



King County

**King County Rural Forest Commission
 DRAFT Meeting Minutes
 Thursday, January 17th, 2019 – 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
 Preston Community Center, Preston**

Commissioner	Present?	Commissioner (Ex-Officio/Non-Voting)	Present?
Monica Paulson Priebe, academic forester (Chair)	✓	Kelsey Ketcheson, WSU Extension	✓
Amy LaBarge, forest ecologist (Vice-Chair)		Brandy Reed, KCD	✓
Laurie Benson, WA DNR		Martie Schramm, USDA Forest Svc.	
Jeff Boyce, rural cities/professional forester	✓		
Andy Chittick, forest product user/forest landowner	✓		
Wendy Davis, private forest landowner	✓		
Wyatt Golding, non-timber values of forest land	✓		
Daryl Harper, forest landowner			
Steve Horton, forest product user/forest landowner	✓		
Li Hsi, forest landowner	✓		
Bernie McKinney, forest landowner/conservation advocate			
Steven Mullen-Moses, affected Indian tribe			
Grady Steere, rep. large forest landowner	✓		

County Staff Present	Guests Present
Kathleen Farley Wolf, DNRP	Steve Braun, student
Dave Kimmett, DNRP	John Creighton, citizen
Evan Lewis, DNRP	
Bill Loeber, DNRP	
Richard Martin, DNRP	
Megan Moore, DNRP	
Wendy Sammarco, DNRP	

Chair Monica Paulson Priebe called the meeting to order at 9:02 am.

Motions

- **01-0117.** That the November 15th, 2018 meeting minutes be approved with one revision, to clarify attribution for the idea of the new RFC meeting time. Wyatt Golding motioned, Steve Horton seconded, and the motion carried.
- **02-0117.** That Jeff Boyce and Wyatt Golding look into serving as primary and alternate RFC representatives on the KCD Advisory Committee, and follow up with Kathleen Farley Wolf. Monica Priebe motioned, Grady Steere seconded, and the motion carried.
- **03-0117.** That the January 17th, 2019 RFC meeting adjourn at 11:59 am. Wyatt Golding motioned, Wendy Davis seconded, and the motion carried.

I) Chair Report – Monica Priebe

- **Meeting Minutes:** Grady Steere asked to clarify the November 15th, 2018 meeting minutes to reflect that while he motioned to change the RFC’s regular meeting time, the idea was Steven Mullen-Moses.’ A motion by Wyatt Golding was made to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Steven Horton; the motion carried.
- **Field Day Ideas:** Commissioners discussed when and where to hold their “field day” site visit/meetings for the year. Wendy Davis offered her site near Carnation, and Dave Kimmett offered a King County Parks site near Black Diamond. After some discussion, it was agreed to hold an abbreviated RFC meeting and a field visit on the same day. It was suggested to view Mr. Kimmett’s site in conjunction with the May RFC meeting in Renton, due to closer proximity to Black Diamond. Ms. Davis’s site is closer to Preston, so the date of the visit to her site is to be determined, possibly in conjunction with the September RFC meeting.

II) King County Parks Forest Management Update – Dave Kimmett, KC Open Space Program

Mr. Kimmett's presentation gave a broad overview of King County's forest stewardship program (FSP), along with its partnerships with schools, and on-the-ground projects.

The forest management process for King County involves a key partnership between the WLRD and Parks Divisions within DNRP. Parks holds land in a sort of operator/caretaker role, but works with the Forestry program staff in WLRD to manage these lands. All County-owned lands in the Open Space Program are in the lowlands and foothills and have different management goals, with forest being their shared characteristic. The Open Space Program includes 200 sites and 26,000 acres of forest, which include: working forest lands, ecological/natural areas, active parks and trails, and conservation easements. Forest stewardship guidelines include: ensuring healthy and resilient diverse forests, conserving and restoring ecological/hydrological functions and fish and species habitat, and providing public education/recreation opportunities.

