

**Skagit County Forest Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes/Summary
Wednesday, April 1, 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: Skagit County Commissioner Ron Wesen; Jessica Espy, Hampton; Susan David; Hampton, Nick Kunz, Skagit Conservation District; Eric Johnson, FAB Coordinator

March 4, 2026, Meeting Minutes. Approved

Brief Meeting Recap

The April 1, 2026, Forest Resources Advisory Board (FAB) meeting focused primarily on two major topics:

- Upcoming tours and educational workshops. There are four tours/educational activities over the next several months including the tour set for the Skagit County Commissioners on April 17th which will showcase forestry operations and discuss the impact of new rules like the Non-Product Forest (NP) rule that will result in reduction of forest harvest and in turn revenue loss to the county and junior taxing districts.
- Discussing Skagit County State Forest Board Transfer Lands and preparing a request for a briefing with Skagit County Commissioners regarding history, issues, and options associated with reconveyance and management of Skagit County Forest Board Transfer Lands.

“Np Rule” Amicus Brief

FABs’ request to the Skagit County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) regarding participating in an Amicus Brief on the adoption of the “Np Rule” was forwarded to the BoCC. The BoCC is discussing the issue during an upcoming meeting. Eric shared he has been discussing the issue with other County’s that share similar concerns about the impact of the rule’s adoption. Information and charts were shared illustrating an expected 4.3% loss in harvestable timber and corresponding forest excise tax revenue in Skagit County due to new Np rule. There is significantly greater loss of forest excise tax revenue in other counties.

Skagit County Forestry Tour - County Commissioners

FAB discussed plans for an upcoming tour on April 17th for County Commissioners, which will focus on second growth management and the economic value of forestry to Skagit County. The tour will include stops to discuss Np rule issues and feature strategic locations, with transportation planned for approximately 10-12 attendees in one van. The group expressed their appreciation to Joel, Peter and Nick for all their work in preparing and planning for the trip.

Woods Tour Planning Meeting

Jessica Espy and Susan David shared information about the upcoming Woods Tour on June 26th in Snohomish County this year, marking a change from previous tours held in Whatcom County. The tour's theme will be "landscape mosaic" and will feature stops at Pilchick Tree Farm and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) locations. Moving the tour to Snohomish County will provide an opportunity to expand outreach to a broader audience than those attending in the past. Susan mentioned seeking sponsors and donations for the event, if anyone is interested.

Teacher Event Planning Discussion

Nick provided an update on plans for an upcoming event targeting teachers, schools, superintendents, elected officials, and public leaders, with a capacity of around 60 attendees. Teacher workshop is scheduled for July 14-16.

DNR Forest Health Advisory Committee Tour

Nick updated FAB on a DNR Forest Health Advisory field tour in the Skagit County area on September 22, 2026. Nick is working with DNR staff to firm up details for the tour to showcase relevant forest health issues in the Skagit County area and would like to potentially invite other local and state officials as well.

State Forest Board Transfer Lands

FAB reviewed a memo prepared by Eric and discussed the declining harvests and revenue from forest lands transferred to the state in the 1930s and how these lands were supposed to be held in trust to financially support the County and junior taxing districts. The discussion highlighted that revenue has significantly declined, with DNR selling much less timber than has been projected in the 10-year sustainable harvest plans. The group discussed potential reconveyance options and the importance of documenting the county's original understanding of the trust arrangement, like what Clallam County is doing, as a basis for future comparisons and potential action.

FAB discussed concerns about declining timber revenue and how timber harvests to meet the goal of the sustainable harvest plan has not been met for several decades, creating “arrearage” in unsold timber and associated revenue to Skagit County and junior taxing districts. Eric presented data showing declining timber harvest and revenue from Skagit County Forest Board Transfer Lands over the past 20 years, including a chart/graph that Nick put together.

The group discussed some of the legislative and historical context that resulted in the transfer of county forest lands to the state. FAB noted that a better understanding about this land transfer, and reviewing past records and deeds is an important research project and an important step that the County should undertake. FAB discussed potential approaches to address declining harvest volume and revenue and believe it is an appropriate time to discuss these issues with the BoCC. FAB believes that the County needs additional information and a better context to the issues to begin to put forward potential actions or pathways to ensure there is a true sustainable and predictable harvest from Skagit County’s Forest Board Transfer Lands.

FAB agreed to move forward by adopting a motion requesting an opportunity to brief the Skagit County Board of County Commissioners on these issues.

There were a variety of other items brought up, mentioned, or discussed by FAB members including:

- Concern about the Seattle City Light relicensing agreement that will result in additional land being taken out of private ownership and production, either agriculture or timber, for conservation purposes.
- Joel (who volunteered to represent FAB) provided a brief update on the initial work of the recently formed Skagit County Climate Impact Advisory Committee. The group initially seems to be focused on flooding and flood control and not forestry issues at this time.

- FAB discussed concerns about DNR's financial situation, with projections showing the Forest Development Account will very likely go negative within the next few months, potentially leading to budget realignment or staff reductions by 2026.
- FAB members expressed continued alarms about the challenges facing the timber industry in Washington state, including regulatory barriers, market pressures, and demographic changes affecting rural areas, despite the need for renewable wood products to support housing needs and expected population growth.
- Eric provided a brief update on the current activities of the Timber, Fish, and Wildlife (TFW) Policy Committee including a more in-depth analysis of the recommendations from a four-part study of the Adaptive Management Program by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife. One recommendation addressed the lack of consideration by TFW Policy Committee of the economic viability of the forest industry when developing new forest practice rules.
- Commissioner Wesen provided updates on the Seattle City Light relicensing process and expressed his appreciation to FAB members for their work. He indicated he welcomed a discussion with FAB about the Forest Board Transfer Lands and shared the concern about declining timber harvest volumes and funds to the County and junior taxing districts.

Actions and Decisions

- Joel, Nick, and Peter were doing a dry run of the April 17th County Commissioners tour route following the April 1 FAB meeting.
- Susan/Jessica: Send the Woods Tour flyer to Eric and group for distribution to contacts in Snohomish and Skagit counties.
- Group members: Distribute Woods Tour flyer to relevant contacts, particularly targeting teachers, schools, superintendents, elected officials, and local government representatives in Snohomish County and Commissioner Eisenhour.
- Interested members: Contact Susan regarding potential donations or van driving volunteer roles for the Woods Tour.
- FAB approved a motion by John Gold to request a briefing/work session with the BoCC regarding Skagit County's State Forest Board Lands:
 - FAB recommends the BoCC consider allocating resources to fully understand how, when and under what conditions the 84,000 acres of Forest Board Transfer Lands in Skagit County were transferred to the State; and

- Investigate alternatives to how, and under what circumstances, could the Skagit County State Forest Board Transfer Lands be reconveyed back to Skagit County to be managed in a sustainable manner to support the local forest products industry and revenue for the trust beneficiaries; and
- Directed Eric and Chair Hillery to finalize the briefing memo regarding the Skagit County State Forest Board Transfer Lands and submit to County Administration with BoCC briefing/meeting request.
- Eric: Work with Nick to update the 20-year Skagit County Forest Board Transfer Land revenue chart/graph with a future trend line showing projected harvests/revenue.
- Eric: Schedule a FAB update from Skagit County Public Works regarding recent storm damage/road washouts/construction schedule/ 6-year County Transportation Program, at a future meeting.