



Skagit County Forest Advisory Board

www.skagitcounty.net/NRForestAdvisory

Chair: Jamie Hillery

Members: Dave Chamberlain, Al Craney, Gordan Iverson, Kris McCall, Joel Dryen, Aubrey Stargell, Steve Tift, Peter Janicki, John Gold, Brett Greenwood, Carter Manning

Meeting Minutes/Summary

Wednesday, September 2, 2026

Attendance:

Member	Present	Absent
Chamberlain, Dave	X	
Craney, Al	X	
Iverson, Gordon		X
Hillery, Jamie, Chair	X	
McCall, Kris	X	
Dryden, Joel	X	
Stargell, Aubrey	X	
Tift, Steve	X	
Janicki, Peter		X
Gold, John		X
Brett Greenwood	X	
Carter Manning	X	

Others present: Skagit County Commissioner Joe Burns; Randy Johnson, Skagit County Building Official; Bonnie LaCount, Skagit County Deputy Fire Marshal; Jessica Epsy, Hampton; Matt Comisky, AFRC; Nick Kunz, Skagit Conservation District; Cameron Bruner, District Ranger, Darrington Ranger District, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest; Eric Johnson, FAB Coordinator

August 5, 2026, Forest Advisory Board (FAB) Meeting Minutes. Approved

Brief Meeting Recap

Highlights of the Skagit County Forest Advisory Board's (FAB) September 2nd meeting include:

- Introduction of two new members of the Skagit County Forest Advisory Board:
 - Brett Greenwood, Superintendent, Sedro Wooley School District
 - Carter Manning, Sierra Pacific

- Nick Kunz, Randy Johnson, and Bonnie LaCount discussed the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Wildfire Hazard and Risk Mapping initiative required by SB6121, expressing concerns about the lack of funding and resources for local jurisdictions to review the maps, which will impact WUI code enforcement.
- Reviewed the outcomes of the Board of Natural Resources meeting that included approval of the Ladybug Sorts Timber Sale in Skagit County.
- The group discussed the recent Thurston County Superior Court judicial ruling in favor of State Agencies on the new Type NP Forest Practices Rule, with an appeal expected by WFFA/WFPA.
- Camden Bruner from the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest presented an update on wildfire response, disaster recovery efforts, and the forest's timber program, outlining goals to increase consistency and product diversity.
- The meeting also touched on the Forest Practices online permit application system, the Department of Ecology's Outstanding Resource Waters rulemaking, and the potential for litigation on timber sales.

DNR Forest Health Advisory Committee Tour

Nick provided an update on the Forest Health Advisory Committee tour, scheduled for September 22nd in Skagit County. The tour will highlight forest health initiatives and management issues in the Northwest. Nick is working on the tour with Jen Watkins (DNR) and Jenny Coe (State Conservation Commission).

Wildfire Hazard Mapping Draft Review

Nick presented draft wildfire hazard and risk mapping required by SB 6121, which DNR plans to complete by December with local jurisdiction input due October 15th. The mapping will affect WUI code enforcement, with implementation targeted for May, though local jurisdictions face challenges with the compressed timeline and lack of funding from DNR to review the maps and provide meaningful input.

Randy Johnson explained that the WUI code, based on this mapping, will become part of the building code enforced by the county, affecting building design and construction in areas identified as high risk based on factors like forest density, underbrush, and soil conditions.

Nick explained that while SB6121 allows counties to develop their own wildfire hazard and risk maps, this would require significant time and effort, and the county is already strained for resources. The discussion highlighted a growing issue with insurance companies dropping homeowners based on wildfire experience and fire risk maps.

Randy discussed concerns from the Washington Association of Building Officials about a map being pushed from the state level that could dramatically impact building codes and create hardships for rural building. The group discussed following up with Tricia, Jennifer, and Commissioner Burns about the concerns raised. Eric suggested the possibility of coordinating a comment letter to DNR regarding concerns about the mapping and process by the October 15th deadline. Eric indicated he would try and coordinate a meeting with Nick and staff at the Association of Counties to see if this is an issue for other counties or unique to Skagit County.