Mr. Kimmett reviewed a timeline of documents involved in the history of the FSP, dating from the Farm and Forest Report in 1995 to the current/ongoing Land Conservation Initiative (LCI). The LCI will involve conserving 65,000 more acres of open space (including forests) in 30 years, largely through easements. There is also the County's Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP), a 5-year blueprint for County action to confront climate change. These efforts include goals such as planting 1 million trees by 2020, developing a 30-year plan to re-tree King County to the maximum extent practical, and stewarding or restoring over 25,000 acres.

King County forests include a mix of conifers, hardwood, and mixed conifer-hardwood, with a significant portion (40%) being hardwood. Active forest stewardship types include: hardwood to conifer commercial retention harvests, variable-density thinning, reforestation harvest sites with diverse species, post-harvest planting maintenance and monitoring, and site/vegetation management (such as noxious weed control). He spoke about the intricacies of managing red alder forests and transitioning them to conifer in upland areas. He noted the County's forest management process is still "catching up" the forests to where they need to be, but gradually.

He reviewed some of the "1 Million Trees" initiative sites: Taylor Mountain Forest, Henry's Ridge Open Space, Vashon Island Center Forest, Mitchell Hill Forest, and Sugarloaf Mountain Forest. Island Center's is to be an 8-acre thin from below on 100-year-old Douglas fir and a small contract floral shrub harvest, which will be tried for the first time. When it was advised to harvest the shrubs before logging, Mr. Kimmett said while this might be done at some sites, it would likely not be done at Island Center so as to fast-track the thinning to be done before fire season. Sugarloaf Mountain will be a large-scale "drop and leave" conversion from alder to conifer. Monica Priebe offered to put one of her classes in touch with Mr. Kimmett so as to have extra hands in the field.

He then reviewed FSP college partnerships, including University of Washington (UW)'s School of Environmental Sciences, and Green River College. UW students have completed 6,000+ acres of forest stewardship plans, and are working on projects such as carbon sequestration and hardwood forest management. GRC students work similarly, completing stewardship plans, site analyses, and a study on estimated timber sale revenue. GRC is also hiring 2 more interns; ideas are sought to develop their workload. Richard Martin noted that sometimes students present their draft stewardship plans to the RFC; Mr. Kimmett agreed the County might have students come back to King Street Center to present their draft plans. Mr. Martin said more discussion should occur on the need for interns.

Mr. Kimmett said there are many challenges for the FSP, which include: growing the County's forest land base; having many disconnected sites; inheritance of poorly-managed lands; ongoing assessment of new forest lands; restoring hardwood forests; recreation demands; population growth; educating the public about forest stewardship (he stressed this was very important); permitting and cultural resources; and writing plans to meet SCAP goals. One other challenge is hazard trees: these are dying/dead trees within striking distance of property or people. Dr. Priebe asked what the County's biggest need is to move forward in achieving its goals. He replied that more forestry staff and interns are needed for the many ongoing and special projects.

Andy Chittick asked whether the County's harvest projects break even financially. Mr. Kimmett said revenue is not a main goal, and the County's mandate is to show good forest management practices and be good land stewards and the staff salaries are already covered, so the answer would depend whether all costs were included. Bill Loeber added that working with consultants and interns is critical.

III) King County Progress Report, Revisited – Richard Martin, DNRP

Mr. Martin presented a color-coded table indicating varying levels of progress on a list of 26 priority action items from the 2009 Rural Forest Commission Report. These will be compiled into a written report for the RFC to review at the next meeting. He noted that it would be helpful if the RFC advised King County on what to focus on and

guiding how to go forward. This feedback can be given informally or upon receipt of the written report. Brandy Reed said this is key to guide not only the County, but other entities like KCD in securing investments to do the work. She suggested committing structurally to revisit this report on a recurring basis and updating more frequently than every 10 years.

