



**SKAGIT COUNTY FOREST  
ADVISORY BOARD**

Dave Chamberlain, Chairman  
Lisa Cassidy            Ken Osborn  
Al Craney                Chuck Parker  
Gordon Iverson        Tom Nelson  
Paul Kriegel             Aubrey Stargell  
Tim Raschko            Steve Tift  
Fred Loffer  
Kendra Smith, Staff

**Minutes**

June 19, 2019

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

- I. Agenda: Ken requested to have the Open Space Tax exemption be added as a discussion item to the agenda today. FAB agreed.
- II. Minutes: Gordy moved and Chuck seconded to approve May 2019 minutes. Passed unanimous.
- III. Discussion:
  - a. Mineral Overlay- As a follow up to last month's discussion the FAB discussed what activities are allowed in the designated MOL in the Comp Plan. They also talked about the 3 acre pit size for owner use. This may be an item the FAB would like to talk to the Planning Department about at some future date.
  - b. Open Space Tax (OST) exemption: With talk about the potential Rate and Charge (as allowed by RCW 89.08) request from the Conservation District, Ken wanted to have a discussion about other potential funding sources that could help with getting forest management plans in place. The FAB all agreed that if a property is put into an open space status (specifically timber) where taxes are not collected (or at a reduced rate) it should absolutely be managed per the RCW. They listed several reasons for enforcing the required management plan (environmental- both health and fire suppression; revenues to the County; wood to the mills; jobs). The FAB moved (by Ken) to draft a letter to the BoCC suggesting the County follow up on the OST parcels to ensure the forest management plans are being implemented as written and required by the state law. Al seconded. Discussion: Generally speaking, since the FAB supports forest management, which is also a direct tax benefit to the County they see by implementing the plans it may also help the County pay for a person to write and enforce the plans. Approved unanimous. Ken volunteered to draft the letter and send it via email to the FAB for their input before sending to the BoCC.
  - c. Skagit Conservation funding (Rate and Charge RCW 89.08): Al told the FAB that he appreciated the FAB's input on Bill Blake's presentation and Bill understood the concerns the FAB had regarding the amount of funding going towards a forester to help with management plans versus an urban forester. Al said the numbers and graphs had been reworked and they would be sent to the FAB. Bill Blake also said he'd come to the next meeting to explain changes. Al also emphasized that this is not a tax per se but is a method offered in the RCW to allow for the conservation districts to get funding for their programs and activities. It is a per parcel rate except for large landowners. He also restated that the Conservation District is going this direction since their other funding sources have dried up and the County is not providing the District with any funding. He noted that other districts have started to go in this direction (Grays Harbor, Clallam and maybe Mason). NRCS only helps with funding in the SW counties. Kendra asked if it

would help if the County Commissioners were to put a request to the Washington State office of NRCS to potentially help in Skagit. Al said he was 100% sure NRCS wouldn't do it. Ken moved writing a letter to the BoCC in support of the Rate and Charge funding. Seconded. Discussion included Paul's concern about the actual amounts of this fund going to help traditional forestry. There appears to be lots of resources for ag, but not forestry. Urban forestry is not where they'd like to see the funding go and the majority of the parcels are within cities (which indicates an urban forester). Other members were concerned how the rate of \$5 would really be imposed. Dave questioned how long this "would be on the books". There does not appear to be a sunset clause and who makes the decision on an annual basis as to how the funding is to be spent? What if the Conservation Board decides they'd rather not spend the money on a forester one year. What assurances are there? The FAB all agreed that there is always the good intentions but often the underlying consequences come as well. With a friendly amendment Ken's motion was amended to have "Al, on behalf of the FAB, draft a letter to the BoCC supporting taking advantage of the State RCW 89.08 for Rates and Charges to go to the Skagit Conservation District; and to have the FAB review the letter at their next meeting." Seconded and passed unanimously.

- d. Updates: Kendra shared the FPB motions and directions to policy with the FAB as well as Commissioner Janicki's resignation from the Board. The FAB spent time talking about the need to be in Olympia and participating in TFW as well as with the BNR. Kendra shared the work continuing on the BM23 for water typing. Updates included the Principle's meeting Commissioner Frantz held, the Policy/FPB/tech workgroup subcommittee for water typing, SLO template work and the FPB's decision on the continuation of reviewing studies for the Type N rule making. The BNR was handed a petition requesting a formal policy on climate change as it affects state land sales. The FAB feels that this may actually be of benefit as the public understands how much they actually do with respect to carbon sinks and fuel loading management. They talked about getting Bruce Lippke involved from University of Washington Institute of Forest Resources.

IV. Adjourn 9:04 am