



PLANNING NORTHWEST

ECONOMICS IS A KEY TO PROTECTING AGRICULTURAL LANDS

*Don Stuart
American Farmland Trust*

Planners frequently express frustration that farmers are the last people to come forward to fight for the protection of farmland. This is understandable, of course. Farmers are usually landowners. They often hope to profit from appreciation in the value of their land.

But it is a tragic irony that agriculture, as an industry, doesn't generally lobby for the protection of its own land base. To understand this seeming political dilemma requires an understanding of the economics as well as the politics of agriculture.

It is estimated that at least half of the dollar value of the agricultural production in the state of Washington is grown on land whose market value exceeds its agricultural value. We all understand the notion of "market value." But the idea of an "agricultural value" sometimes can be less intuitive.

Farming, of course, is a business. And the agricultural value of farmland is the price a farm business can afford to pay for that land and still remain competitive. So "agricultural value" refers to the natural resource and economic productivity of the land, not to what

some might term its "highest and best use."

The cost of land can become a farmer's largest annual expense. One hundred acres whose agricultural value is \$2,000 per acre would be worth \$200,000 to a farmer. At that price, the farmer would, at 6 percent interest, have an annual land carrying cost of \$12,000 — an expense that must be deducted from the bottom line each year in assessing profitability.

If the value of this land appreciates, so does this expense. Should this land acquire a true market value of, say, \$10,000 per acre, this farmer must accept two new realities. Of course his land is worth a lot more money — very good news. But with that land now worth \$1 million, this farm business will bear a substantially increased land expense. At the same 6 percent interest, its annual land carrying cost has risen from \$12,000 to \$60,000. This easily may be enough to make this business no longer profitable.

Since the investment in this farmland has obviously been a good one, this farmer may decide not to sell. Staying with that investment while drawing a little continuing income from farming might make good

sense. But there are consequences to staying in farming on land whose market value has come to exceed its agricultural value.

Agriculture is a highly competitive business. Many, perhaps most, of the investments farmers make in competitiveness are investments in fixtures to land. A new irrigation system, for example, might help cut production costs, save on chemicals, reduce labor, and produce a better quality product that can be sold for a higher price. In the long run, this new irrigation system could be an excellent business investment.

But will the farmer make this investment if he knows that when his land sells it will almost certainly sell to someone who will use it for something other than agriculture — someone who will not need or even want an irrigation system?

For this farmer, the investment in this and other improvements on this land may well depreciate the property. Competitiveness of the farm business is no longer the only issue. When the farm's market value has exceeded its agricultural value, these often become investments their owners find difficult to make.

That is why it is so important

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PENINSULA SECTION REPORT

Robert Fink AICP

The first Olympic Peninsula Planners Forum was held April 21 in Port Orchard, with 35 members in attendance.

An interesting variety of topics were presented. An unusual part of the program was an opportunity for each person to give a short report on what was happening in his or her community and organization.

The forums are a project sponsored by the Washington Chapter of the APA, along with PAW and CTED. On behalf of the Olympic Peninsula Section, I would like to thank the organizers and presenters for their efforts.

The forum is intended to be held several times a year and the next meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, July 15. The section's next general membership meeting also is scheduled on July 15, after the forum.

The section board felt that the two activities are supportive of each other and will save members travel time, which can be extensive on the Olympic Peninsula. Topics for discussion and action will include amendments to the section by-laws.

UW STUDENTS TO FORM PLANNING STUDENT ORGANIZATION

Students of the UW Planning and Design Masters program

The University of Washington APA student representatives, Andrew Brand, Puget Sound Section, and Michael Hintze, Washington Chapter, are working to build awareness of and interest in the APA among urban planning students at the UW.

A common sentiment among students is that the APA does not offer them very much and what it does offer is not worth the membership dues. A major step toward changing this attitude is not only informing students of the benefits, but also establishing more solid ties between the APA and the UW program.

A starting point in forming these stronger ties would be for the UW program to have an officially recognized Planning Student Organization (PSO). Thus, Michael is gathering names and APA member numbers from at least 10 students and will be submitting these on a certification form to state chapter president Michael Katterman so he can approve it and send the form to national.

By forming an officially recognized PSO, the representatives hope to increase interaction between students and the state chapter and regional sections in a number of ways. Some ways in which this could happen include student attendance at chapter meetings/conferences, inviting chapter members to speak, helping with conference organization, developing an internship or mentoring program, participating in letter writing campaigns, contributing to the chapter newsletter, and using chapter members as resources for research advice and assistance.

