



SKAGIT COUNTY FOREST ADVISORY BOARD

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Minutes

October 11, 2023

Present: Dave Chamberlain, Aubrey, Al, John, Kris, Peter, Steve, Gordy, Absent: David Nielsen, Tim, Chuck and Jamie Guest: Melissa Sternhill, Regina Wandler (Skagit Land Trust) Commissioner Janicki and Matt Comiski

1. Minutes: Gordy moved and John seconded to approve. Passed unanimous.
2. Member Updates: It was noted that a Forest Resilience Task force is being created in Whatcom County with a 22 member group. This is to discuss county forestry issues and report back to the Whatcom Council. Councilman Galloway wants to take a more “holistic” approach to forestry. Public Works presentation to be rescheduled for November.
3. Cascade River Tier III update: There has been no news as far as a decision for a rule. The question was asked how a decision could be appealed if desired. Commissioner Janicki said she’d look into it.
4. Education update: Al noted that Podcast with Kevin Zobrist, WSU Extension, will now be airing monthly. It can be found on the WSU webpage. Al said he’d send the link to FAB. Commissioner Janicki said she’d get the DNR ‘Lightening talks to Brian Young to put on Skagit TV.
5. TFW Update: TFW had a 2-day meeting field trip on the East side for the October meeting. It was in concert with CMER and allowed for so good in-the-field discussions. It was focused on the East side type N , but there were issues that carried over to the west side work.. Policy is working on draft rule language for Type N based on the Forest Practice Board decision in August. It will probably be close to 2 years before the rule language will be adopted. FAB again discussed a study done at OSU regarding roads, buffers and benefits. Dave said he’d send a link for FAB to review. It appears the road work has not really provided much improvement in fish populations.
6. Board of Natural Resource Update: Sustainable Harvest lawsuit against the DNR was dropped by AFRC. It appears the DNR is implementing many of the actions AFRC had asked for in the Settlement. Skagit County was part of the Settlement negotiations. It appears to be futile to pursue a lawsuit due to the cost and how close the next Sustainable Harvest Calculation is required to be completed. The next SHC is to be done by June 2024, though this is in unrealistic since DNR staff has not yet started. Commissioner Janicki had asked DNR staff to report back to the BNR with an expected timeline. All of the timber sales were approved. During the sale presentation, DNR staff again noted that approximately 50% of the State lands are already set aside for conservation and then approximately another 38% can be conserved out of each sale for things like inner gorges, wetlands etc. DNR sated that land acquisitions are taking time due to

trying to find suitable lands both with timber and affordable. DNR keeps referring to the “Blanchard Fix” as they way to go, but this is not a fix for the Jr Taxing Districts and puts the pressure on elected officials to determine how revenues should then be levied. If utilizing the Blanchard fix, then federal lands should be considered for the transfers.

7. TFW Regional Partners: The once quarterly TFW meetings stopped with CoVID and not returned. This was a great way to share ideas, concerns, science updates etc. between the TFW community. It is now hard to find a venue capable of having such a breakfast meeting now, like the Farmhouse on Hwy 20. FAB noted that the relationships with other partners really needs to be re-established. Emotions are tense making dynamics stressful in the field. DNR has been too busy to full engage in setting up meetings again. The ongoing local meeting with the DNR and foresters is scheduled for October 24th. Permits are still taking 2-weeks+ for approval.
8. Grizzle Bear Restoration plan: An EIS has been issued with the utilization of the 10 J experimental operation as a proposed alternative, which is the only one that makes sense to many. It was noted that it is not a question of re-introducing the grizzly, but how. That is why the 10J is the most acceptable at this time. The FAB asked that a link be sent on what the 10J entails. Kendra said she'd send. Basically it has a projected growth of 25 to 200 over the years and a no net loss of core habitat and can't apply if the grizzly is already in the specific region.
9. Adjourn 9:01