Commissioners and others raised several points to address:

- Grady Steere asked to review and streamline the rules relating to shorelines, as well as clarify the issue of County bridge weight restrictions, as the latter impacts small forest landowners in terms of moving equipment and large loads. Unstable slopes were also highlighted as an area that affects a lot of forest landowners. Mr. Martin said code issues/changes are Eric Beach's purview, and while the County's been "bogged down" in some specific code matters, Mr. Beach needs to be aware that these other issues need addressing. Mr. Martin added that the new Department of Local Services (DLS) and its director, John Taylor, are in a good position to look at these types of requests.
- Li Hsi asked about the chance of dedicated program funding for small landowners to treat invasive species, or for the County to periodically review and enforce invasive species control. Mr. Martin said the Noxious Weeds Program may need to present to the RFC on this. He added that very little County funding comes back directly to the forestry program or private forest landowners, and the RFC can consider whether they want to make a recommendation to the Executive that dedicated funding be provided.
- Andy Chittick asked about what County permits are issued for forest practices, as that is generally done by the state. Mr. Martin replied that if an activity falls under a Forest Practices Act (FPA) permit, the County is generally not engaged. However, building a structure or a road, or non-FPA tree clearing, may require a County permit. If a County permit is required, there is no reduction in fees for forest landowners. Ms. Reed added that if a small forest landowner approaches the County to get a permit for clearing in a non-FPA zone, a clearing/grading permit is triggered as if it's a development activity, and can cost \$2,000-3,000. While Mr. Beach is working on this issue, she advised that any impacts to on-the-ground work from this should be monitored and reported to the new permitting team at DLS.
- Steven Horton asked why the delay on intersecting the goals of agriculture and forestry. Mr. Martin answered there's been no active pushback, just no progress.
- Dave Kimmett said, despite his pushing, a full-time Parks forester has not been hired, although funding has been available for consultants. He said this item's status should be coded "red" (no progress). Mr. Martin noted it is easier to hire consultants than staff, and advised anyone with feedback on the color-coding status of these list items to let him know.

Monica Priebe noted that at the last meeting, there was wide RFC support to update the 2009 report. She didn't believe an official vote was required now, and today's prioritization exercise should flesh out RFC concerns. She asked Commissioners to look at the ideas that come up on the poster and note where they interest with the King County progress report, which would help provide a path for the report update.

IV) Code Change Update – Eric Beach, DNRP

This update was not addressed due to the absence of Mr. Beach.

V) RFC Priorities Activity – Commissioners

Monica Priebe directed Commissioners to several large printed wall lists of ideas and action items, some of which overlap with the 2009 forest report while others are new. She asked RFC members to engage in a priorities ranking exercise and she noted that a row should be added to include revisiting/updating the 2009 report. She advised all to write or add post-it notes on the papers as needed.

----- **BREAK:** During the break, Commissioners engaged in the priorities exercise for about 25 minutes. -----

VI) RFC Priorities Follow-Up Discussion – Commissioners

Monica Priebe observed many of the topics included on the poster intersect with the actions from the 2009 report, though there are new ideas that should be added to the 2019 plan. Three areas stand out as top priorities, including: infrastructure to support working forests; cost-share for Firewise implementation; and updating/rewriting the 2009 forest plan. Dr. Priebe noted two submitted ideas for "equity and social justice" and "tribal issues and priorities" were not clearly categorized as a specific action area, and asked the person suggesting them to clarify their intent. Wyatt Golding said he was one of the votes for "tribal issues and priorities," and noted that there is concern with development on lands that impact tribal resources, as well as issues related to tribal notification. Another suggestion was advising landowners on carbon forestry, but it was noted that the County is working on this.

Dr. Priebe said these tables would be fleshed out and summarized for next meeting, and from there the RFC would look at how to address the 2019 plan. Further feedback should be directed to Dr. Priebe or Kathleen Farley Wolf.