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to consider the economics as well as the politics of protecting farmlands. Farmers need access to land priced at a level they can afford. They cannot compete for those lands with Microsoft executives and with WalMart. How do we accomplish that?

One way is through the use of programs for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements sometimes called purchase of development rights (PDR). With the 50 percent federal match currently available through the Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program, these programs have become quite appealing. By permanently preventing development on the protected land, PDR limits the market to other farmers, and thus reduces the price to what farmers can afford.

Another way is through consistency in application of our zoning laws. In a very real sense, when a parcel of farm-zoned land is excepted from established restrictions, that sends a message to every appraiser and every landowner

in that zone. The fair market value of all those properties goes up.

While that may be good short-term news for many of those farm landowners, it is very bad long-term news for their farm businesses. It increases the annual operating expense of every farm. And it helps create the self-fulfilling reality that these lands have no real future in agriculture.

Among the necessary prerequisites to keeping American farms competitive and in business is a stable, appropriately priced land base. Planners, by paying attention to economics, can help to make that happen.

Don Stuart is director of American Farmland Trust's (AFT) Pacific Northwest Field Office in Puyallup. Prior to joining AFT in May 2000, he was executive director for the Washington Association of Conservation Districts. He also has been executive director of a commercial fisheries trade association, manager of a statewide ballot initiative defense, a Congressional candidate, a commercial fisherman, and a practicing Seattle attorney.



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AND ONE MORE THING...



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I'm still basking in the glow of a good conference experience and an exciting first visit to Washington, D.C., in late April. Beginning with meetings for the Chapter Presidents' Council (CPC) on Friday and continuing through with the final mobile workshop to new towns (Greenbelt, Columbia, Germantown) in Maryland on the following Wednesday, it was a six-day marathon! Here's some news from D.C.

AICP PRESIDENT CENSURED

One of the most difficult issues that the CPC addressed in our meetings was whether to recommend some type of disciplinary action for the current president of the AICP Commission, Daniel Lauber. CPC has no authority to take action on these matters, but we are an advisory body to the national APA Board and we take that role seriously.

There is obviously more to the story than I can summarize here, but in short, during the recent national elections Mr. Lauber posted some statements on an independent Web site that were misleading and potentially damaging about one of the candidates. Several people objected, the opposing candidate issued a statement denouncing the posting, and the

language was quickly removed. Mr. Lauber also issued an apology after the voting deadline.

CPC felt that the action was a violation of the AICP code of ethics that, as AICP president, Mr. Lauber is responsible for upholding. Specifically, the code states, in part:

"A planner should treat fairly the professional views of qualified colleagues and members of other professions.

- 1) **A planner must protect and enhance the integrity of the profession and must be responsible in criticism of the profession.**
- 2) **A planner must accurately represent the qualifications, views and findings of colleagues."**

The CPC recommended (and I supported) that the APA Board censure Mr. Lauber, remove him from his office, and suspend his membership in AICP for a period of 3-5 years. I felt it was important to send a very strong message in light of the information and his position in the organization. In the end, the APA Board voted to censure.

WASHINGTON CHAPTER SHINES IN D.C.

The Washington Chapter was well represented and well recognized at the conference. We were ably represented by four of our members at the delegates' assembly to discuss draft policies related to energy and redevelopment. Our delegates were **Kent Anderson, AICP**, City of Kelso; **Michael Ingram, AICP**, City of Bellevue; **Dee Caputo, AICP, CTED**; and **Lilith Yanagimachi, EWU student**. Thanks to our delegates for their time and

efforts to help shape national APA policy.

There were a total of 46 new members inducted into the AICP College of Fellows, three of them our own. The new inductees from Washington are **Jill Brown Sterrett, FAICP, EDAW**; **Dick Winchell, FAICP, EWU**; and **Joe Tovar, FAICP, Central Puget Sound Growth Hearings Board**. There was a black tie ceremony and reception honoring the new fellows at the Omni Hotel on the Saturday before the conference. Congratulations to our newest FAICP members.

At the awards luncheon on Tuesday, Pierce County received the Current Topic Award: Parks and Public Lands for the **Chambers Creek Properties Master Site Plan**. Award recipients were **Joe Scorcio, AICP**, Pierce County; **Ann-Marie Marshall-Dody, Pierce County**; **Julia Walton, AICP, Berger/ABAM**; and

Steven Arai, AICP, Arai-Jackson Architects. Congratulations to Pierce County and members of the project team.

CHAPTER BOARD CHANGES

The ballots have been counted and **Steve Butler, AICP**, City of SeaTac, will become president-elect of the board July 1. Steve has been serving as vice president for the past year and has been a tremendous help by taking on several special projects. He will serve as president-elect for one year, automatically become president for the following two years, and spend the fourth year as immediate past president.

