



**King County Rural Forest Commission
 DRAFT Meeting Minutes
 Thursday, September 20th, 2018 – 8:30 to 11:30 am
 Lake Wilderness Lodge, Maple Valley**

Commissioner	Present?	Commissioner (Ex-Officio/Non-Voting)	Present?
Nate Veranth, forest landowner (Chair)		Kelly Ketcheson, WSU Extension	
Rex Thompson, professional forester (Vice Chair)	✓	Brandy Reed, KCD	✓
Laurie Benson, WA DNR		Martie Schramm, USFS	
Andy Chittick, forest product user/forest landowner	✓		
Wendy Davis, private forest landowner	✓		
Daryl Harper, forest landowner	✓		
Li Hsi, forest landowner	✓		
Amy LaBarge, forest ecologist			
Bernie McKinney, forest landowner/conservation advocate	✓		
Steven Mullen-Moses, affected Indian tribe	✓		
Monica Paulson Priebe, academic forester	✓		
Dick Ryon, rural city	✓		
Grady Steere, forest landowner	✓		

County Staff Present	Guests Present
Eric Beach, DNRP	Johan Bärwald, forestry student
Kathleen Farley Wolf, DNRP	Jeff Boyce, Meridian Environmental
Dave Kimmett, DNRP	Bea Covington, KCD
Bill Loeber, DNRP	Steven Horton, forest landowner
Richard Martin, DNRP	Kevin Zobrist, WSU Extension
Megan Moore, DNRP	
Wendy Sammarco, DNRP	

Vice Chair Rex Thompson called the meeting to order at 8:44 am.

Motions

- **1-0920.** That the July 19th, 2018 meeting minutes be approved without amendments. Dick Ryon motioned, Grady Steere seconded, and it passed unanimously.
- **2-0920.** To adjourn the September 20th, 2018 meeting. The action was motioned, seconded, and passed unanimously.

I) Chair Report – Rex Thompson

Mr. Thompson advised delaying discussion of future meeting times, to address later if time allowed.

II) Introduction to WSU Extension/KCD Presentations – Brandy Reed

Ms. Reed and Kevin Zobrist of WSU Extension presented on WSU and KCD’s joint efforts to address forest stewardship, education, and conservation since 2015, as well as future RFC priorities.

Ms. Reed noted the 2015 timeframe was chosen due to a five-year work plan funded by KCD which started that year, scheduled to end in 2019. She said that the RFC is an important stakeholder and KCD and WSU want to hear from the RFC what efforts have been working, how their priorities have aligned with KCD/WSU’s efforts, and what they want to achieve together in the future. She reminded all that Andy Chittick is the RFC’s representative to the KCD Advisory Committee.

III) WSU Extension Forestry Program – Kevin Zobrist, WSU Extension

Mr. Zobrist's presentation was delayed until after Ms. Reed's due to a timing conflict.

He reported that King County has one of the highest numbers of small forest landowners in the state, behind Snohomish and Spokane, a total of about 16,455 landowners. He explained that depending on the regulating agency, the definition of small forest size varies, but in the national system, it falls between 10-100 acres. In King County, there is greater fragmentation due to smaller parcel sizes. He also clarified that the generally-preferred term is "small forest landowner" as opposed to "non-industrial private forest." Forest landowners in King County are mostly in lowland areas, near water and salmon habitat. Forest landowners here appear to be motivated largely by non-market values such as lifestyle, aesthetics, observing nature, wildlife habitat, and so forth. However, those motivated by economic values own a larger area.

He said WSU's program looks at the nexus of need, opportunity, and action that leads to impacts. The 5-Year Strategic Plan focuses on several identified needs/concerns: loss of forestland, invasive species, degraded forestland, poor logging practices, inadequate critical area care, and unfamiliar policymakers. Key programs include coached planning sessions and "Field Days." In addition to workshops, the programs include publications, online resources, and an award-winning curriculum.

WSU surveyed Coached Planning 2008-16 participants and found that significant knowledge change has been occurred for participants in these programs. Mr. Zobrist reviewed some of these data points. Some included: more completion of stewardship plans, higher implementation of course knowledge, and sharing knowledge with others. Surveys further out after program completion showed yet more completion of stewardship programs, implementation of course knowledge, and quality of life improvement. He said the apparent low percentage of participants enrolled in preferential tax programs is due to this being regional data, including several counties that do not offer the same options for preferential tax programs as King County. A follow-up survey is planned, with similar sets of questions to random landowners in one county with a Public Benefit Rating System tax program (King County) and one without (Snohomish County). This is expected to provide local insight into how things are working and barriers to participation in these tax programs.

