



**King County**

**King County Rural Forest Commission  
 Meeting Minutes  
 Thursday, July 18th, 2019 – 9:00 am to 12:00 am  
 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, large forest landowner			
County Staff Present			
Richard Martin, DNRP			
Wendy Sammarco, DNRP			
Kathleen Farley Wolf			

**Motions**

**01-0718.** Motion to approve the draft minutes from the May 16, 2019 meeting of the Rural Forest Commission as written. Wendy Davis made the motion, Steve Horton seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

*Amy called the meeting to order at 9:05 am.*

Draft minutes from the May 16, 2019 meeting were reviewed and no changes were recommended. Amy called for a motion to approve the May minutes as written, Wendy Davis made the motion, Steve Horton seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The Commission reflected on the May 16, 2019 field trip to the Taylor Mountain County Forest. Field trip stops included: 1.) red alder treatment with the goal of restoring the forest to natural composition; 2.) recent (2018) hardwood harvest followed by planting (2019) with the goals of improving forest health and promoting strategies for improving long term carbon sequestration; 3.) Potential culvert removal location with the goal of improving long term fish passage and access (management and recreation).

Discussion about the field trip followed:

Li commented on the uniqueness of having abundant bigleaf maple. Li suggested thinning the maple and promoting red alder. His rationale is because maple is not a common dominant species in the northwest forest, and this uniqueness should be preserved. Li is concerned about bigleaf maple demise and sees value in preserving healthy maple across the forested landscape.

Steve H. commented on the management units on Taylor providing visual representations of treatment options. Storyboards could be considered as a method of communicating to visitors a variety of approaches for managing for healthy forests.

Bernie commented on our King County Executive's Land Conservation Initiative. Much of this land was previously harvested and would benefit from restoration work; with a strong focus on invasive weed control. There is a real concern that the budget is not robust enough to adequately address invasive weed control. Bernie feels that priority should be invasive treatment before thinning. He suggests aggressive invasive treatment followed by planting followed by continued focused commitment. Brandi Reed commented on the importance of investing in property that are assets and stewarding appropriately. Laurie Benson asked if there is a King County Plan that prioritizes projects.

### **Public Comment**

There was none.

### **Carbon Project Update**

Kathleen Farley Wolf, King County Forest Carbon Program Manager, discussed the County's Forest Carbon Program. Kathleen provided an update on the program including build out information. King County is pursuing a Forest Carbon Program for the following reasons: to increase stores in rural and urban carbon; co-benefits to water, air, wildlife and recreation; to provide an opportunity for private forest landowners to participate; to engage the business community; and to share the program with others. There are two Carbon Programs being developed by King County: 1) Urban Program with a start date of 2018 and 2) Rural Program with a start date of 2015. The first Urban Program project has been successfully verified and a portion of the carbon credits were sold to Fisherman's Finest, a Kirkland, Washington based company. The Rural Program is being developed under the Verified Carbon Standard ("VCS") and will use their "improved forest management" methodology. Carbon offsets are calculated by comparing forest condition under revised management versus business as usual. Carbon stocking is modeled using a newly-approved approach and permanent plots are established to validate the model. This is a much cheaper and easier approach and only requires about one plot per 40 acres versus one plot per 4 acres under the previous sampling methodology.

Should a landowner decide to participate in the County's carbon program, they will be required to enter into a forest carbon easement. Although the details are still being developed, the County will retain a portion of carbon credit sales to cover program management, but the goal is to return maximum value to the landowner. There will be minimal up-front cost to landowners. The County will establish a "buffer pool" of credits to serve as insurance against future, uncontrolled timber loss (e.g., wildfire).

The County anticipates enrolling about 740 acres of public and private land in this first year. The project design is under a 30-day public review after which an independent reviewer will examine the project and provide the necessary program validation and offset verification. Microsoft is committed to purchasing all the first year verified carbon credits.

Kathleen is working on a number of documents required for private landowner participation, including the Letter of Intent, Participation Agreement, Forest Carbon Plan, and a Conservation/Carbon Easement. Daryl stressed keeping documents simple and having them available on a website. Brandi asked about minimum land area required for private participation and Kathleen noted that below a certain threshold (approx. 10 acres) the return to the landowner would not justify enrollment. Wyatt suggested exploring neighborhood or community enrollment.

### **Recruiting New Members to the RFC**

Richard shared with the RFC that Daryl and Bernie are reaching the end of their second full terms serving on the RFC. The September meeting will be their last. KC has posted a formal request for RFC applications on the KC website. Richard made a request to the RFC to provide RFC candidate recommendations. Additionally, Richard requested volunteers from the RFC to form a subcommittee to screen applications and interview potential candidates. Subcommittee volunteers: Amy, Daryl, Bernie, Wendy, Laurie, and Li.

Three RFC members will be reaching the end of their first terms next year: Amy, Laurie, and Monica. These three members are being asked to consider serving on the RFC for a second consecutive term.

### **2019 Forest Plan**

Richard explained the approach to updating/creating a Forest Plan to direct the work of KC for the next ten years (2020-2030). He distributed a spreadsheet and the Commission members broke in to working teams covering: 1) Profitability (Grady (absent) & Wyatt); 2) Fire Resiliency (Jeff & Wendy); 3) Managing Lands (Andy (absent) & Steve H.); 4) Conservation Priorities (Lee & Bernie); 5) Tribal Issues (Steve M. & Amy); 6) Small forest landowners (Brandi & Kelsey). Each team reviewed their program areas, identified key strategies moving forward and reported back to the full RFC.

Those team recommendations will be discussed in some detail during the September meeting and the RFC will determine how best to present their recommendations (simple spreadsheet or a full report). There was support for a full report because the document can serve as a communication tool and some key forest concerns were not addressed in the 2009 report (e.g., Tribal rights and concerns).

### **Concerns of Commissioners**

Brandi: Updated the RFC on the KCD current rates and charges that are due to sunset on 12/31/2019. Public hearings are scheduled for next week, seeking comments on KCD performance/work and proposed rates and charges.

Laurie: Under the Good Neighbor Authority the DNR will be auctioning two sales soon.

### **Adjourn**

Laurie motioned to adjourn the RFC meeting, Wyatt 2<sup>nd</sup>. Meeting was adjourned at 12:00

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