NP Rule Litigation Discussion

The group discussed the litigation brought by Washington Forest Protection Association and Washington Family Forest Association regarding the new Type NP Forest Practices Rule, which was recently heard in Thurston County Superior Court, which ruled in favor of the state. An appeal is expected, with a hearing scheduled for Friday to consider both a final order and a stay to the rule during the appeal process.

Forest Practices and Adaptive Management Program Updates and Discussion

The group discussed the Hard Rock Phase III 3 study report regarding additional buffer requirements for amphibian protection, which is still under consideration by TFW Policy Committee.

FAB Members shared experiences and frustration with the new forest practices online permit system, where participants noted ongoing technical issues and the system's current limited public access, with DNR staff manually inputting new permits while working out bugs.

Board of Natural Resources

Eric noted that the Board of Natural Resources approved the Ladybug Sorts Timber Sale in Skagit County, with a preliminary estimate of \$1,035,600 that will be dispersed to beneficiaries.

Matt also noted that all proposed timber sales were approved with unanimous support, except for one opposed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

USFS Update – Camden Bruner, District Ranger, Darrington Ranger District

Camden provided a broad briefing on wildfire response, disaster recovery, and land management in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

Wildfire and Forest Management Updates

He reported that while human-caused wildfires remained under control, lightning strikes caused 25 fires during August, with some larger fires being managed by incident management teams. Regarding disaster response, over 50 road sites were damaged in December floods, with repairs completed on some roads while others like Forest Service Road 28 remain pending repair.

Forest Service Timber Management Updates

Camden outlined the forest's historical timber production decline from 450 million board feet in the 1960s within the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest to current levels below 10 million board feet annually, with plans to gradually increase production to 20 million board feet. Camden discussed the Forest Service's stance on barred owl removal, explaining they would let Fish and Wildlife Service lead the effort while expressing skepticism about the effectiveness of the removal campaign. He presented the Northwest Forest Plan land use allocations for the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, highlighting the limited areas available for timber harvest due to wilderness, roadless areas, and late successional reserves. Camden explained the shift from watershed-level to forest-wide environmental assessments, noting that while the new approach was faster, it lacked the previous amount of public engagement and could face potential litigation. He outlined current and planned timber sales across different watersheds, emphasizing the Forest Service's progress in planning sales several years in advance.

Timber Program Goals and Challenges

Camden presented on timber program goals and challenges for the Darrington Ranger District, highlighting three key objectives: consistency in production, increased product diversity, and scaling to 20 million board feet annually. He discussed strategies to address seasonal operating restrictions through acoustic recording units to demonstrate spotted owl presence/absence, efforts to reduce road costs through internal road maintenance, and the successful Good Neighbor Authority program with DNR.

USFS Travel Management and Roadless Rule Update

The presentation also covered the proposed repeal of the 2001 roadless rule and its potential local impacts, with Camden noting that most local roadless areas are already managed and have very little road infrastructure (approximately 29 miles), though he expressed optimism about returning management decisions to local discretion.

Actions and Decisions

Eric

- Work with Nick, Randy, Bonnie, as well as Jennifer Johnson and Tricia Logue on a potential comment letter to the Department of Natural Resources regarding SB6121 wildfire hazard mapping and issues associated with lack of funding to review map, transparency in GIS data and data accuracy, timeline, and inability to meet the October 15th deadline.
- Eric will set up a meeting with Nick and County Association staff to discuss the wildfire hazard mapping and concerns.
- Distribute information about the upcoming Timber Counties Caucus September 16th meeting
- Investigate and follow up on the Department of Ecology's Outstanding Resource Waters rulemaking and determine if the Skagit County Board of County Commissioners made comments on previous rule efforts. Eric will reach out to John Gold to better understand his perspective on the Outstanding Resource Waters Rulemaking, which could affect several streams in Skagit County, and raises potential precedent-setting procedures and additional protections beyond existing designations without clear objective criteria.
- Coordinate with Jamie regarding a presenter for the October 2026 FAB Meeting.