



**SKAGIT COUNTY FOREST
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Minutes March 15, 2010

Present: Al, Dave, Aubrey, Tim, Paul, Gordy, Chuck, Steve, Lisa and Tom

Absent: Fred and Ken

Guest: Bonnie____, Devin Smith, Paul Wagner, Samantha Chang, Ryan Walter, Gary Sorenson, Jeff McGowan, Gary Christensen and John Cooper

- I. Call to Order and Introductions
- II. Minutes- Gordy moved and Paul seconded to approve the minutes with the amendment to make clear that the platted Lands Bill only made it through the Senate. Passed unanimous.*
- III. Public Comments- none.
- IV. Discussion
 - a. Platted Lands- The House did not have time to hear the bill, and it didn't appeared to have opposition. Commissioner Dillon worked hard supporting this and contacted Senator Haugen trying to get it passed. It is very rare that a bill makes it through the first time so attempts will be made again next year.
 - b. Bill Wallace retirement. It will be April 30, contact the DNR for reservations. Gordy moved and Aubrey seconded to make sure the BoCC was made aware of the new opening at the regional director level and to ask to be part of the selection committee.*
 - c. Assessment of the conversion of working forests- Shared information received by Al Craney and Samantha Chang were distributed and discussed. Kendra asked if the FAB would be willing to put together a subcommittee that could meet on a regular basis to help put together some thoughts and figure/facts on this topic. This is the information needed to make sound future land use decisions. A subcommittee of Aubrey and Al were formed with Samantha offering to help if she has the time. Samantha asked for the group to clarify specifically what they would be looking for since the issue is so extensive. It would be necessary to attach a definition of conversion to any work so that it is clear was to what is being discussed. Gordy commented that id is bigger that purely conversion...it is the USE of those lands. One of the questions asked was 'what is the conversion from the HCP?' There was some more discussion regarding Blanchard Mt. and it was agreed that it would be good to look at the Assessors data on open space applications/permits to try and understand the extent of lands in open space category. Thoughts were to examine 3 areas within Skagit County and then try to extrapolate from there on the rest of the landscape to try and get a general picture. The 3 areas would be 1. More/bigger buffers, 2. More houses and 3. Preservation, which would include habitat restoration.
 - d. Small landowner information- Fixed buffer widths by site class- Al Craney provided John Cooper with a press release from the DNR. He has the template. Site Class I is 145', Site Class V is 75' There is a range in between and most of ours here are a Site III at 101'.

- e. TNC tour-April 16th 8:30 a.m.
 - f. Nooksack Wild and Scenic River designation- Devin Smith (representing himself) and Bonnie ____ who is working on the river designation. Devin and Bonnie presented why they would like the County support in obtaining a Wild and Scenic designation for the Nooksack River. Their primary concern was trying to block hydro plants from being developed along the river. The FAB had the following comments: There are rules in place today that protect and buffer the river. Hydro is the cleanest energy to date and in the future there may be a way to place hydro on the river and with conversions eliminate any harm that has been done to salmon in the past. They don't want to limit future technology just because there is an unclaimed fear that something bad may happen someday. Devin and Bonnie were asked if there were any hydro projects in the plans and they answered no. The FAB said they were sorry but really couldn't support this request based on the fact that these projects really do end up costing the industry money and time that is required to defend frivolous lawsuits. The FAB pointed out how the river really is protected from anything else through all of the regulations already in place.
 - g. Conservation Subdivision Interim Ordinance- Ryan Walters, Jeff McGowan and Gary Sorenson. This would allow conservation organizations to by-pass the full subdivision regulations that can often be quite costly when in fact the subdivision is being done to protect lands from development and therefore doesn't need to include all of the subdivision provisions. There was discussion as to why government finds ways to help themselves out of predicaments, but when similar situations arise for the private sector they don't seem to be so accommodating. The presenters pointed out that this may help the industry if a conservation group wished to purchase some of the required buffers for more restoration work and the industry could then get paid for the buffers. The FAB said it would be unlikely for conservation groups to want to buy lands that were already required to be buffered. However, they did see that there was some potential advantage to have something like this adapted. They felt it needed more work and more input from all of the resource industries. It was also pointed out that given the economic times it made no sense to ask for money (that regardless of where people thought it came from was in fact tax dollars) to purchase lands that were already protected. Somewhere government had to stop spending money.
- V. Next meeting topics- more discussion on forest facts and figures and acres of conversions.

Adjourn- 9:14 a.m.