

# Port of Port Townsend – Short’s Farm Steering Committee Agenda



**Date:** March 6, 2024

**Time:** 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

**Location:** in person – WSU Extension - Kivley Center, 97 Oak Bay Road, Port Hadlock

Time	Item	Leader
5:30 – 5:35	Meeting Introduction & Purpose	<i>UW Students</i>
5:35 – 5:45	UW & Farm Steering Committee Introductions	<i>UW Students &amp; FSC</i>
5:45 – 5:50	Expectation Setting	<i>UW Students</i>
5:50 – 6:25	Existing Conditions Report: Land Use Conservation Agriculture/Economic Context	<i>UW Students</i>
6:25 – 6:35	Questions and Comments	<i>FSC</i>
6:35 – 6:45	Break	
6:45 – 6:50	What is Visioning?	<i>UW Students</i>
6:50 – 6:55	Visioning Goals & Methods	<i>UW Students</i>

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Time	Item	Leader
6:55 – 7:25	Visioning Activity: Break Out Discussion	UW Students
7:25 – 7:30	Meeting Wrap-Up/Next Steps	UW Students
7:30	Adjournment	

*This meeting is open to the public. However, it is not a venue for providing public testimony. Written comments may be submitted and entered into the record. The principal purpose of the meeting is to allow the Farm Steering Committee and Port staff to communicate with each other, ask and answer Committee member's questions, and obtain Committee member input regarding the subject topic(s).*

***The Mission of the Port of Port Townsend is to serve the citizens of Jefferson County by responsibly maintaining and developing property and facilities to promote sustainable economic growth, to provide community access to Port facilities and services, and to protect and maintain our environment, community resources, and maritime heritage.***

**Minutes: Port of Port Townsend Farm Steering Committee – Wednesday, February 21, 2024**

The Farm Steering Committee met for a regular business meeting at the ESU Extension Office Kivley Center, 97 Oak Bay Road, Port Hadlock, WA.

Members present: Janet Aubin, Martin Frederickson, Keith Kisler, Laura Llewellyn, Martin Mills, David Seabrook, Kellie Henwood, Al Latham, Rebecca Benjamin

Other Attendees: Heidi Eisenhour Jefferson County Drainage District and Sara Spaeth (for Erik Kingfisher) Jefferson Land Trust

Staff: Port Executive Director Eron Berg, Deputy Director Eric Toews, Administrative Assistant Joanna Sanders, and University of Washington Rick Sepler.

**Welcome and Introduction** by Eron Berg

**Review of Meeting Objectives #1 and FSC Ground Rules** by Eric Toews. He covered Open Public Meetings Act Rules, Public Records Act Compliance, Level of Commitment and Responsibility, Decision-Making Process, and Meeting Structure/Content.

**Role of the University of Washington** by Rick Sepler. An existing conditions report would be drafted by the students and presented on March 6.

**Planning Process Timeline and Objectives: Schedule and Key Milestones** were reviewed by Eric Toews. He explained the development of a “road map” to guide future farm use, identifying key issues requiring research/resolution, and near, medium, and long-term action items. Port Commission Goals include benefiting and supporting local farmers, expanding ag production, improving habitat especially for Migratory Fish, and achieving a 9.5% return on Port-Invested dollars.

**Questions and Discussion:**

A binder with key documents and useful information would be provided in addition to documents and information available on the Port’s website. The NOSC geomorphic assessment would be printed in color.

Periodic review of Comprehensive Plan is in process in 2025. The agriculture section of the Comp. Plan would benefit this project. Heidi Eisenhour asked to understand items in the plan that would be helpful.

Eron Berg responded to questions about the 9.5% return on investment. There is flexibility as to when that 9.5% would need to be achieved. The goal is to make a difference in the ag community with those investments carrying their own weight.

**FSC discussed, shared thoughts, and observations from the Farm tour:**

- 1) trying to imagine ag production leasing,
- 2) how to use the land given the flooding impairments,

- 3) considering the near, mid and long-term seasonal uses by farmers,
- 4) how to transition unusable areas to useable,
- 5) how to improve the limited amount of rentable infrastructure,
- 6) possibility of leasing area for food composting,
- 7) possibility of providing farmer/worker housing,
- 8) what actions/solutions can be implemented on the creek/canary grass,
- 9) where would consensus come on conditions assessment,
- 10) options for conveying more water off the property, restoring the creek and addressing the “bathtub” topography situation,
- 11) how much dredging of the creek and mowing of the canary grass might be done,
- 12) what does the science literature say about conservation restoration,
- 13) is the drainage district responsible for maintaining creek flow and,
- 14) we may need a plan for the plan,
- 15) what are the limitations written into the conservation easement on what is allowable for habitat or stream restoration and what is written as “needs to be maintained as agriculture land,”
- 16) in other low grade stream ecosystems, would it be expected to have a low flow marshy wetland stretch and should we be fighting against it or should there be a marshy zone in the alternatives.

