



Klickitat County

Protecting Agriculture and Agricultural Lands in Klickitat County

Don Stuart

**Pacific Northwest States Office
American Farmland Trust**

20-year vision:

We retain a rural landscape with a profitable, diverse, and sustainable agriculture industry engaged mostly in family farming operations suitable to the varied landscapes in Klickitat County.

Barriers & concerns:

- **Rate and pressure for development – cost of land**
- **High taxes**
- **Lack of water**
- **Flaws in current land use regulations**
- **Inconsistency between land use laws and the business needs of agriculture**
- **Lack of profitability in agriculture**
- **Public ignorance of agriculture neighbors**
- **Regulation & property rights**



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Action Items – What can we do in Klickitat County?

- Limiting regulation and reducing impact of govt.
- Reducing tax impacts
- Improvements in zoning code
- Purchase of development rights
- Transfer of development rights
- Public education
- Economic development and farm profitability
- Improved access to and sharing of water
- Agriculture Advisory Commission
- Right to Farm improvements
- Farm transition
- Outstanding proposals:
 - Trout Lake community proposal
 - Farmland Preservation zone



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Limiting regulation & reducing the impact of government

Questions for discussion:

- Increase availability of conservation incentives (CD assessment?)
- Public process for comprehensive review of regulations
- Condemnation policy
- Public acquisitions policy
- Permitting requirements for farm structures
- Landowner assistance with regulatory issues
- Other?



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Reducing Tax Impacts

Questions for discussion:

- Encourage participation in current use program
- Improve current use eligibility policy and process
- Establish current use advisory committee
- Identify other exemptions (e.g. conservation improvements) and provide education to farm community
- Other?



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Improve zoning code

Questions for discussion:

- Facilitate cluster zoning – incentives
 - Density bonus?
 - Remove current use tax disincentive?
 - Grants for costs & back taxes?
- Consideration of land capacity for use
- Increased density near cities
- TDR program
- Other?



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Purchase of development rights

Questions for discussion:

- Facilitate use of current PDR programs (state and federal)
- Encourage participation by landowners
- County funding contribution
- Identification of priority lands
- Other?



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Transfer of development rights

Questions for discussion:

- Identification of sending and receiving areas
- Will it work in Klickitat County
- Other?



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Public education about agriculture

Questions for discussion:

- Assemble new information about agriculture in Klickitat Co.
 - Cost of Community Services
 - Economic profile and impacts of agriculture industry
 - Land use profile of agriculture
- Support Ag in the Classroom
- Code of the West
- Farmer education programs (CD assessment?)
- Fairs, harvest celebrations, etc.
- Other?



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Economic development and farm & ranch profitability

Questions for discussion:

- Economic Development Council participation for Ag
- Economic development strategic planning for Ag
- Local markets (local institutional buying, farmers markets, local branding, etc.)
- Cooperative processing, marketing, etc.?
- Facilitate direct sales (farm stands, signage, off farm sales, etc.)
- Ancillary income sources (wind, gas, conservation markets?)
- Other?



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Access to and sharing of water

Questions for discussion:

- Aluminum plant water made available for farmers with long-standing applications
- Water-based decisions on subdivision of land
- Other?



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Agriculture Advisory Commission

Questions for discussion:

- Advisory body to Commission and County government
- Could fill role of working with Assessor's Office
- Part time FTE for staff support (could also be a public contact for county on Ag issues)
- Identify new needs and actions to support Ag
- Other?



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Right to Farm law improvements

Questions for discussion:

- Notice signed by buyers at closing – filed of record
- Waiver of common law rights to nuisance claim
- Annual reminder to residential landowners
- Other?



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Farm Transition

Questions for discussion:

- Use of existing programs with:
 - Dept. of Natural Resources
 - Office of Farmland Preservation
 - Washington FarmLink
- Actions by government to facilitate transitions
- Other?



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Outstanding proposals

Questions for discussion:

- Trout Lake community proposal
- Farmland Preservation Zone proposal
- Other?



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