

Meeting Minutes - FSC Meeting 4/25

Scheduled Meeting Time - 600 PM PT to 800 PM PT

600-

- Group meets at quarry area on Short's Farm property

605-

- Roger Short - Discusses origins of canary grass planting on property and efforts to manage it over the years
- All - Discussion of problems with canary grass across the wider area
- Janet - discussion about maple tree that stands nearby.
- All- agree that the maple is important and should stay no matter what

608-

- Eric T - Outlines the purpose of the evening - FSC should look at what is usable on the farm and what is not
- All - agreement on purpose- discussion to focus on best uses and limitations of the farm

610-

- All - Walk to southern boundary of farm
- Erik K- Trees (in center of property) were planted a long time ago, many by schoolkids
- Al Latham - this area is mostly Semiahmoo muck, clays, and loam
- Martin Mills - mainly grazing in this area, but only in some seasons due to wet conditions
- Al shows maps with rough idea of soil composition in area, Martin uses shovel to pull up some soil to look at
- Erik K - this is where the gradient starts to shift from dry, draining clays to wet muck
- Janet - Could this be a grazing pass area? Food forest could work on the nearby hill with trees. Area where we stand would not have much sun, though
- Martin M - points out the built and reserveable duck blinds are near this area
- All - Discussion of hunting and noise complaints in the area
- Keith - mentions that his property has been hit by bullets, not bird shot, due to proximity
- All - agreed, neighbors are very close by
- Janet - turns discussion back to trees. Points out stand of cottonwoods that "suck up" water from the creek. Cottonwoods hurt the flow of the creek
- Martin - this would actually be best for grazing. Some of the wetter plots could be summer grazing, hot wires could be used to manage grazing animals
- Martin - sheep might be best here for grazing. Some parts could support hay production

625-

- Group walks back to quarry area
- Martin M - mentions the hill/quarry cut could be an area for solar panels
- Eric T - What are the big takeaways from this area?
- All - this SW corner could support some ag if irrigation was run. Grazing might be best use. Hay might work
- Martin - could split out area to be contour farm plots, doesnt have to be squares. This would allow plots to use the land the best, but irrigation and draining still a concern
- Janet - perennial systems could work, but water situation would need to be addressed

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- Erik K - the sandy section that was cut out (quarry area) was used for building roads in area. Can still be used for that purpose. Trees could do well, but notes that tree production is limited by conservation easement

635-

- Group loads up in truck to tour other areas of farm

640-

- While in truck, all discuss the 18-19 acre plot in western section near cattle pens
- Roger Short - this is good ag land. Possibly best on entire property
- All - agreed. Area appears good for farming

645 -

- Stop near Naylor creek and road crossing
- Roger - discusses the installed risers and how the property is irrigated from the nearby well
 - Explains the layout of irrigation lines. Wells do not pull from the creeks, but pumped from groundwater
- Group continues tour

700-

- Stop by pond area and well locations
- All - discussion about wells. Keith, Eric, Martin all inspect the wells and electrical
- Martin - all electric will likely need to be replaced or electrician to come review
- Roger - pond was originally a peat field
- All - good to know that pond was man-made

705-

- Group stopped by main silo area and barns in northwest corner of property
- All- discussion about pros and cons of silage
- General consensus that silage process can help produce more hay on second cuts, but not best for cattle feed
- Martin M- this silo is way too big to just support this farm
- All - discussion about using silo collectively or repurposing the silo
 - Idea to place a simple roof structure over the top and use as barn/pen/storage
 - Could be simple PVC or metal trusses to support a flexible roof
- Sandy Short - thats a really good idea, but what would you put there?
 - There are 3 other silos on property, this is the largest with about 400 tons of storage capacity
- All- Discussion about electrical in the barns
 - Roger explains that electrical was put in to be run off inverter from truck
 - Is tied into main electrical, but not working at this time
- Martin M - Barn buildings by silo are actually really valuable and usable

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- Hard to feed cattle regular hay in current setup as made for feeding with silage, but buildings still serve purpose

745-

- Group travels back to quarry area
- All - decide to walk through main buildings at entrance of property as well
- AI - Will this property be public access when the Port takes over?
 - Eric T- No, not intended to be, but possible that parts are depending on vision
- All- discussion about birding and hunting
 - Martin M- lots of money in hunting, regardless of the feelings about it
 - Sandy - Shorts receive one check from WDFW, part for birdwatching, part for hunting, but not sure of exact split
 - Martin M - likely weighted towards hunting

800-

- Group meets at main building envelope
- Eric T - So, what are the next steps here? Should we start outlining a vision?
- Roger - anything you do needs to start with water and drainage
- Rebecca- No decisions should be made without more info, Port needs to provide more data and ops
- Eric T - Port is working on this, but FSC is charged with putting together a vision
- Janet - We have a real opportunity to outline a vision for this farm and only a short amount of time to do it
- Justin - UW team can assist with this vision process, but also is limited in time due to project/academic schedule
- Martin M- Agreed, if we have a vision, that gives us something to work towards. Will have to figure out stuff along the way anyways
- Eric T- Meeting on 18th was very focused on ag uses and need for Ops, but is not what FSC is here for. FSC is charged with providing a longer term plan for how farm could impact local community
- Janet - Agrees, long term vision should be our goal. Would be helpful to have packet for next meeting with options of public entities that have done something similar. Asks if UW team can provide this
- Justin - Yes, this is exactly what we can best assist with
- Eric T - UW team can research potential uses so that FSC has something to work with to build a bigger vision for farm
- All - further discussion on what is really needed to come up with a Farm Plan document
 - Ag survey of local farmers would be useful but not enough time
 - Meat processing keeps coming up and is a real possibility
- Martin - Lots of people have looked into meat processing before, but could UW help looking into this?
- Justin- Yes, could do a high level feasibility report
- All - it would be good to understand rent ranges (what would Port charge for grazing on an acre? Ag plots?)

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- Eric T- I think this is where FSC experience can help. FSC knows what farmers would reasonably pay. Port and UW can look at numbers for other uses, like meat processing
- Eric T - Discusses next steps for meeting on 15th
 - UW will research a few ideas (meat processing, comparable projects, map of general uses for farm)
 - Port will be working on Ops manual
 - FSC will think about numbers for plot leasing numbers
- Eric T - closes meeting, thanks to everyone here. We will meet again on May 15th