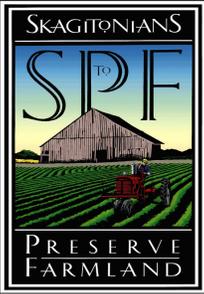


SKAGITONIAN

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A Message from Executive Director Allen Rozema SPF's Mission Drives Appeal of County's Wetland Bank Decision



Since our founding in 1989 Skagitians to Preserve Farmland has been a consistent voice for farmland protection and smart growth in the Skagit Valley. For almost 20 years SPF has worked in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration with government agencies, land owners and special interest groups to settle differences and develop solutions to natural resource issues to ensure the long-term stability of farming in Skagit Valley.

On occasion we need to disagree with positions taken by some of the same agencies we work closely with. On April 3, 2008 we filed an appeal of the County's Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance for a proposal to create a wetland mitigation bank on agricultural lands of long-term significance.

At the heart of the issue for SPF is our core mission: to protect a finite supply of high quality agricultural land for food production. The farmland in question is an important component of the overall land base for crop rotation and seed isolation requirements, which sustains the agricultural production capacity of the Skagit Valley.

SPF recognizes the issues surrounding mitigation banking are complex. Compelling arguments can be made for and against these banks. However, the project in question will permanently convert about 800 acres (396-acre mitigation bank and an undeclared and uncertain future for the remaining 400 acres). This marks the largest single conversion of designated agricultural land in Skagit County since the adoption of the Growth Management Act in 1991. Something is fundamentally wrong when, despite federal, state and local policies, goals and requirements to protect it, we are still losing farmland at alarming rate. *(See attached Capital Press story.)*

While SPF is going to appeal the County's decision and fight for the preservation of these agricultural lands, we will continue our efforts to work cooperatively to find creative solutions in other areas.

As an example, SPF is currently engaged with the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, The Nature Conservancy and Western Washington Agricultural Association on a research project called "farming for wildlife" to explore how wetland functions and benefits can be provided by agricultural lands on a temporary basis and integrated into the crop rotation system. To date the pilot project involving three farms—Hedlin Farms, Mesman Dairy and Thulen Farms—has achieved some surprising benefits. The partners are cautiously optimistic about a new paradigm of working collaboratively to enhance wildlife and environmental benefits while protecting farmland as a source of fresh, local, safe food for generations to come.

Skagit Environmental Bank—What is it?

The proposed Skagit Environmental Bank in northeast of Mount Vernon would be developed as a wetland mitigation bank on the site of a former 800-acre dairy farm. The wetland bank would be constructed on about 396 acres with the remaining acreage to be sold off. The project plan states that it will rehabilitate approximately 13,000 feet (2.5 miles) of existing stream channel and riparian habitat, construct 9,720 feet (1.8 miles) of new high-flow back channels; and enhance, reestablish, or rehabilitate 261 acres of emergent, scrub-shrub, and forested wetlands.

In Memoriam

We remember and celebrate the memory of three long-time leaders in the protection of Skagit agriculture. We are grateful for their contributions and commitment to stewardship of the land and the environment. Many thanks to those who contributed gifts to SPF in their memory.

Lloyd T. Good (Sie)

Sie was born and raised on Fir Island. Growing up he worked on the family farm and at neighbors during harvest time. After 2 1/2 years of Army Air Corps service in Europe, Africa and the Middle East he returned home, married and began to oversee the farm. Known as hard-working and innovative, Sie used his skills to update the farming operation. He also supported his family helping to build and work as an operator at the Shell Oil Refinery in Anacortes. His family notes that Sie loved the small piece of paradise he called home. In his retirement years, before every trip he would slip on his boots, button up his coat and pull on a cap before taking his dog and walking every inch of the entire farm before he left.

Robert J. Hulbert

Bob's name is synonymous with farming in the Skagit Valley. Born in Mount Vernon, he grew up on his family's dairy farm in La Conner, which became a crop farm when he and a brother took the reins. A graduate of Washington State University, Bob served in many leadership capacities over the years in the agriculture industry including farming, research and education. A founding member of SPF, he actively supported farmland preservation throughout his life.

In a letter last November to SPF supporters Board President Alan Mesman wrote, "My friend and longtime local farmer Bob Hulbert has been known to say that the Skagit ranks as one of the three greatest river valleys in the world, right up there with the Nile and the Mesopotamia."

David Black

The environment, education and support for youth were hallmarks of David's life. A Seattle native with a passion for the outdoors, his ties to the environment and farming in the San Juan Islands led to many years of involvement with SPF. A teacher for many years at Lakeside School in Seattle, he was known to bring groups of students to his farm on Lopez Island and to other local farms to teach kids from the city about the source of their food.

With gratitude to these individuals, we pledge to continue the work that was so important to them for the benefit of those who follow us.

Legacy Gift Remembers SPF

SPF recently received a bequest from the estate of Susan J. Briggs. Susan, a resident of Guemes Island, was a retired school librarian from the Snoqualmie Valley. She recognized several nonprofits in her will and SPF is honored to have been included. As a result of her careful planning, Susan's generous gift will further our work in farmland protection and preservation.

By making a planned gift to Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland, you have the opportunity to advance our work in land protection and stewardship while achieving your financial, tax and estate planning goals. If you are interested in receiving more information about planned giving as a way to maximize benefits to you and to SPF, please contact us at 360.336.3974.

Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland exists to ensure the economic viability of Skagit County agriculture and its required infrastructure through farmland protection, advocacy, research, education and public awareness.

Save the Dates!! 2008 SPF Special Events



Art Show

Saturday, July 19 – Sunday, July 27

La Conner SeaSide Gallery

Appreciate art all weekend and support SPF!

Visit Skagit Artists Together Studio Tour July 19 & 20 and enjoy the summer bounty at farm stands throughout the Valley! Check the SPF Web site for local inns and B & Bs offering special weekend rates for you!

Special thanks to Seaside Gallery owner Mark Conley, our host and sponsor.

Annual Picnic

Sunday, August 17 La Conner Flats

Bring your family and friends for an afternoon of fun and farm fresh foods!

Special thanks to Bob and Margie Hart for sharing their lovely gardens for this event.

10th Annual Harvest Dinner & Auction

Saturday, September 27

St. Joseph Center, Mount Vernon

Known as the 'food event of the year,' this evening celebrates the Skagit's best fall harvest prepared by local chefs. Many new features and surprises await you!

Auction items / ideas and volunteers are welcome!

Please call SPF at 360.336.3974.