

**Skagit County Forest Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes/Summary
Wednesday, June 3, 2026**

Attendance:

Member	Present	Absent
Chamberlain, Dave	X	
Craney, Al	X	
Iverson, Gordon	X	
Hillery, Jamie, Chair	X	
McCall, Kris	X	
Nielsen, David		X
Dryden, Joel	X	
Raschko, Tim		X
Stargell, Aubrey		X
Tift, Steve	X	
Janicki, Peter	X	
Gold, John	X	

Others present: Jessica Espy, Hampton; Nick Kunz, Skagit Conservation District; Eric Johnson, FAB Coordinator, Matt Comisky, AFRC, Robby Eckroth, AICP, Senior Planner, Skagit County Planning and Development Services

May 6, 2026, Forest Advisory Board (FAB) Meeting Minutes. Approved

Three items were added to the June 3, 2026, FAB Meeting:

- FAB Membership
- DNR Proposed Land Exchange
- Potential AFRC Associate Membership

Brief Meeting Recap

The Forest Advisory Board (FAB) meeting focused on several key topics including:

- Education Tours
- Reconveyance Discussions
- Skagit County Clean Energy Advisory Group
- Potential New Forest Advisory Board Members
- Recommending that Skagit County become and Associate member of American Forest Resource Council (AFRC)

Significant time was spent discussing the issue of “Reconveyance” of State Forest Transfer Land back to Skagit County from the State of Washington. FAB members reviewed materials that discussed the concept of transferring trust lands back to county control, with concerns raised about DNR's fulfillment of fiduciary obligations and potential legal strategies.

The meeting also included an update from Robby Eckroth, AICP, Senior Planner, Skagit County Planning and Development Services about Skagit County's Clean Energy Advisory Group. FAB is invited to appoint a member to the Clean Energy Advisory Group.

Other topics covered included updates on timber sales, sustainable harvest calculations, and Forest and Fish Adaptive Management Program

Educational Tours

The group discussed the upcoming educational tours that are planned:

Woods Tour Planning Meeting

Jessica Espy provided a quick update on the annual Woods Tour on June 26th that will start at the Boys and Girls club in Arlington/Snohomish County. Jessica reported there are 41 attendees signed up and have space for 65 attendees. FAB members encouraged Commissioner Burns to attend the June 26th tour, describing it as valuable forestry education for decision makers.

Teacher Event Planning Discussion

Nick provided updates on the upcoming teacher tour, outlining plans to visit Blanchard State Forest, Pacific Rim Tone Woods, and Baker Lake.

DNR Forest Health Advisory Committee Tour

Nick outlined plans for a Forest Health Advisory Tour in the Skagit County area on September 22nd including viewing Anacortes Forest fire site and Pilchuck Tree Farm to highlight forest health and management issues and demonstrate the facets of active forest management versus a neglected forest. Nick is working on the tour with Jen Watkins (DNR) and Jenny Coe (State Conservation Commission).

Reconveyance

Two documents regarding the subject of “Reconveyance” were provided to FAB members including a report from Washington State Association of Counties and a Memorandum from Chair Hillery to the Skagit County Board of County Commissioners. The group

discussed concerns about DNR's management of State Forest Transfer Lands in Skagit County, including the Department of Natural Resources not fulfilling their fiduciary obligations as required in the “Skamania Decision” by the Washington State Supreme Court. The group discussed the range of options that could include potential legal strategies as well as seeking legislative reconveyance of State Forest Transfer Lands back to Skagit County. FAB members were reminded of Skagit County’s past litigation over DNR's carbon credit proposals as a potential roadmap for future litigation. The discussion concluded with plans for continued follow-up meetings and future input on the topic from Clallam County Commissioner Randy Johnson, the County Representative on the Board of Natural Resources, and Paul Jewell, Government Relations Director, Washington State Association of Counties.

The group reviewed and discussed the FAB briefing on “Reconveyance” to the Skagit County Board of County Commissioners on June 2, 2026, by John, Peter, Jamie and Eric. Materials were shared in advance to the BoCC and the group shared background information and lead discussion about the potential of “Reconveyance”, and the myriads of issues that need attention, research, analysis, and answers. It was noted that there was generally positive consensus from the BoCC to continue looking into “Reconveyance” including gathering more background information on some legal, legislative, operational, and political implications.

