



**King County Rural Forest Commission
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 15, 2022 – 9:00 am to 12:00 am
hybrid**

Commissioner	Present?	Commissioner (Ex-Officio/Non-Voting)
		Grace Garrison - WSU Extension
Amy LaBarge, forest ecologist (Vice-Chair)	✓	Brett Anderson, KCD ✓
Laurie Benson, WA DNR	✓	Martie Schramm, USDA Forest Svc.
Jeff Boyce, rural cities/professional forester	✓	
Wendy Davis, private forest landowner	✓	Daniel Oderyd RFC nominee ✓
Wyatt Golding, non-timber values of forest land	✓	Vacant, forest landowner
Steve Horton, forest product user/forest landowner	✓	Vacant, forest landowner
Li Hsi, forest landowner	✓	
Grady Steere, large forest landowner	✓	
Mari Knutson, forest landowner	✓	
Monica Paulson Priebe, academic forester	✓	
<i>Seven RFC members attending is a quorum</i>		
County Staff Present		
Richard Martin, DNRP		Paul Fischer
Wendy Sammarco, DNRP		
Josi West		
Public		
Tim Obrien		Bernie McKinney

Motions

01-9152022 A motion is made to accept May meeting minutes with edits. Laurie Benson makes the motion, Monica Paulson Priebe seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously

Action Items

Action Item: Gather input from RFC members (survey) that investigates preferences for future RFC meetings: online or in person. (*RFC staff liaison assignment*)

Action item: All RFC members assist in the RFC recruitment efforts. The RFC members could suggest and encourage forest landowners and managers to consider applying to serve on the RFC. (*unending action item*)

Action item: Forest operations that are impacted by neighboring structures that are >+\$1,000 value, should remain Forest Practice (currently Clearing and Grading); craft and pursue resolution through KC Policy (*holdover from previous RFC meeting*)

Action item: Present to the RFC the update on the model building code relative to the WUI, specifically the vegetation management plan and fuel reduction plan requirements. Investigate if Firewise type work will require a Clearing and Grading Permit. (note: Firewise fuel reduction and fire resilience actions being added to KCD LIP program -cost-share) (*holdover from previous RFC meeting*)

Action item: Craft and seek a permit exemption (from clearing and grading permit) for Fire hazard and/or

invasive species abatement. (*holdover from previous RFC meeting*)

Action item: Schedule/coordinate a presentation of the Cedar River Watershed Forest Management Plan later this year (4Q 2021) now extended in to 2022. (*holdover from previous RFC meeting*)

Action Item: Schedule presentation of Impacts to King County Forest Cover over the last twenty-years+-No Net Loss of Forest Cover

Action Item: Schedule/Coordinate Forest Field Tour for King County Council – Local Services and Land Use Committee

Action Item: Draft a letter to King County Council Local Services and Land Use Committee emphasizing the importance of forest and including specific asks. This letter will be a precursor to the field tour. Wyatt Golding will draft the letter; Wendy Davis will work on logistics to support the tour.

Action Item: Schedule a presentation on the WA DNR’s Trust Land Transfer Program

Action Item: Schedule a presentation on the WA DNR’s Carbon Program

Call to Order

Amy LaBarge called the meeting to order. This meeting of the RFC is hybrid, with participation both in-person and online via Zoom. There is a quorum.

Past Meeting Minutes

The RFC members review May RFC meeting notes.

Motion: A motion is made to accept May meeting minutes with edits. Laurie Benson makes the motion, Monica Paulson Priebe seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously

Highlights from the July Field Tour of the Snoqualmie Tree Farm

Grady Steere, tour lead/guide shares about the tour which included a visit to active logging, precommercial thinning, commercial thinning, biosolid application, forest roads, and various silviculture applications (planting, treatment of competing vegetation, etc.)

-Li Hsi shares that his forest is adjacent to the Snoqualmie Tree Farm and he was particularly interested in how his neighbors managed their forest. Li is particularly impressed by the road maintenance program including surface mine development/management and the contribution to road surfacing. Li reminds us that quality roads are important for many reasons: hauling, silviculture activities and fire access. Li is also impressed by the management of forested steep slopes. And he is impressed with Grady’s knowledge about all aspects of management of the Snoqualmie Tree Farm.

Laurie Benson shares that it is particularly interesting to learn about how management decisions are made.