In discussing the online education option, it was observed that the only statistically significant result compared to traditional classroom education was in stewardship plan participation: 48% participation from online students vs. 69% from traditional. Monica Paulson Priebe theorized that small sample size could be influencing these percentages, that those who participate in online courses are generally those with time constraints that already render them less likely to complete a stewardship plan. Mr. Zobrist noted that completion of a stewardship plan may not be the best measure of success and that they know that the online courses are reaching a new audience.

Mr. Zobrist also noted that brochures seem to be more effective than larger publications at increasing public outreach/program enrollment. Postcards are now being considered, as they have already seen a dramatic increase in class enrollment in Snohomish County, where postcards were recently implemented.

IV) KCD Urban and Rural Forestry Program – Brandy Reed

Ms. Reed reviewed the goals of KCD's forestry programs, and how they align with RFC priorities. She briefly explained KCD's nature and mission: a special purpose district for King County (excluding five jurisdictions) promoting sustainable resources through stewardship. KCD along with 11 other Puget Sound conservation districts are committed to this model and to working with landowners on their property. She explained that much of KCD's work is funded by a "rates and charges" system, approved by King County Council (KCC), which is not a tax but rather a rate applied to a land parcel depending on its land use classification. These funds can also be used to leverage additional funds.

Two-thirds of land in King County is forested, about 264,000 acres of that in private ownership. The hope is that landowners will manage this resource for benefit of themselves and the public. In 2009, the RFC set priorities to conserve forests in King County, which were transmitted to KCC.

KCD's rural forestry work aligns with the RFC's 2009 recommendations and focuses on "small lot" private forest lands. Their Rural Forest Health Management Program seeks to educate new small forest landowners on managing their lands. While other entities address managing larger forests, KCD serves the

smaller audience of small forest landowners who own 1-5 acres. These landowners own about 42,000 acres, or 5% of the total forested area in King County.

KCD services include: forest stewardship planning, technical assistance, coached stewardship courses, forest field days, and “twilight tours.” KCD also collaborates with WSU to offer expanded services. Other services include recommended forest health prescriptions and cost-share programs to reimburse landowners for project costs. Wendy Sammarco noted that while forest stewardship plans are typically for lands 5 acres or less, cost-share participants can have larger lands, though those must have a stewardship plan as well. Ms. Reed also mentioned the Landowner Incentive Program, which works with landowners to implement “Best Management Practices” (BMPs) on private properties, including forests.

Another significant portion of KCD’s forestry work is the Firewise program, which works with communities on planning and implementing fuels reduction, prepares local communities for fire risk management, and holds Chipper Days events. Since July 2017, 4 to 6 communities have become Firewise communities. The Firewise program uses a different funding source than KCD’s other forestry activities, currently slated to end in 2019 unless addressed.

KCD also has an urban forest health management program, which parallels its rural forest program. The view is that the canopy should be managed across the county, with rural and urban working together. KCD works in collaboration with local jurisdictions to identify forest priorities, build out their annual work scopes, then fund them.

Current data indicate a social inequity in forest canopy cover, with higher canopy generally found in high-income areas. While not every city is at Seattle’s level in terms of urban planning, 31 out of 34 jurisdictions in KCD’s area have worked with KCD on forest health management. The goal is to maintain existing canopy and improve/expand it when possible. Canopy cover is also key in the Puget Sound region to intercepting and mitigating stormwater runoff, impacting water quality.

There was discussion on how equity and social justice (ESJ) issues factor into management of canopy. Ms. Reed said many state, federal, and local entities have provided papers documenting that absence of canopy is detrimental to societal well-being. Many jurisdictions appear to endorse the idea of canopy being an ESJ issue. Daryl Harper asked if cities were in agreement that canopy cover is a social justice issues and whether the electorate sees it as a social justice issue if the cost of housing goes up while maintaining canopy cover. Bea Covington replied there appears to be an understanding of a linkage between canopy cover and ESJ, and an increase in willingness to discuss it. She also noted that a lot of housing in south King County is rental and that is a different conversation than would be had with a parcel owner.

V) Future RFC Priorities – Brandy Reed and Kevin Zobrist

Ms. Reed advised a structured approach to gather feedback to engage the RFC on its future priorities. She suggested using the 2009 forest report, as it serves as the RFC’s strategic plan and guiding document for priorities. Richard Martin agreed, as it would be a chance to determine the success of recommendations from that report. He said the County could have a report on this for the RFC by November.