Steve's election also leaves a vacancy. To fill the remaining year of his term, I am appointing **Shane Hope, AICP**, City of Mountlake Terrace. Shane has been involved in planning is-

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AWARD-WINNING TEAM

National award-winning team for Chambers Creek Master Plan, Current Topic Award: (l-r) Ann-Marie Marshall-Dody, Pierce County planner; Steve Arai, AIA, Arai-Jackson Architects; Julia Walton, AICP, Berger/ABAM; and Joe Scorcio, AICP, Pierce County Special Projects manager.

AICP INDUCTEES



1. Newly inducted member of the AICP College of Fellows Jill Brown Sterrett and her husband, Dean. Jill is a principal with EDAW in Seattle.



2. Newly inducted member to AICP College of Fellows Joe Tovar and his wife, Patrice Tovar, AICP. Joe serves on the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board. Patrice is a planner with the City of Kirkland.

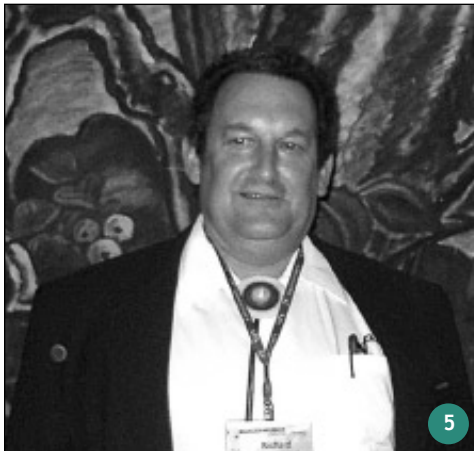


3. Pat Sheffels at the FAICP ceremony. Pat is a former Bellevue planning commissioner and a member of the national board of APA.



4. Newly inducted member to AICP College of Fellows Dick Winchell (center), with his son, Matt, and wife, Susan Winchell, AICP. Dick is a professor at Eastern Washington University. Susan is a planner with Spokane County Boundary Review Board and chair of the Washington Chapter Nominations Committee.

5. Richard Rolland attending the FAICP ceremony. Richard is a professor at EWU and the Washington Chapter representative to Western Planner.



6. Bruce Laing, FAICP, and his wife, Brigid. Bruce serves on the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board.



DELEGATES ASSEMBLY REPORT

Lilith Yanagimachi, student at EWU

The Delegates Assembly on Public Redevelopment & Energy was held during the APA National Conference in Washington, D.C. Washington state was represented by Michael Kattermann, Michael Ingram, Dee Caputo, Kent Anderson, and alternate Lilith Yanagimachi. Each delegate actively contributed valuable input to the process.

Prior to the assembly, the Washington delegation worked through questions and ideas that would enhance the proposed policies, especially the energy policy. Specifically, we addressed the need to include incentives for governmental and non-profit groups promoting reduced energy in building and life-cycle use.

During the assembly, wording of the proposed changes was shared with delegates from Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, West Virginia, and California to build consensus and support. The California delegation suggested putting the changes as a separate initiative. We concurred and adjusting the wording to stand on its own as Policy Statement 1 – Initiative #4.

The energy policy covered many areas of concern, but lacked the inclusion of urban design as a valuable aspect of effectively managing energy use. Washington delegates proposed altering Initiative #11 to read: "Recognize that providing transportation



Chapter Delegates (l-r), Kent Anderson, AICP, City of Kelso; Michael Ingram, AICP, City of Bellevue; Lilith Yanagimachi, student at EWU; Dee Caputo, AICP, CTED

options and good urban form design are the first steps to changing pollution-intensive choices for mobility."

Both suggested changes were accepted by the authors and assembly, becoming part of the APA National Policy. Many of the representatives brought meaningful points that added strength and diversity to each proposal, demonstrating the value of broad base participation.

In addition to being a fun event, the assembly provided a great opportunity to

engage with planners around the country to shape policies that guide planning and legislation nationally.

Currently, a security policy is being developed for next year. If you wish to participate or submit your comments to this issue, please check the APA Web site (www.planning.org) for information or contact the author, Ethel Sheffer, NY Metro Chapter president, at 194 Riverside Dr., New York, 10025, (212) 799-3631, or esheffer@nyplanning.org.



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
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2004 AICP EXAM PREP CLASS HELD

Nancy Eklund, AICP

A total of 25 prospective AICP exam-takers attended the March 27 Exam Prep class. The day-long session was held at the Port of Seattle.

