



King County
Rural Forest Commission

Minutes - King County Rural Forest Commission Meeting Thursday, November 16, 2017, Preston Community Center

Commissioners present: Nate Veranth, forest landowner (Chair); Rex Thompson, forester (Vice Chair); Dick Ryon, forester; Andy Chittick, forest landowner/sawmill operator; Amy LaBarge, forest ecologist; Steven Mullen-Moses, Snoqualmie Tribe; Monica Paulson Priebe, Green River College; Brandy Reed, King Conservation District; Bernie McKinney, Green River Coalition; Kelsey Ketcheson, Washington State University Extension; Daryl Harper, forest landowner; Li Hsi, forest landowner; Wendy Davis, forest landowner; Grady Steere, Campbell Global

Guests: Steve Horton; Mike Lasecki, King Conservation District; Green River College students

King County Staff: Richard Martin, Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD); Eric Beach, WLRD; Wendy Sammarco, WLRD; Bill Loeber, WLRD; David Kimmett, Parks and Recreation Division (Parks); Daphne Payne, Parks; Fereshteh Dehkordi, Dept. Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER); Linda Vane, Commission Liaison

Chair Nate Veranth called the meeting to order at 8:38 a.m.

Motions

Motion 1-0917 That the minutes of the September 21, 2017 meeting be approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion 2-0917 That the phrase “cultural values” not be included in proposed revisions to the definition of “Forestry” (KCC21A.06). The motion carried.

Green River College student project: Bass Lake Forest Stewardship Plan

Anthony Pounds

Forestry Technology Program, Green River College

Anthony Pounds, a student in Green River College’s Forestry Technology Program, reported on a Forest Stewardship Plan that students developed for King County’s Bass and Beaver Lakes Natural Area Complex. The project was one of several opportunities for field experience that King County Parks and Recreation Division (Parks) had developed in cooperation with the college. The project employed Parks’ Forest Landscape Assessment Tool (FLAT) to develop a general management strategy for the Natural Area Complex.

Anthony described the general characteristics of the Natural Area Complex, which includes a 140-acre wetland, three lakes totaling 42 acres and another 90 to 100 acres of riparian areas. He explained that the FLAT analysis indicated that there were 11 different ecotypes in the complex. These were diverse, with upland steep slopes, lake, wetland and bog, among others, represented. The area is within the Green Duwamish Watershed, which has had a longstanding checkerboard ownership pattern of private industrial, agriculture, and rural residential land uses that have resulted in fragmented forests and wildlife habitat, according to Anthony.

Anthony explained that King County and Washington state agencies and non-profit organizations had been involved in developing common goals for conserving the environmentally significant wetland and

forest complex. Among these goals were to protect land within the lake complex from development and to create and restore more diverse and self-sustaining ecological habitats for public recreation and fish and wildlife habitat.

A question and answer session concluded the presentation. David Kimmett of King County Parks commented on the complexity of the site in terms of habitat types, explaining that the project involved a mix of ecological assessment and traditional forest management approaches. Grady Steere asked about the project's ultimate goal. David said that there would be another stage in which the FLAT analysis and strategy would be used as the basis for developing a forest management plan for the site.

Proposed KC Code updates

Linda Vane, Commission Liaison

Linda provided an overview of the commission's work on code revisions and gave a status report. She said that the Code Updates project comprised three topic areas:

- 1) Revisions to the definition of "forestry" in KCC 21A.06;
- 2) Moving the forestry-related code provisions located in various places throughout KCC 21A.06 into a single Resource Land Uses table; and
- 3) Additions and corrections to code related to forests and forestry.

The Commission discussed additional edits to the draft changes to the definition of forestry, which were developed earlier in the year. There was an extensive discussion of the question of whether the definition should include language related to the enhancement or recognition of "cultural values." It was recognized that there was value in acknowledging that trees and forests are important from the spiritual and religious perspectives and such practices could be considered part of forestry. At the same time, such practices were recognized as being private. There was concern that a reference to such practices in County regulations would allow regulations to intrude on private religious and spiritual practices. The group decided not to use the term "cultural practices" in the definition.

The Commission reviewed and commented on the reorganization of the KCC 21A.06 Resource Land Uses table and the most recent draft of additions and corrections to code related to forests and forestry.

In addition to various technical recommendations, the group discussed the need for making the Code, which is available online, easier to use and understand. Among the comments were:

- There should be a chart where one can find out if you need a permit.
- Citizens need to know what would trigger a permit.
- There should be references to tell you where to find the details regarding a particular activity.
- Improve the formatting so a layman can find information.

Eric Beach said that staff were working on updating the informational bulletins provided on the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER) website. He said that he would provide drafts for the Commission's review at a future meeting.

Staff and Agency Reports and Announcements

King County Forestry Program – Richard Martin announced that Commission Liaison Linda Vane would be retiring at the end of the year. He also introduced Wendy Sammarco who recently joined the staff as a Forester, providing technical assistance to private forest landowners.

Green River College – Monica Priebe welcomed her students and shared information about their forestry studies in the Natural Resources Program.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on January 18, 2018, at the Preston Community Center.