VII) **King County Fish Passage Restoration Program – Evan Lewis, DNRP**

Mr. Lewis, a Special Projects Manager at DNRP, leads the County's new fish passage restoration program and reviewed it for the RFC. The goal is to accelerate and prioritize restoration of County-owned/maintained waterways that have barriers to fish passage, an overall process expected to take 20-30 years. He noted a key aspect is collaboration with interested parties and stakeholders to ensure regional "buy-in" for the program, and he hopes to engage the RFC to incorporate their feedback. The program has five main elements:

- **Early Actions:** There are 36 potential projects funded for the 2019-20 biennium; these represent a "down payment" on future fish passage restoration efforts. Mr. Lewis said all 36 projects may not be completed; many may be advanced to a phase sufficient to apply for further funding. Steven Horton asked why fish would return to a previously blocked-off habitat; Mr. Lewis replied that fish will disperse to available habitat.
- **Inventory and Assessment:** This defines the program scope. WDFW has an online color-coded fish passage map of about 475 King County-owned crossings, and about 2,500 with roads, trails, stormwater facilities, and other County assets. Four people will be hired by next month to go out in teams to each site, to assess classifications and narrow down any needs to address. This inventory is expected to take about 2 years.
- **Prioritizing Barriers:** This will be done by accounting for factors such as: habitat value, asset condition, status of certain fish stocks, relationships to other projects, and any other non-County sites on these waterways. Some assessing will be done over the next 4-5 months to narrow down the list, at which point collaboration will begin with state and tribal entities. Mr. Lewis offered to return and brief the RFC on this if desired. He said the main goal is to get the most fish to the best habitat as quickly as possible.
- **Program Procedures:** This involves streamlining approaches in terms of design, program management, contracting, and regulatory. These will then be integrated across County programs and practices. This will also provide a means for technical assistance to link County and non-County projects to connect more habitat as quickly as possible, and provide a clearinghouse for information about fish passage projects.

A key aspect of all this is programmatic flexibility. The focus will be to complete higher-priority projects first, and develop approaches for when fish passage needs and infrastructure needs aren't aligned. The County wants to work long-term with partners to define success criteria and objectives for the program, such as possible cumulative habitat gains. It is expected that a pattern will emerge showing rapid habitat gain from a small proportion of the projects, then diminishing returns in gains per project; this will inform program procedures. For instance, about half of the current projects represent about 90% of expected total habitat gain. King County's Mitigation Reserves Program also provides examples of successfully optimized mitigation for impacts to wetlands and other waters.

- A question was raised about what maintenance considerations the County implements with a road adjacent to a section of stream above an impassable structure, and where accountability would fall (County or state) with vegetation maintenance affecting such a waterway. Mr. Lewis replied this would, if in an unincorporated area, likely be directed to the County's Roads Division's maintenance crews.
- **Funding Strategies:** The current assumption is that more funding will be needed to adequately address the County's fish barrier issues in the coming decades. The task is to find sustainable funding to complete removal of these barriers. This analysis will be done on a 30-year scale similar to the LCI, to determine what funds, and strategies to obtain them, are needed. These may include state/federal grant sources, a potential new County capital program, partnerships, or other ideas.

Richard Martin asked about the impetus for this whole process. Mr. Lewis said the Executive is interested in helping clean water and healthy habitat and wants to know how the County can unblock access to good fish habitats. There is also legislation moving through the court system involving state-owned culverts impacting tribal fisheries and the County wants to be proactive. Mr. Lewis reviewed a detailed timeline of the process, first steps of which (2019-2021) include early action projects and barrier inventory and assessment.

