



# OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Washington State  
Conservation Commission  
PO Box 47721  
Olympia, WA 98504-7721  
360/407-6200  
Fax: 360/407-6215  
[www.scc.wa.gov](http://www.scc.wa.gov)

1  
2 The Farmland Preservation Task Force met on February 4, 2009 at the Natural Resource  
3 Conservation Service Office in Olympia, Washington. Chair Bob Hart called the meeting to order at  
4 9:28 am.

## 6 MEMBERS ATTENDED

7 Chair Bob Hart  
8 Don Munks, member  
9 Richard Thomason, member  
10 Dee Caputo, member  
11 Jeff Harlow, NRCS (sitting in for Roylene Rides at the Door)  
12 Fred Colvin, Member  
13 Rudy Plager, Member  
14 Lynn Bahrych, Member  
15 Lee Faulconer, Member  
16 Jeff Emtman, Member  
17 Sheryl Cox, Member

## COMMISSION STAFF

Mark Clark, Executive Director  
Ron Shultz, Policy and Intergovernmental Relations Director  
Josh Giuntoli, OFP Program Coordinator  
Lori Gonzalez, Administrative Assistant

## GUESTS

Kirsten Workman, Small Farms Coordinator  
Russell Fox, South of the Sound Community Farmland Trust  
Caitlin Krenn, South of the Sound Community Farmland Trust  
Peter Witt, Public Citizen

## 19 ADMINISTRATIVE

20 *Don Munks moved to approve the revised draft December 2008 Meeting Minutes. Commissioner*  
21 *Rudy Plager seconded. Motion passed.*

## 23 RE-ELECTION OF CHAIR

24 *Don Munks moved to re-elect Bob Hart as Chair of the Task Force and Sheryl Cox seconded the*  
25 *motion. Motion passed.*

## 27 UPDATE ON FEDERAL FARM BILL

28  
29 Ron Shultz discussed briefly that the Federal Farm Bill rules have just been released. There will be  
30 a public comment period through the end of March. We should have a better idea by the Task  
31 Force's May meeting on how those funds will be disbursed. Fred Colvin added that there is EQIP  
32 funds and there is roughly \$2 million coming to the state of Washington. Roylene Rides at the Door  
33 is working to understand the dynamic on how we can try to get more money for our state. Sheryl  
34 Cox asked how many types of programs in our state will be put on hold. It was stated that as of right  
35 now the Conservation Security Program is on hold for review.

## 37 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

38 Ron Shultz and Josh Giuntoli handed to the task force a list of bills that are currently of interest to  
39 farmland preservation and briefed the Task Force what they have actively been doing on the "Hill"  
40 in Olympia. Recently, the Commission did a presentation to the Senate Agriculture Committee on  
41 the budget for the WSCC as well as walked through OFPs report and recommendations. Ron  
42 explained the report was very well received by the committee members and how they were  
43 impressed by the amount of work the Task Force members have achieved during the past year.  
44 Another presentation was given to the House Appropriations Committee on WSCCs budget. WSCC

1 staff met with Representative Brian Blake, Chair of House and Natural Resources regarding the OFP  
2 report. Representative Blake expressed establishing a work session around the report, however,  
3 would need to be at a point where session has slowed down a bit.

4  
5 The OFP report is currently at the print shop and should be done any day. Copies will be distributed  
6 around to State Agencies, as well as all members of the Legislature. A copy of the report has been  
7 posted to the OFP website: [www.ofp.scc.wa.gov](http://www.ofp.scc.wa.gov)

8  
9 Lynn Bahrych called attention to a specific bill currently in motion, HB 1613 - SB 5517-  
10 Establishing a meat and poultry inspection program- Members expressed this is something we  
11 should communicate or provide information to the legislative committees that this concept supports  
12 one or more of our recommendations for farmland preservation. Technically, state agencies cannot  
13 lobby, however, we can provide useful information to the committees.

14  
15 ***Lynn Bahrych motioned for the Task Force to craft a letter that fits within the limits of what we***  
16 ***can do, that indicates this bill supports and is consistent with the Task Force recommendations.***  
17 ***Don Munks seconded. Motion passed.***

18  
19 Josh discussed stock water bills. House Ag had a hearing last week and testified on all three bills:  
20 HB1489, HB1091 and HB1509. HB1091 is the most restrictive bill due to the 5000 gallon a day  
21 limit, it would be retroactive once the bill goes to effect. Sheryl Cox expressed HB1091 will be  
22 extremely detrimental to all livestock. WSCC cannot lobby for these bills but are tracking them and  
23 have not taken any position on them as well as WSDA.

24  
25 ***Sheryl Cox moved that the Task Force is against this bill and agrees that HB1091 is extremely***  
26 ***detrimental to agriculture in the state of Washington. Commissioner Plager seconded.***  
27 ***Discussion. Motion passes.\****

28  
29 **\*For the record, the following state agency members abstain and remain neutral on the**  
30 **subject: Lynn Bahrych from WSCC, Lee Faulconer from WSDA & Dee Caputo from CTED.**

31  
32 Mark Clark explained to the Task Force that there will be additional bills the remainder of session  
33 that will raise concerns for the Task Force. Mark and staff will notify the Chairs of both the  
34 Commission and the Task Force to discuss. Mark will then take the concerns to the appropriate  
35 parties, for example; the policy folks at the weekly Natural Resources Sub Cabinet meetings, which  
36 involve all of the Natural Resource Agencies.