Monica Paulson Priebe suggested starting with the specific section of the document addressing KCD, then going from there. It was agreed to send out an email requesting feedback early, with the option of submitting feedback by email or handwritten feedback in the next meeting. Bea Covington noted that this would need to move quickly, as KCD has a lot of items on their November agenda. She added that KCD’s goal is ultimately to take the RFC’s goals and determine if KCD is the right entity to help reach those.

Rex Thompson said no vote was needed on this, but the Commission should proceed as suggested. The only action needed from Commissioners is to return in November with answers to the feedback questions. Ms. Covington said anyone wishing to submit feedback in person may call her or Ms. Reed.

--BREAK--

VI) Proposed Code Changes – Eric Beach

Mr. Beach reported that he, Kathleen Farley Wolf, and Richard Martin will meet with DNRP-WLRD assistant director John Taylor to discuss their part in the County’s Comprehensive Plan. This will be followed on October 1st by a meeting with the Executive’s office, then DPER, who are “keepers” of the Code. The meeting will include DPER’s assistant director and new legislative liaison to determine how to format the suggested changes and move them forward. The Plan submittal would go to King County

Council (KCC) in about six months. Once approved there, it goes into effect in about a week. The Plan was last updated in 2016, with its next update in 2024, though there is a mid-term review in 2020. Mr. Beach will send his resource table handout to Ms. Farley Wolf, who will distribute them.

VII) RFC Recruitment – Monica Paulson Priebe

Ms. Paulson Priebe reported that informal interviews have been done with all candidates for open RFC Commissioner positions. The decision process is ongoing, taking care to ensure that the geographical balance and skill sets currently on the Commission remain in balance. She said there may be more information by next meeting. Kathleen Farley Wolf said the nominations have been sent to the Executive's office, and will then go to KCC. Richard Martin added that if there is no Council opposition, after 30 days, the new Commissioners could vote, though it may still be several additional months' delay before formal appointment. He thanked Ms. Paulson Priebe and Dick Ryon for their help with the interviews.

VIII) Public Comment

There was no public comment.

IX) Agency Reports and Announcements

- KCD: Dick Ryon spoke about his ending tenure on the RFC, as KCD is what spurred his involvement with the RFC. He praised the KCD advisory committee's interest in adding to a body of knowledge. He said that the RFC and KCD offer services in terms of what landowners want. He also said he has enjoyed serving on the Commission and thinks it is well-poised to move forward.
- WA DNR: There was no report. It was noted that while the current DNR representative is on vacation, a report from them is needed soon.
- WSU Extension: There was no report.
- King County: Dave Kimmett spoke on several issues:
 - 3,000 more acres in King County have now become FSC-certified, following a letter of support from the RFC. More proposed sites for certification will be brought to the RFC in the near future.
 - Urban forestry is a major component of the County's Land Conservation Initiative (LCI). The LCI has observed a disparity in green space available to unincorporated communities inside urban growth boundaries, and is looking at how to add green space in those areas. An Equity cabinet will advise the County in how to assist in the green space acquisition program.
 - Mr. Kimmett is planning a nine-acre thinning of a 90-year-old stand that needs opening up in Vashon's Island Center Forest. They are trying to capture the value from FSC certification and attempt to make it a local, economical project.
 - There was some discussion of upcoming harvests at Taylor Mountain and elsewhere; Taylor Mountain's harvest goes through November. There was discussion about how the timber from these projects is sold and the pros and cons of different types of contracts. Mr. Kimmett explained that funds from sales go into operating funds, such as replanting trees at sites.
 - The Million Tree Initiative will plant 45,000 trees at Taylor Mountain, with seedlings bought "over-the-counter." Wendy Sammarco explained that the very high demand for seedlings this year has become a serious problem; the County now has to determine other ways, such as a grow order, to get 77,000 seedlings for 2020 plantings. She added that the three annual coached planning classes had a total of about 30 participants.
 - Richard Martin said crews are putting in carbon-monitoring plots for the County's forest carbon study. Kathleen Farley Wolf is monitoring their progress. The study should be complete by the end of this year, at which point the RFC can make a recommendation.

X) Concerns of Commissioners

Kathleen Farley Wolf relayed a statement from departing RFC chair **Nate Veranth**, absent today. He apologized for his absence, but stated he has enjoyed serving with each member of the Commission.

XI) Concluding Remarks/Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be November 15th, 2018, at the Preston Community Center.