Skagit County/AFRC Membership Discussion

The group discussed Skagit County's potential membership in American Forest Resource Council (AFRC). Matt Comisky shared the benefits to Skagit County for being a member, and the access to information regarding both State and Federal land forest management activities. FAB members approved a motion to recommend to the Skagit County Board of County Commissioners that Skagit County join AFRC as an Associate Member.

Board of Natural Resources

Eric noted that there was only one proposed timber sale in Skagit County approved at the June 2nd Board of Natural Resources, with three beneficiaries receiving funding:

- Common School
- Charitable, Educational, Penal and Reformatory Institutions
- Normal Schools.

Matt Comisky expressed concerns about DNR's presentation on forest inventory systems and noted that public engagement is restricted in the sustainable harvest planning

process. The group discussed ongoing workshops for Eastern Washington's sustainable harvest plan update.

Forest Advisory Board Membership Discussion

FAB discussed membership composition for the Forest Advisory Board and the need to replace two FAB positions (one resignation [Tim Raschko] and one non-participating member). Eric provided background material regarding the current vacancies, excerpts from the FAB enabling resolution, and the current membership roster. FAB members reviewed the requirement for 12 members with 4 appointees per board of county commissioners serving 3-year staggered terms. The discussion centered on identifying candidates to represent timber sectors and trust land beneficiaries, particularly focusing on potential school district representatives given that schools receive about one-third of county timber sale funds. The group agreed to gather nominations for two open seats by the next meeting, with the intention of making recommendations to the BoCC on two FAB appointments at that time. FAB members also wanted to find a way to thank and recognize outgoing FAB members.

Clean Energy Advisory Group Appointment

Robby Eckroth, AICP, Senior Planner, Skagit County Planning and Development Services presented an opportunity for the Forest Advisory Board to appoint a member to the new Clean Energy Advisory Group, which will help develop development regulations and county code for clean energy projects including solar, battery storage, small modular nuclear reactors, and renewable fuels. Wind power will not be considered. The group discussed potential challenges with the significant time commitment (3-hour meetings on from 9 a.m. – noon, approximately every 3 weeks, through September) and whether someone from the forest industry outside FAB could serve instead. It was agreed to discuss internally and provide a response within a couple of weeks to hopefully get one or more FAB members to participate in or share the position.

Forest and Fish Adaptive Management Program

The meeting also covered updates on the CMER Committee and TFW Policy Committee, particularly regarding a non-consensus science document on amphibian declines in the Hard Rock Phase III Study.

Proposed Department of Natural Resources Land Exchange

Eric briefly reviewed a DNR proposed land exchange/transfer involving parcels in Benton, Kitsap, Snohomish, Skagit, and Clark counties. FAB agreed to review the DNR land transfer

proposal at the next meeting and recommend to the BoCC if any comments, pro or con, should be provided from Skagit County.

Actions and Decisions

- Eric will follow up with County Administrators on appropriate recognition and thanks for outgoing FAB members.
- Eric will provide maps and materials to FAB members regarding a proposed DNR land transfer that has Skagit County as the potential recipient of additional state lands. Eric will also invite Robert Winslow with DNR, to the July 1st FAB Meeting to provide an overview of the proposed land transfer and be available for questions.
- FAB took formal action to recommend that the BoCC consider having Skagit County become an Associate Member of the American Forest Resource Council.
- Jamie will follow up with Peter Janicki to see if there is any more FAB needs to do about oversized/overload vehicle permits.
- Eric will follow up with County Administration on requests from Commissioner Burns at the June 2nd work session on legal analysis and previous litigation regarding Department of Natural Resources/Board of Natural Resources management activities and potential reconveyance
- Continue to support outreach for the Woods Tour, especially potential Skagit and Snohomish County attendees.
- Nick will get Eric synopsis of the education tours he is engaged in for future minutes.
- Follow up on potential FAB members to participate in the Clean Energy Advisory Group.
- All members encouraged to think about nominations for new FAB members and bring nominations to July 1st FAB Meeting.