Highlights from the August King County Council Presentation

Amy LaBarge, Monica Paulson Priebe, and Wendy Davis presented to the King County Council Land Use and Local Services Committee (Sarah Perry chair) about the Rural Forest Commission 2022 Report. Amy provided an overview of the RFC and forest land in King County and Wendy Davis shared about the work involved in managing a forest. The Land Use and Local Services Committee is interested in following up this presentation with a forest field tour hosted by the RFC.

Action Item: Schedule and coordinate a forest field tour for King County Council – Local Services and Land Use Committee.

- Monica Paulson Priebe will develop/build on the primary message (objective) of the field tour. The field tour should tie in a budget ‘ask’ relative to forest management (as indicated in the 2022 RFC Report)
- Amy LaBarge shares that there is always room to educate on the importance of forests

Action Item: Draft a letter to King County Council Local Services and Land Use Committee emphasizing the importance of forest and including specific asks (from the RFC 2022 Report). This letter will be a precursor to the field tour. Wyatt Golding will draft the letter; Wendy Davis will work on logistics to support the tour.

Amy LaBarge and Monica Paulson Priebe share last words and future visions (Amy and Monica’s last RFC meeting = terms have expired)

-Monica Paulson Priebe shares a thank you for the opportunity to serve. She plans to attend with her Forest Policy students in the fall. Monica also shares the value of filling the position she is vacating with an academic forester, and has a potential replacement in mind. Monica also shares a congratulations and thank you for completing the 2022 RFC Report

-Amy LaBarge shares that she had considered serving on the RFC in the late 1990s, but took a job located outside of King County. She has been honored to serve on the RFC. She cautions that development is booming, and it is important to consider the forest. Amy is attempting to recruit to fill her forest ecologist/professional forester RFC position. Amy appreciates the efforts to develop and complete the 2022 RFC Report.

Rural Forest Commission Chair Vacancy, discussion, nomination and motion

Amy, who is vacating her RFC Chair position, opens the discussion and nomination process for the next RFC Chair.

Steve Horton nominates Wendy Davis who is currently serving as Vice Chair = Wendy Davis declines

Wendy Davis nominates Steve Horton who is currently serving on the Executive Committee = Steve Horton declines

Steve Horton nominates Li Hsi = Li Hsi declines

Monica Paulson Priebe nominates Laurie Benson

Richard Martin volunteers that it is reasonable/acceptable that the WA DNR RFC member Chairs the RFC.

Amy LaBarge shares that the Chair responsibilities include reviewing the meeting Agendas, leading the meeting, and following up on any action items as needed (infrequent)

Monica Paulson Priebe shares that if you can be at the meeting you can Chair the meeting. Any extra time is infrequent. The Vice Chair assists when the Chair is unable to attend.

Richard Martin shares that in addition to running the meeting, figure on an additional two-hour commitment.

Also, no RFC Chair has ever suggested that the work of the Chair is/has been overwhelming. (note RFC meetings occur five times a year + one field trip a year)

Laurie Benson shares that she will consider the nomination; however, she has returned to her job recently and will evaluate workload and commitments before accepting the nomination.

Amy LaBarge determines that it is premature to entertain a motion and vote on the RFC Chair. She shares the importance of serving and finding the capacity to step up and be part of the important RFC work

Note: Serving as RFC Chair is a two-year commitment.

Presentation: King County Parks 5-Year Forest Implementation Plan = Paul Fischer

Paul introduces the Plan as a ‘Planning document to identify forestry practices, priorities, and support work.’

What drives the plan is knowing what King County has relative to forestland, knowing what KC needs to do relative to ecological considerations as well as understanding and incorporating King County policy in actions and activities. Paul shares that the next five years will be a combination of commercial and noncommercial thinning/harvests, maintenance actions, and tree planting. The scale will include all of King County Parks managed forest land. There will be an annual update to the 5-year Plan work schedule. There will also be an Annual Report on the completed work from the previous year. Included in the Annual Report will be if/how well the goals are being met.

Paul provides that King County Parks stewards 28,000 acres of forest which includes 4,200 acres of ‘working forestland’ and 8,200 acres identified as high and medium priority forests that will greatly benefit from active

management now for long-term climate resilience.

The guiding policies for King County forest land management include: Clean Water Healthy Habitat, Strategic Climate Action Plan, 30-Year Forest Plan, Open Space Plan, Equity and Social Justice Program

The vision for King County Parks Forest Management: Be a regional leader in multi objective ecological oriented forestry; employ innovative forest stewardship strategies; define long-term management using climate resilience objectives.

Currently King County Parks forests are 40% hardwood dominated, 35% mixed conifer hardwood, 25% conifer dominated. Paul shared that King County has a forest data management need; there is an abundance of data however there is not a functional inter-relational system to house, manage or extract data from.

