



King County
Rural Forest Commission

Minutes - King County Rural Forest Commission Meeting
Thursday, March 14, 2013, Preston Community Center

Commissioners present: Dick Ryon, North Bend resident (Vice Chair); Doug McClelland, WDNR; Sandy Miller, forest landowner; Matt Rourke, International Forestry Consultants; Ron P. Baum, forest landowner; Daryl Harper, forest landowner; Bernie McKinney, forest landowner; Nate Veranth, forest landowner; Cindy Spiry, Snoqualmie Tribe; Julie Stangell, Hancock Timber; Brandy Reed, King Conservation District; and Jim Franzel, USDA Forest Service

Staff: Alan Painter, Unincorporated Service Area Programs, Department of Natural Resources & Parks (DNRP); Randy Sandin, Department of Permitting & Environmental Review (DPER); Kathy Creahan, Water & Land Resources Division (WLRD); Kristi McClelland, WLRD; and Linda Vane, Commission Liaison

Guests: Donna Brathovde, Ravensdale resident and Mike Brathovde, Ravensdale resident

Vice Chair Dick Ryon called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

Minutes: Motion 1-313 That the minutes of the January 10, 2013 meeting be approved. Julie Stangell moved; Doug McClelland seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Staff and Agency Reports and Announcement

USDA Forest Service – Jim Franzel announced that he will resign from the Commission next month because he is retiring from Forest Service. The Forest Service will designate another ex officio representative for the Commission. Vice Chair Dick Ryon thanked Jim for sharing his vast background and knowledge during his tenure.

RFC Work Plan – Linda Vane presented the draft RFC work plan. Commissioners recommended additions. Linda will reorganize the document from list to table format.

Climate CPR web tool – Linda distributed information about a new county website, which provides estimates of the carbon stored on forested properties and in urban forests. The website provides general recommendations for improving forest health. Commissioners provided comments and recommendations for the website designers.

King Conservation District (KCD) – Linda reported that the King Conservation District will designate three rural representatives to the KCD Task Force this spring. One is to be a member of the Rural Forest Commission. The purpose of the Task Force is to make recommendations to the KCD Board of Supervisors and the King County Council on conservation programs and service needs in the region.

Community Service Areas – Alan Painter announced that the DNRP Community Service Areas Program will issue a request for grant proposals in April. Also coming up this spring will be a series of Community Service Area public meetings to gather input on the County's budget process.

USDA Forest Service – Jim Franzel reported that the Forest Service is expecting a 5% sequestration budget cut. They do not yet know how this will affect operations. He also reported that a bill has been introduced to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. Unless reauthorized, the program and its RAC grants for conservation projects in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest will end this year, according to Jim. He also provided an update on the new visitors' center planned for Enumclaw with funding from a federal Scenic Byways grant.

Jim reported that Representative Dave Reichert is working with the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust to promote National Heritage Area recognition for the Greenway. Rep. Reichert has also reintroduced the Alpine Lakes Wilderness expansion bill, said Jim.

Project Report on rural economic development through Forestry

Kristi McClelland, Forester, King County DNRP

Kristi reported on the Forestry Program's progress in implementing the Commission's recommendations related to rural economic development through forestry. Kristi said that there are challenges in trying to rebuild a forest economy in King County. And yet, forest management and restoration do generate economic activity, she said. For every 1 million board feet harvested it is estimated that there are about 7.7 direct jobs and 33.3 direct jobs generated by forest management and even more for restoration work, according to Kristi.

- In 2012 the Rural Forest Commission and the King County Agriculture Commission joined the Snoqualmie Tribe and several non-profits in co-sponsoring the "We Are All in This Together" twilight tour, which was designed to educate decision-makers about agriculture and forestry in the Snoqualmie Valley. Deputy County Executive Fred Jarrett attended. Having heard and seen recent successes, he challenged the organizers to come up with another list of challenges to tackle.
- King County's 2012 and 2013 budgets include staff support for rural economic development in the forestry sector and contracted assistance finding market and market connections local forest products marketing.
- 2012 and 2013 funding for WSU Extension coached forest stewardship planning courses reach a large group of ever-changing landowners who own anywhere between 160- to 4-acre tracts and who initially may not self-identify as forest landowners. Surveys of 2007-2012 participants show that 89% have changed behavior by implementing stewardship practices affecting over 2,000 acres of forest that they would not have undertaken otherwise. 90% reported increased enjoyment and understanding of the ecological importance of their land and, 3 years after having taken the course, 64% report reduced invasive species, 43% enrolled in Current Use Taxation programs. 100% reported greater confidence in their knowledge of how to manage their land.

- Puget Sound Fresh is developing a forestry segment called Puget Sound Grown. A November 2012 workshop was well attended and participants demonstrated a high level of interest in re-establishing a lumber mill in King County and in marketing non-timber forest products.
- The Forestry Program has submitted a proposal to the Built Green program to award the same points for local grown/local milled wood as FSC certified wood.

In addition to these successes, Kristi reported setbacks in the realm of cost share grants. The two cost share programs available to small forest landowners in King County have been cut back this year. These are the King Conservation District Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) program. The KCD LIP was reduced because of a reduction in the KCD assessment and NRCS cost share for forestry was reduced because program priorities were changed.

Kristi credited the Rural Forest Commission's advice and support for the success experienced by these programs.

Transfer of Development Rights Program

Dick Ryon, RFC Vice Chair

Dick Ryon facilitated a discussion of a new policy in King County's 2012 Comprehensive Plan that introduces a new option for transferring development rights from rural properties to other rural properties. Currently, almost all transfers of development rights in King County involve rural-to-urban transfers. The new policy provides for demonstration projects on former mine sites that would involve the transfer of development rights from properties in the Forest Production District to properties zoned for mining in order to develop clustered residential development and associated open space on the site of the mine. After discussion, the Commission decided to continue a dialogue on the topic of rural-to-rural transfer of development rights policy.

Soft surface trail permitting and code changes associated with the Shoreline Master Program Update

Randy Sandin, Division Director, King County DPER

Randy met with the Commission to continue a discussion of permitting and best management practices for the construction of soft surface trails. Randy explained that there may be a need to amend the County code so that some trail construction projects do not require permits. He said it would be a matter of simplifying the application process and cutting down costs for the applicant. He explained that the Department of Permitting, through work with King County Parks trails program, has already created a set of standards for soft surface trails. These standards could be used as threshold for determining if a trail project needed a permit or not.

Doug McClelland agreed and commented that only those projects that have safety or environmental concerns, such as bridge construction, really need a permit. Julie Stangell commented that there could be issues when trails intersect roads. She recommended that the potential for conflicts with road traffic should be taken into consideration. A general discussion

of the topics of liability and potential threats to title on private land ensued. The Commission concluded that Doug, Julie, Daryl, and Nate would research the topics further and report back to the rest of the Commission.

Randy Sandin provided a brief update on implementation of code changes related to the County's Shoreline Master Program that eliminated the requirement for conditional use permits in certain circumstances. Further discussion was postponed until the next Commission meeting.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on May 9, 2013, at the Preston Community Center.

Staff Liaison: Linda Vane, at 206-296-8042 or linda.vane@kingcounty.gov