Many thanks to our volunteer instructors who gave up a Saturday to help, with special thanks to Brad Collins, who was battling a nasty cold and still showed up. Instructors included:

- Brad Collins, FAICP, City of Port Angeles
- Gina Mares Kurtz, AICP, Jones and Stokes
- Greg Lipton, AICP, King County Transit
- Kevin O'Neill, AICP, City of Bellevue
- Kris Liljeblad, AICP, City of Bellevue
- Lynn Kim, Brodie GIS Consultants
- Rick Sepler, AICP, Madrona Planning
- Tim Trohimovich, AICP, 1000 Friends of Washington.

This year's class was supported in part by contributions from corporate and agency sponsors. Many thanks to our donors for their generosity:

- AHBL
- BERGER/ABAM Engineers Inc.
- EDAW
- Pierce County Public Works and Utilities.

Thanks to all, and good luck to our class for a successful outcome on the exam!

UPCOMING 2004 DEADLINES

- **Early June**
Online application for the November AICP exam will be available at: www.planning.org/certification.
- **July 21**
Application submission deadline for November exam.
- **September 24**
Deadline for applying for the chapter's Reduced AICP Exam Fee Scholarship.
- **October 1**
Deadline for registering for the November exam, once application has been accepted.

- **October 4-6**
An abbreviated exam prep class may be held at the Washington/Oregon APA Conference; however, nothing has been confirmed yet.

- **November 8-20**
Testing window for exam.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR REDUCED AICP EXAM FEE AVAILABLE

Two scholarships remain available for chapter members qualifying to take the November AICP exam. The scholarship defrays the cost of the exam by reducing the exam fee from \$325 to \$55. Details on how to apply for the scholarship are available on the chapter Web site (www.washington-apa.org).

EXAM STUDY MANUAL

Copies of exam study manuals are available for purchase from the chapter office at (206) 682-7436.

QUESTIONS?

Contact Nancy Eklund, PDO, at (253) 841-5462 or nancye@ci.puyallup.wa.us.

AND ONE MORE THING...

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sues at the local, regional and state level for several years.

Other changes include new co-chairs of the legislative committee, **Ivan Miller**, PSRC, and **Esther Larsen**, Spokane County. Both have been involved in the legislative committee in years past and bring knowledge of the issues as well as a range of experiences and perspectives.

We will be working to expand the number of active members of the committee this year and formulating a platform outlining the chapter's positions on issues anticipated next session.

Finally, the newest member of our editorial board for *Planning Northwest*, starting with the next issue, is **Angela Brooks**, City of Milton. Angela is also a Seattle planning commissioner and active in the Planning and the Black Community division of APA. I am enthusiastic about the new people that are joining your board. They will add to the energy and successes of the current members.

More to come, stay tuned!



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GMA WORKING GROUP CONTINUES

Lisa Verner, AICP

The GMA Working Group met in May to wrap up its 2003-2004 efforts to improve the Growth Management Act and its implementation.

There was general agreement that the group needs to address the leftover issues from the 2004 legislative session – Best Available Science (BAS), timelines for required updates, and basic updates for smaller/slower growing communities – before moving on to new issues.

In late 2003, the working group adopted eight policy statements after each participating organization had endorsed them. Policies addressed BAS, timelines for required updates, industrial land banks, LAMIRs, flexibility for Washington farms, the Growth Management hearing boards, a farm account for purchase of critical area buffers, and GMA funding. Most of these policy statements were translated into legislation submitted to the 2004 Legislature; bills on industrial land banks, LAMIRs, and flexibility for farms were passed into laws.

The working group members include AWC, WSAC, CTED, Washington State Farm

Bureau, 1000 Friends of Washington, WEC, League of Women Voters, Washington Association of Realtors, and National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, in addition to APA.

BAS, timelines, and basic updates are seen as important issues for participants' members. Meetings to begin work on ways to address these issues will begin in July. Additional organizations may be invited to join the working group.

The group agreed to continue discussions regarding its future and whether to begin addressing new issues; suggestions included both legislative and non-legislative issues involving fuller implementation of GMA.

Steve Butler has joined Mike McCormick, Jill Sterrett and Lisa Verner as an APA representative to the working group. Please contact any member if you have questions or comments on GMA issues: subtler@ci.seatac.wa.us, mjmcormick@olywa.net, sterrettj@edaw.com or lisa@cdspermits.com.

As the GMA Working Group moves forward, we will publish updates in *Planning Northwest*.



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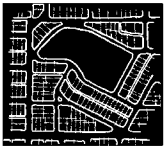
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