Forest Stewardship Plans are required on all King County owned forest land that is 200-acres and greater in size

Discussion

-Monica Paulson Priebe: Does King County manage vegetation to mitigate the effects of fire? Paul Fischer: No, because there is very little to do that is ecologically reasonable in westside forests, however the County is beginning to focus on road access.

-Grady Steere: Is there King County owned forested properties that have a 'let burn' policy? Paul Fischer: King County would default to WA DNR to make the determination. Richard Martin: King County forested holdings are small and disconnected, so no, King County would not have a 'let burn' policy.

-Amy LaBarge: The "Accelerating Forest Restoration Table" tells the story that aligns with the RFC Report awareness and needs. Richard Martin: The RFC Report identified a need for one dedicated forester to help with managing King County Parks forest restoration. King County honored this with the addition of Josi West to the Forestry Team = the RFC has influence!

-Monica Paulson Priebe: Green River College natural resource students can help with conifer release, inventory, manual labor, etc.

-Monica Paulson Priebe: Have you connected with Paul Footen (WA DNR) about how he works with the public and/or recreation users? Paul Fischer: Great idea, I will connect with Paul Footen

-Laurie Benson: How does the King County 30-Year Forest Plan and this 5-Year Plan work? Richard Martin: The 5-Year Plan supports the 30-Year Forest Plan objectives.

Presentation Potential Land Use & Zoning Study Relative to Surface Mine Development and Expansion in Southeast King County = Tim Obrien Enumclaw Plateau Community Association

There is a coalition of community groups who share the objective of keeping rural King County rural. The Enumclaw Plateau Community Association is concerned about the cumulative impacts of proposed gravel mines and concerned that King County Department of Local Services does not follow up/regulate surface mines appropriately/rigorously.

Tim shares that Subarea Plans are not a good fit for the analysis to proposed gravel mines because Subarea Plans focus on the urban areas within the County. Also, the Subarea Plan scheduled for Southeast King County will be too late when compared with the development timeline of surface mine development and expansion.

Tim suggests that as part of the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan that a 'Land Use Study' is identified and committed to (by King County).

Tim shares that the Washington Aviation Systems Plans Study, researching a location for a new airport, has identified southeast King County as a potential location and that the 'Land Use Study' would address this as well. For reference, Tim pointed us towards King County Code: 20.08.060 = Subarea plan and 20.08.070 = Comprehensive Plan

Tim shares a list of community concerns regarding surface mines: incompatible land use, infrastructure degradation, public safety, permitting model is funding/fee based but does not work well for public interests, impacts of mines in close proximity is cumulative but permitting is site by site, lack of code enforcement and lack of complaint process, business model for gravel mines include next use of land, business model may include landfilling and cutting corners, reclamation almost never gets done or is done incorrectly, reclamation when

‘returned’ to forest is not so effective, pollution cumulative impacts.

Tim asks if the RFC would support the ‘Land Use Study’ request/addition to the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan

*For clarity, these proposed surface mines and surface mine expansion locations are **not** in the Forest Production District (Industrial Forestland – east King County)*

Agency Updates

WA DNR - Laurie Benson DNR has completed a legislative request supporting the Trust-land Transfer Program. 10 properties have been identified representing 7,000-acres. The Trust-land Transfer Program transfers DNR Trust-Land into conservation status, for example West Tiger Mountain Natural Resource Conservation Area may/will be expanding. WA DNR’s new Carbon Program is going through the SEPA process. 10,000 acres may be going into Carbon Program status.

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks - Richard Martin The RFC and Ag Commission Code Change recommendation of increasing the storage building size from 200ft² to 400ft² is approved and will be applicable in January 2023. The biennial budget has been submitted to the King County Executive with a request to secure additional funding for forest land support (action from RFC Report). King County Parks will be expanding forest staff, with these new positions being funded by the Parks levy.

KCD - Brett Anderson KCD has hosted tours recently showcasing projects and best management practices. A collaborators meeting is in the works for KCD, DNR, NRCS and KC to strategize how to best work together and support the small forest landowner.

Concerns of Commissioners

Monica Paulson Priebe: Update the RFC webpage! Richard Martin: King County is in the midst of a project to revamp all DNRP webpages, planned to completion first quarter 2023

Amy LaBarge shares about bigleaf maple decline with sooty bark disease. (note: WA DNR pathologists are investigating sooty bark on bigleaf maple)

Concluding Remarks

Amy LaBarge thanks the Rural Forest Commission for the honor of serving.

Adjourn