



SKAGIT COUNTY FOREST ADVISORY BOARD

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Minutes

8/15/19

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

Guest: Assessor Dave Thomas and Annette DeVoe from the Assessor's Office; Samantha Chang and Amanda Roberts from USFS

Meeting called to order and Dave asked the attendees for a moment of silence in memory of Paul Kriegel. He will be missed more than anything and has served as one of the original FAB members since 2004. He

- I. Agenda. Dave asked if the AFAB would approve an amendment to the agenda by adding Dave and Annette from the Assessor's office to the discussion items as well as the USFS. Approved.
- II. Minutes. Due to only Paul, Ken and Dave being present at the last meeting there were no minutes for July. Ken moved and Chuck seconded to approve June's minutes. Passed unanimous.
- III. Introductions: Assessor Dave Thomas and Annette DeVoe from the Assessor's Office; Samantha Chang and Amanda Roberts from USFS. Amanda will be the new contract administrator previously from Ak and Tx.
- IV. Open Space (OS) Taxation- Ken explained why the FAB wanted Dave and Annette to attend the meeting. The FAB's largest concern is the issue of a of lack of management on lands classified OS. Dave Thomas said he realized there was a lack of compliance with the lands in the forest designation and this is a tough issue. Their office is almost done with an ag land audit and will may be have a chance to move to the forest lands. They don't have the means to police the non-compliance. Annette explained that in 2015 OS timber was changed to OS Forest lands where 5-20 ac were combined. When properties change ownership the Assessor's office can then do a check to see if the landowners are following their management plan. She also noted that the law was changed to have current use open space and many landowners have been wanting to transfer their open space designation (leaving the designated forest land classification). This would mean a management plan is not required and the lands are just left totally unmanaged. Most FAB members felt this would be terrible for forests all the way around. Like Island and San Juan counties, Annette would like to have a community rating system in place before landowners are granted the OS designation showing how the community benefits from the parcel being placed into OS. There are currently 350 parcels in the designation. Administrative staff oversee this program now and they are not equipped to have any boots on the ground at this time. They want a solid plan in place to move forward. Discussion was then about a windfall to the county. Only gets 4% to general fund with school districts getting some. They feel they are 2 years out for getting a plan in place, but they need support to do so. Ken moved to have the FAB support the Assessor's Office in attempting to verify the use of designated forest land as it relates to forest management. Gordy seconded. Passed unanimous.

- V. USFS Update - Samantha gave an update reporting about savage sales the USFS have been trying to put up for sales in the Baker Lake area. They have done the first “Good neighbor” contract with the DNR off the north fork of the Nooksack in Whatcom. The DNR will be taking over the contracts They have a flat budget so really can’t do any work even with having 2-3 million visitors/year. She noted that it was a very bad budget for roads as well. Amanda has done contract sales in other parts of the country and is up for the challenge with working on the Mt Baker/Snoqualmie Forest.
- VI. FPB Update- Tom gave an update on the August meeting specifically noting that the FPB should have taken over the rule making for the water typing because they have not moved the process along any faster than Policy had and now it is apparent that with additional science needed the adaptive management process should have been followed. He had asked the FPB members to give it back to Policy. Conservation and WDFW were not in agreement. It was noted that the Conservation caucus has long waited for Policy to be by passed and issues go just to the FPB. FAB talked about why it’s in the conservation caucus best interest to have it this way. At the end of the meeting DNR put up a slide which appeared to re-define fish habitat. Half of the caucuses were furious for the deviation from the Forest Fish Report and HCP. There was discussion about current meetings occurring. The FPB also had discussions and comments on the June Principle’s meeting and the attempt for a re-commitment to the TFW forum. There was consensus that progress has come to a standstill, which was upsetting to many. DNR stated that the facilitator will be doing more work this fall and a contract for \$150,000 drafted.
- VII. SLO template- Kendra reported that the subcommittee has made progress on both the hardwood conversion and the thinning templates and are reviewing the science reports on the science-based proposal. It appears that certain prescriptions fall within +/- of the current rule probably should be deemed acceptable in lieu of the small landowner legislation.
- VIII. Adjourn 9:05