa Cassidy, Chuck Parker, Gordy Iverson, Fred Loffer, Al Craney, Tim Raschko, Ken Osborn and Andy Blachly. Staff Kendra Smith. Absent: Paul Kriegel, Chuck Parker.

Introductions of FAB members and guest: Dennis Creel from Hampton. Dennis has been with Hampton for 30 years and has been appointed the policy coordinator regarding WFPA. He is looking for feedback from this Board to take back and help understand area specific issues and improve working relations.

Minutes not yet submitted for the August meeting. Minutes also needed from the April meeting from Tim.

Discussion Items:

1. DNR, Jim Cahill, will be present at the next FAB meeting to present and take input on Blanchard Mountain.
2. Gary Christensen's letter to the BoCC and Kendra, in response to Paul's letter to Gary and the BOCC. These were regarding proposed amendments to the Comp Plan from the FAB. Concern was raised over several of the FAB's recommendations for amendments to the Comp Plan not being passed onto the Planning Commission. Reasons given were that there was not a record to support some of the recommendations. The FAB felt that besides the consultants and Planning Departments recommendations theirs should also be moved forward for consideration. They questioned why neither the Planning Dept nor the consultants had helped them build a record or let them know that they needed to do the work themselves and build a record. The recommendations dropped included a 50% density incentive to cluster in Secondary Forest; the creation of a Compensatory Incentive Program (CIP) for helping compensate lands being taken out of timber harvest due to critical areas; and discontinuing a tax incentive for lands taken out of forest production, i.e. a conversion, unless a forest management plan was strictly followed.

The FAB also raised concerns over the fact that they had put so much time and energy into coming up with language that would ensure the viability of the forest practice industry, not create a financial burden on the County, protect both the forest resources and the critical areas, decrease infrastructure and lessen the threats of more building within the forest lands. The group calculated there was more than 300 years of experience amongst them. Most of the members recalled their warnings and predictions on what would be the 'state of the industry' as more regulations have been put into place. The first being the loss of the USFS lands from just about any harvesting at all. The FAB discussed each of the recommendations that were dropped and stated to evaluate how a record should be developed since the consultants and Planning department were not putting one together, but rather more concerned with passing the issues off in another study. The following points were made:

Density bonus for clustering:

1. This was not in conflict with the GMA because it was protecting the resource from a bottom up approach and essentially limited all future development in the forest lands.
2. This would protect the rural character and not only lessen the infrastructure, but would be better for fire protection and control.
3. Land would be protected with a NRLE (easement) and require an active forest management plan. The NRLE is harder to dissolve than the threat of future development as populations keep increasing.
4. Land base is being taken out of production due to development (cheap land with views), rules/regulations and programs such as offered by land conservancies.

Compensatory Incentive Program (CIP):

1. The FPR, the HCP and SEPA all provide for habitat and riparian protections that exceed any other State's in the nation. Unlike for Ag, lands have been taken out of production (without any sort of compensation) with adaptive management monitoring occurring after the fact. The Industry has been at the table working on solutions. In most cases the loss of land to protective buffers has taken between 20-28% of the land base. Members of the FAB expressed that they do not want to be subsidized and take money for their loses, but would like to find a feasible compensation in return for what is being provided in the name of public good. The purchase of a development right(s) depending on the areas lost would work if money was available, but this does not appear to be the case. Another mechanism would be to grant a development right, which could be transferred (but since no program currently exists...) or used on the site impacted if other than industrial forest. A CaRD would be required.

Tax incentives for lands out of production:

1. The County is subject to lose tax revenues. If land is no longer used for forest practices, then back taxes need to be paid and all rules should apply that would to any other conversion.
2. Though the County still receives PL 106-393 funding, that source of revenue will soon be gone.
3. The lost revenues could be used for many other County programs including helping compensate lands removed from production due to habitat and fisheries protections.

The following members of the FAB volunteered to work on various parts of the Record to help satisfy the Planning Department's concerns:

Andy
Ken
Aubrey
Dave
Dick
Tim

Meeting adjourned 9:00 a.m. Next meeting November 7, 2005, 7:00 a.m. County.