

SKAGITONIAN

Spring 2009



www.skagitians.org

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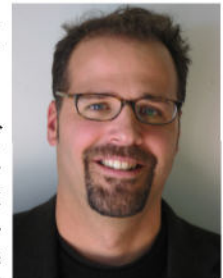
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A Message from Executive Director Allen Rozema

Governor Signs Bill Into Law

On Tuesday, May 5th, Governor Gregoire signed into law Engrossed House Bill 1967, a bill that limits the expansion of Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) onto 100-year floodplains.



SPF worked closely with Futurewise who coordinated with the state associations of cities and counties to ensure that this was a bill that would work for local governments. In doing so, a couple of careful exemptions were included in the bill that would allow expansion into flood plains for cities and towns that have no growth alternatives outside the flood plain. While we would have liked to see this bill without the exemptions, it is significant step in the right direction by limiting growth on much of Western Washington's floodplain. And because much of Western Washington's floodplains are also prime agricultural lands, this bill has a tremendous secondary benefit of protecting some of the best agricultural lands in Western Washington, including Skagit Valley's "coming home view."

What does EHB 1967 Mean for Skagit Valley?

The passage of this bill prevents the City of Mount Vernon from expanding their current UGAs onto the 100-year floodplain as they have options to grow to the east, out of the floodplain. Approximately 1,500 acres of farmland that has been the subject of urban expansion by the City of Mount Vernon are now protected from this threat.

The City of Burlington, located entirely within the floodplain, has no alternatives for expansion and is exempt from the bill. However, Burlington is committed to stopping urban expansion into the floodplain and is working with SPF on the development and adoption of the *Burlington Agricultural Heritage Credit program*, which will permanently retire the development rights from farmland bordering the city boundary.

While the immediate development pressure around the City of Mount Vernon has decreased, city officials will be sitting down with legislators during the interim session to advocate exempting Mount Vernon from the bill or having the bill repealed altogether, so SPF will continue to work with farmland owners to purchase development rights - the only permanent way to protect farmland from conversion to non-agricultural uses.



I would like to thank all of you who responded to our e-mail alert in early April by calling your Senator and/or House Representative Your voice was heard and it did make a difference. Thank You!

Meet Our Members



Name: Casey, Shelley and Rue Schoenberger

Where we live: Conway; Shelley's family (Olson) has farmed in the Skagit Valley for five generations

What we do: Casey is a Horticulturist at Christianson's Nursery. Shelley teaches Spanish at Mount Vernon High School. We run a small Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program called *Happy Little Farm* growing organic vegetables and fruits for several families.

How long we have been members of SPF: Two years

Why do we support SPF: Many reasons. First, we have a passion for real food and feel strongly that all people should have access to it. The preservation of farmland is essential to meeting that goal. Second, Skagit Valley farmland is a very important part of Shelley's family history and they have watched Mount Vernon creep down I-5 toward Conway over the last several years. We can not afford to lose this agricultural treasure. Lastly, the loss of family farms around the country is one of the great tragedies we've seen over that last 50 years. We have become friends with many of the great farmers in the valley and want to do what we can to help make sure that farming in the Skagit remains.



Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland
414 A Snoqualmie Street
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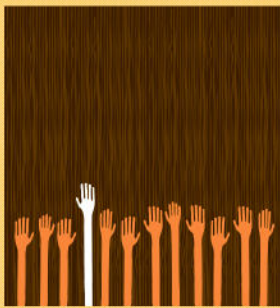
Want Your SPF News in Color?

Go Green with SPF's Online Bulletin!

SPF is stepping up efforts to conserve resources even more in light of the economic situation. Help us save on postage and printing costs, and enjoy SPF's updates in color! Just e-mail info@skagitonians.org. put "SPF E-mail News" in the subject line and we'll add you to the list.

Volunteers Needed

SPF programs such as InFARmation Radio and Crop Identification Signage are made possible with the help of volunteers who contribute their time, talent and resources to raise awareness about SPF and its mission. If you have an interest in volunteering for SPF please call us at 360-336-3974.



Save the Date!

Upcoming SPF Events you don't want to miss

SPF Spring Farm Tour -- Friday, May 29

Celebrate Skagit Art -- July 17-26

SPF Membership Picnic -- Sunday, August 16

See SPF On flickr®

Join SPF on flickr and see the beautiful images of Skagit Farmland that SPF members and supporters are posting in our "Preserving Skagit Valley Farmland" group. Add your own picture!

<http://www.flickr.com/groups/920522@N25/pool/>



Camera Anyone?

SPF is in need of a point-and-shoot digital camera, preferably 8 Mega pixel. If you would like to donate a gently used one, please give us a call at 360.336.3974.