

## **Partnerships in Saving Farmland**

**Guest speaker: Kate Dean, Jefferson LandWorks Collaborative**

On Friday, March 14, 2008, Kate Dean of the Jefferson LandWorks Collaborative spoke to a small group on Lopez Island. The Collaborative is a group of concerned organizations on the Olympic Peninsula. Representatives meet monthly, and work on specific projects. These organizations include a land trust, a bank, WSU Extension, and a biodynamic farm, among others.

The mission for the Collaborative is threefold: 1) Keep land affordable and available, 2) Help farmers prosper through business training, providing infrastructure, and marketing coordination, and 3) Ensure consumer demand and markets. They do not deal with policy, but instead find solutions to individual problems. With the many organizations involved, they can leverage fundraising and present a unified whole to the public. They set targets and specific goals that can be enumerated to check on their progress. In general, they work one on one with landowners or businesses. Currently they have seven clients.

Kate gave several examples of their projects. In one, the Land Trust bought a farm, then leased it to a farmer for five years. The bank helped with a business plan, and the farmer paid for infrastructure. In another project, money was raised to purchase a conservation easement on a 180 acres farm, which had been short platted for 36 lots. The Collaborative is also looking into carbon credits for responsible forestry projects.

Kate gave us the benefit of some of the lessons the Collaborative has learned. These include caveats that each organization must not only have the capacity to commit to the process, but to benefit in some way. There must be adequate staffing and funding to take on a project. Also, client confidentiality is extremely important.

In the future, the Collaborative will be looking at more alternative leasing, ownership, and investment strategies. They will also be looking into methods to preserve farms through education in succession planning and inheritance.

For more information about the Collaborative, visit [www.jeffersonlandworks.org](http://www.jeffersonlandworks.org)