

**THURSTON COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**McLane Building Conference Room
5033 Harrison Avenue
Olympia, WA 98502**

JULY 25, 2013

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chery Sullivan
John Lentz
Robert McIntosh
Eric Hagan
Dave Nygard

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

STAFF: Lucas Patzek, WSU Thurston County Extension
Polly Stoker, WSU Thurston County Extension

GUESTS: *Robert McIntosh guest (didn't sign in)*

CALL TO ORDER – 7:08pm, Staff Lucas Patzek

ADOPTION OF MINUTES – Minutes were approved from April.

REVIEW AGENDA – add US Fish & Wildlife Pocket Gopher Process and Fair Update

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OTHER BUSINESS –

A question was presented regarding the AG meeting schedule for the year. We will need to wait until everyone is at a meeting to discuss but start thinking about this. A thought to consider is not having a July meeting, and combining November and December meetings to the first Thursday in December.

DIRECTOR REPORT: n/a

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

Synopsis on Conservation Futures & Farm Link – Erik Hagan

Conservation Futures: Erik passed out the handout from the Thurston County Board Briefing on the 2013 Conservation Futures Project List. (attached) He was really impressed on the committee's focus on AG this year versus previous years. They approved the top three on the list automatically. The only issue was the commissioners wanted to see more South County approved. There is still money available (about \$550,000) for this year that hasn't been ear-marked so more properties or partial approvals could still happen. Next briefing is August 8th. Applications are also being accepted now for 2014.

Farm Link: This is a database that is set to connect potential farmers with current land owners looking to lease or sell their property. The goal is to start 25 new farms and to begin tracking current farmers. Also included would be information on farmers wanting to add more land. We would like to invite all on the database to the September 30th meeting on how to lease farmland. The bottom line is we hope to connect farmers to farmland that is available.

US Fish & Wildlife process for pocket gopher update – Lucas Patzek and Dave Nygard

There was a meeting where the TCD, USCS and NRCS who brought various commercial farmers together to ask about the pocket gophers impact on their land. There it was noted that the USDA already did a study on the ecology of pocket gophers and the data has not been reviewed yet. We are hoping Tom McDowell could attend our next meeting to further update us on this topic. The USF&W also confirmed they would not need names or contact information for the farmers who would participate in providing feedback on the pocket gophers. At the end of the meeting it was still not clear what they needed or were asking of the farming community.

Thurston County Fair Update – Lucas Patzek

The WSDA will be represented at this year's fair happening 7/31-8/4 in the Heritage Hall annex to celebrate their 100 year anniversary. There will be a combination of different AG education displays for the 5 days of fair. In addition, there will be a cider, beer and wine tasting on the Thur-Fri-Sat of fair. It is a "tasting" and not a "garden". There are quite a few local vendors attending.

ADJOURN – 8:20pm, Staff Lucas Patzek