37  
38 Josh stated February 25 will be the cutoff date for most of the bills. Ron shared the WSCC budget  
39 was cut 20% from carry forward level and has affected OFP by not being able to hire one more FTE  
40 but we will keep that position vacant due to the budget. There is a bill of concern right now which is  
41 the elimination of all boards and commissions through Representative Hunter, and another bill  
42 through Senator Pridemore, eliminate or *suspend* commissions and boards, and the WSCC was listed  
43 on there. Ron mentioned the next revenue forecast will be in March and is expected to reach seven  
44 billion.

1 **SPECIAL AGRICULTURE LICENSE PLATE proposed by MIKE RUMLETT**

2 There has been a proposal for a special agriculture license plate. Josh explained that currently,  
3 specialty plates have been suspended until July 2009. All the revenues generated from these plates  
4 first go into an account to pay for what has been done and once it has reached its threshold it then  
5 goes to what the language designated it for. In this case it would go towards OFP. Most members  
6 feel that this is a good idea and they support the idea as well as it being completely voluntary.  
7

8 **ACTIVITIES REPORT**

9 Josh reported Skagit and Snohomish had a joint Agriculture Advisory Board Committee Meeting. It  
10 is the first one that they had and have scheduled a joint meeting every six months. This is something  
11 that we should support them on; there are a lot of good things that could happen through these  
12 meetings.  
13

14 **PRESENTATION OF OFP REPORT**

15 Lynn Bahrych reported on behalf of the Conservation Commission, that the Commission members  
16 approved the OFP report recommendations and were very pleased with the work the Task Force has  
17 done; to all come to a consensus of the recommendations presented. These are not bashful  
18 recommendations and could be somewhat controversial. If we want to preserve farmland this is  
19 where we need to start. The Commission members question how do we move forward to implement  
20 these recommendations and get a plan of action? And, how or what farmland do we preserve first?  
21

22 Mark discussed the Commission members made a motion during their briefing that they would like  
23 to do an Inter-agency meeting to provide the report to all the various agencies and discuss what parts  
24 of these recommendations are going to impact them specifically and to answer any concerns they  
25 may have. This meeting is scheduled for March 18, prior to the Conservation Commission meeting  
26 being held on March 18 & 19 in Lacey, Washington.  
27

28 **FUTURE OF FARMING**

29 Lee Faulconer briefed the Task Force on the Future of Farming. He stated that 400 online surveys  
30 were filled out by farmers. Lee Faulconer handed out the Executive Summary report that was done;  
31 the report reflects the responses and discussions from their focus groups that were done throughout  
32 the state. Future of Farming also has their set of recommendations. A lot of discussion on getting  
33 these reports out in the hands of the right people. Not only educate but advocate. The final report  
34 can be found on the WSDA website: [www.agr.wa.gov](http://www.agr.wa.gov)  
35

36 Sheryl Cox made commented on meshing future of farming recommendations with OFP's since they  
37 work hand in hand to preserving farmland.  
38

39 **MASON COUNTY SMALL FARMS PROGRAM**

40 Kirsten Workman, Small Farms Extension Educator from Mason County Conservation District  
41 briefed the Task Force on her role at the conservation office and how she works with the local  
42 community in creating Community Supported Agricultural (CSA) programs. CSA programs are a  
43 community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes,  
44 either legally or spiritually, the community's farm, with the growers and consumers providing  
45 mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production.  
46

1 The mission of the program: “Working with the Mason County Community to foster profitable  
2 family farms, land & water stewardship, and access to healthy food.”  
3

4 **SOUTH OF THE SOUND COMMUNITY FARM LAND TRUST**  
5 **Presentation given by Russell Fox, Board Member**  
6

7 [www.communitylandtrust.com](http://www.communitylandtrust.com)  
8

9 **INDICATORS PRESENTATION**  
10

11 Ron Shultz wanted the Task Force to review the report that was presented to the legislature as this  
12 would help move into the indicators piece. Indicators are used to supply information about the state  
13 of systems, in this case the farmland preservation system. They identify key factors into measurable  
14 values, they are used for issue management and to develop or adjust policy actions. Commission  
15 staff provided suggested indicators for the Task Force to consider or come up with some  
16 collectively.  
17

18 **TASK FORCE NEXT STEPS**  
19

20 The Task Force formed sub groups organized around the following OFP topic areas: Transition, Regulatory  
21 (Permits Right to Farm, Farm Study, and Open Space), County Ag Strategic Planning (possible issues: grants,  
22 how to work with counties on ag strategic plans) and finally, State Management of Lands.

23 The subgroups will not physically meet; they would utilize email and conference calls to conduct the  
24 necessary business. They will meet on the recommendations and issues and come back to the task force with  
25 recommendations on how to proceed on that topic. The following Task Force members will meet on:  
26

- 27 • **Transition-** Chair Hart, Fred Colvin, and Richard Thomason
- 28 • **Regulatory-** Don Munks, Rudy Plager, Greg Schoenbachler
- 29 • **County Ag Strategic Planning-** Fred Colvin, Jacob Anderson, Chair Hart, and Don Munks
- 30 • **State Management of Lands-** Sheryl Cox, Lynn Bahrych, and Jeff Emtman

31 Sheryl Cox raised the question on water. Agricultural water is extremely important and we need to  
32 do what we can to help inform other groups that do have a position in this area. Lynn Bahrych  
33 expressed that OFP does have recommendations that address water and the Commission has  
34 approved them along with the support of Future of Farming, we now have a stronger voice. After  
35 this legislative season there will be stakeholder meetings and there should be a Task Force  
36 representative at those meetings to voice our stand on water.  
37

38 Chair Hart adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.  
39

40 **NEXT MEETING**  
41

42 The Farmland Preservation Task Force will have a farm tour and interaction dinner on May 5 & 6 in  
43 Ellensburg, Washington.