There were other follow-up questions. Wyatt Golding asked about monitoring on fixed culverts; Mr. Lewis replied this is part of the process, as changing flow into a watershed affects its balance and can't be left unmonitored. Brandy Reed asked how this program addresses overlay with increased County agriculture priorities. Mr. Lewis agreed the Agriculture and Forestry Commissions, along with the ADAP program, should be consulted, as these are not trivial changes being made. Grady Steere asked if the removal process had started; Mr. Lewis replied they are still in the scoping phase, preparing for prioritization and inventory. Mr. Steere also asked if the weight-limit

downgrade of many County bridges is tied into this program. Mr. Lewis replied that they won't do an assessment on most bridges because they're pretty wide. He noted that there isn't enough roads money to go around, which is manifesting itself in restrictions and closures. His said roads money, for the most part, is used for critical maintenance and so it's not going to be used for pure restoration.

VIII) Public Comment

There was no public comment during this period.

IX) Agency Reports and Announcements

- KCD (Brandy Reed):
 - KCD is moving forward with its strategic plan development and rates/charges authorization processes; she said they are not hearing any surprises relating to small-acreage forest landowners or urban forestry priorities. There is a chance to expand the rural forest health management program; she will keep the RFC apprised.
 - Ms. Reed said it would help for someone on the RFC to advocate for its needs by serving as its representative (both a primary and alternate are needed) on KCD's Advisory Committee, as her doing so in her current role is a bit awkward. Jeff Boyce agreed to consider it, as did Wyatt Golding, provided they could share the responsibility. Monica Priebe motioned for Mr. Boyce and Mr. Golding to follow up with Kathleen Farley Wolf to decide who of them could serve as RFC representative and alternate on the KCD Advisory Committee. Grady Steere seconded, and the motion carried.
- WA DNR (Laurie Benson):
 - DNR closed on a 2-acre piece of land at Mount Si NRCA, bringing them closer to completing the NRCA.
 - DNR has entered a "Good Neighbor Authority" (GNA) agreement with USFS, to apply DNR expertise to USFS lands for work on restoration projects. Ms. Benson offered to have DNR experts on this topic present to the RFC if desired. Mr. Steere asked if this agreement means the federal government will be implementing DNR rules on their property; Ms. Benson replied it all has to go through the GNA process. Dr. Priebe agreed this program was of interest, and RFC consensus was to add this as a future agenda item.
 - Ms. Benson promoted DNR's statewide internship program, which includes a broad range of interests, including forestry; information is available online.
 - Dr. Priebe asked if there is the potential for any land swaps or DNR lands being sold off in the near future. Ms. Benson agreed to compile an update on this for next meeting and touch base with Dr. Priebe.
- WSU Extension: There were no updates.
- King County (Richard Martin, Kathleen Farley Wolf):
 - Framework has been laid for advances on the County's forest carbon program; there will be an urban and a rural forest carbon program. The urban one is already up and running; the rural is awaiting a project design document by the end of this month. The program is being built with County lands as a base, it is hoped for private and non-profit landowners to participate as well. The project design document for the rural program is to undergo a 30-day review period, during which Mr. Martin would like RFC feedback. Dr. Priebe asked if County lands are eligible for carbon credits; Mr. Martin said that some lands qualify and some don't and it will be clearer when the project design document is released, so at the meeting following that, more detail can be provided.
 - Proposed forestry code revisions are in the legislative manager's office at DPER. DPER recognizes they have a two year legislative backlog to address and are currently prioritizing issues to move resource issues forward. Eric Beach expects to have a full update for the March meeting.
 - New Commissioner Orientation is scheduled for March 6th at King Street Center in Seattle.
 - Ms. Farley Wolf reminded Commissioners that 2019 financial disclosure forms are due.

X) Concerns of Commissioners

None.

XI) Concluding Remarks/Adjournment – Monica Priebe

- Dr. Priebe will work with Kathleen Farley Wolf to synthesize the feedback from today's prioritization exercise, as well as an update on DNR's Good Neighbor agreement, and from Mr. Beach on code changes.
- Wyatt Golding motioned to adjourn today's meeting, seconded by Wendy Davis. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be March 21st, 2019, at the Preston Community Center, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.