

2014 FARMLAND PRESERVATION IN WASHINGTON

FARMLAND PRESERVATION OPPORTUNITIES AND SHARED COLLABORATION

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

DECEMBER 11TH EDMONDS CONFERENCE CENTER

2014 Farmland Preservation in Washington will provide a work session aimed at bringing planners, farmland preservationists, and farmland management professionals together for a day of learning and conversation. Topics covered will include Comprehensive Planning and Agriculture, Voluntary Stewardship Programs and similar programs, and tools for Protecting Agricultural Lands. Participants will have the opportunity to engage speakers and attendants in an open discussion period following each presentation. Presentation materials are based on Washington State legal planning requirements and current approaches to strengthening farmland preservation and improving farmland use.

*With many thanks to the **Planning Association of Washington (PAW)** five Certification Maintenance (CM) credits have been sponsored and applied for by PAW. Please be sure you indicate on the sign in sheet if you are interested in receiving credits. PAW is a grassroots educational organization serving the needs of planning commissioners, elected officials, tribes, special purpose districts, private sector firms, state agencies, students, and interested citizens. PAW's vision is of strong and livable communities guided by informed citizens. Their mission is to help shape a vibrant Washington through effective and informed community planning. In the past 40 years, over 30,000 elected officials, planning commissioners, and interested citizens have taken the Short Course on Local Planning created by PAW. If you'd like to help PAW provide education to other decision makers in your communities, please consider being a speaker. Learn more at www.planningpaw.org.*

➤ **Session #1: Comprehensive Planning and Agriculture** – Doug Peters and Tim Trohimovich

The Growth Management Act planning framework for sustaining agricultural industries includes meeting both goals and requirements, and requires crafting both agricultural lands conservation tools and economic development strategies to address the wide variety of local agriculture. A comprehensive planning approach needs to designate agricultural lands, include policies to address land development pressures, provide alternatives for an aging population of farmers, and provide public education and outreach to build a supportive public constituency. Local plans also need regional coordination to ensure availability of agricultural support industries, and the economic stability for access to short-term credit and long-term investment capital.

➤ **Session #2: Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) and VSP-like Planning** – Ron Shultz, Kate Dean, Al Latham

In 2011 the state legislature created the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP). An alternative approach to implementing GMA requirements, the VSP addresses the protection of critical areas impacted by agricultural activities. 28 of 39 counties opted-in to VSP and two counties are implementing. The approach utilizes a work group to develop a work plan for identification of critical areas and agricultural activities in the county, and a plan for outreach to landowners. Landowners would then develop a stewardship plan to address agricultural activities using incentive programs. Several non-VSP counties use a similar approach – a “VSP-like” approach – to address agriculture in their CAO's. Issues of use of best available science, protection of critical areas, and monitoring for results are similar in both approaches and will be discussed.

➤ **Keynote session – Don Stuart**

Don's presentation explains why farmer-environmentalists cooperation is important to all of us and how both groups will benefit if they work together to deal with the various land use and environmental issues that currently confront the agriculture industry. He shows how farmer-environmentalist conflict prevents our effectively addressing these issues. And he suggests public and private processes which could help us all greatly diminish this conflict and help transform a prosperous agriculture industry into our solution to environmental problems while making a sustainable environment the guarantee of future agricultural prosperity.

➤ **Session #3: Protecting Agricultural Lands – Chris Elder, Allen Rozema**

The third session of the day, Protecting Agricultural Lands, will provide an overview of tools employed in Washington State to preserve agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance. Purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, and agricultural resource land zoning will be covered as well as other tools. Speakers will focus on the challenges and successes of farmland preservation providing case studies from Whatcom and Skagit Counties. Discussion of successful approaches used to engage farm property owners and outreach to communities will also be explored.