**Ideas for additional information and documents to consider:**

- 1) A soon to be released Glen Gately paper on the effect of reed canary grass on dissolved oxygen with historic perennial wetlands outlined,
- 2) Legal implication of the drainage district/map and data about the drainage district,
- 3) Four upcoming open houses on Chimacum Creek Watershed Management/Improvement (2/28, 3/7, 3/12, 3/19) advertised on Jefferson County Conservation district website,
- 4) needs identification data/market value (broader community and ag needs), including data through Jefferson Landworks Collaborative,
- 5) identify partners for the additional investments to make it viable (such as housing or new barn),
- 6) exploration of funding/access to local food infrastructure grants,
- 7) data set and/or map of amount year-round leasable acreage (Al Latham circulated a map),

- 8) regulations for a meat processing/slaughter facility (possibly Doyle Yancy feasibility study),
- 9) 2018-19 Puget Sound Processing report (Kellie Henwood noted report it on their regional small farms website),
- 10) possibility of Port-own infrastructure for example pickle processing,
- 11) Corner Farm Stand as stakeholder/possible opportunity for meat market,
- 12) explore meat and vegetable processing/cold storage to expand fresh products sold at market or outside county, grow the demand,
- 13) viability/affordability for cooperatively leasing a cold storage, would the airport be a better location,
- 14) USDA rural energy grants may be available to build a solar array to generate power,
- 15) just released is 2022 Ag Census with helpful data, demographics, production, and trends,
- 16) identify unsuitable farm uses,
- 17) consider possibility of expanding the WDFW lease for immediate revenue generation,
- 18) information about the Port exercising the water rights,
- 19) what is the irrigation capacity and would the Port purchase the irrigation equipment? Distributed were copies of the farm's equipment list, and
- 20) another action item would be replacing the creek culvert at Naylor Creek.

Adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

FEB 26 2024

Port of Port Townsend  
Administration Office

I heard at the last steering committee meeting <sup>ing</sup> the "Port" did not want to create housing and be in that business. With that said the building Sandy and Roger have lived in for more than forty years could be used as Learning Center with offices and or meeting rooms. The building has one smaller room and two larger rooms that are open. It also has a tiny kitchen and bathroom. This has lots of open shelving for whatever as well has two entrances one from the farm and its own driveway off center road with a small parking lot. This entrance

has a ramp for ~~ADIF~~ for flat walk or roll in. There is a sizeable deck with large table and cooking center.

The lower level of the building has a completely separate apartment with a renter at \$500 a month and never has a problem or asked for more. They have been there three plus years. They could be available to tell you of night time activities.

to the steering Committee  
from Sandy Short

**Joanna Sanders**

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**From:** Michelle Schuman <mschuman@mtaonline.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 28, 2024 4:35 PM  
**To:** Public Comments  
**Subject:** Short Farm Property and Acquisition

RE: Public Comment on the Status of the Short Farm Property

As a Professional Wetland Scientist, certified in 1994 by the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS) I have nearly forty years of expertise in wetland science in Alaska. Fifteen years as a private consultant and 22 years with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Duties I held with NRCS include Range Conservationist, District Conservationist, State Toolkit Coordinator and Planner, Acting Cultural Resources Coordinator, Regional Ecologist, and most importantly in regards to this public comment, I was the compliance coordinator for the Food Security Act, Clean Water Act, and NEPA for the Alaska Region. I was also on detail in Washington D.C. Headquarters in the Conservation Easement Compliance department. In addition, I was certified as a Senior Ecologist, the highest ranking with the Ecological Society of America (ESA). My Master's was in Environmental Policy and Restoration Science specializing in the Clean Water Act Regulations and Wetland Science restoration. My undergraduate degree from Washington State University was a double major in Wildlife Biology and Range Science with a minor in Soil Science.

In October 2022 I moved to Port Townsend where I volunteered with the Jefferson Land Trust. It was during my short tenure with the JLT that I realized the term "Farmed Wetland" was being grossly mis-interpreted. Briefly, the only agency that can assign a Farmed Wetland label or any Food Security Act label is the NRCS. And the first step in this process is the landowner must agree to a certified conservation plan and the rules and practices according to the National Food Security Act Manual. The landowner is not exempt from the Clean Water Act nor exempt from any federal, state, or local laws.

My comment is directed at clarification of the term Farmed Wetland and the regulatory agency responsible for determining if an area is first, determined to be a jurisdictional wetland, and second, if the landowner has a conservation plan with the NRCS, and third, the landowner must have a Certified Wetland Determination which includes the assignment of a NRCS FSA label by a certified planner with a certification in wetland determinations according to the National Food Security Act Manual. Further, the conservation plan developed by a NRCS certified planner must be followed and practices implemented to protect the natural resources including wetlands.

From my research and gathering of information on the Short Farm Property, I have not been able to find any of this documentation. If it has, then it needs to be part of the documentation for consideration of acquisition.

It is also of concern, that if there has been any link to federal dollars either through federal monies connected to grants or donations or technical assistance by a federal employee, NEPA procedures must be followed. For example, if there is a Conservation Plan developed by a Certified Conservation Planner with NRCS, then there will also be planning documents that address NEPA and Cultural Resources, in addition to a Jurisdictional Wetland Determination. If there is no Certified Conservation Plan with NRCS for the Short Farm Property, then the agency responsible for conducting a Jurisdictional Wetland per the Clean Water Act Section 404, must be done by the Corps of Engineers. If the Short Farm Property does not have this documentation, then there is the possibility of a Clean Water Act violation if any part of this property is determined to be a jurisdictional wetland. The soils that have been mapped are considered hydric and are not soils of local importance for farmland. The first priority for any property where agricultural land is a priority of protection, the soils must at a minimum be soils of local or statewide importance for farmland.

As an expert in the process of the Food Security Act under the National Food Security Act Manual as well as in the policy, laws and regulations for the Clean Water Act, the Short Farm Property must provide the documentation required by the

National Environmental Policy Act, the Food Security Act, the Clean Water Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act before any public funds are utilized for the purchase of this property. More importantly, any land purchased with public or private funds with a link to any public funds, should be acquired in good faith and at a minimum adhere to any federal, state, local or if needed, tribal regulations. Waters of the United States, including wetlands, especially in this region must ensure conservation and protection, and the application of best management practices for fisheries and other aquatic species.

Sincerely,

Michelle Schuman  
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