

**Meeting of the Board of
Ferry County Commissioners
Tri County Forest Group
Thursday April 20th, 2017 1:00 PM**

**Location: Tri county Economic Development District 986 S Main St. Colville, WA 99114
Meeting Room**

Introduction of Attendees:

1. Amanda Rowton, Clerk of the Board, commissioners@co.ferry.wa.us
2. Mike Blankenship, FC Commissioner District 3, 6jment@gmail.com
3. Nathan Davis, FC Commissioner District 2, ndavis@co.ferry.wa.us
4. Tiana Luke, Conservation NW/NEWFC, tluke@conservationnw.org
5. Maurice Williams, NEWFC
6. Steve Kiss, Pend Oreille County Commissioner, skis@pendoreille.org
7. Dave Hedrick, Ferry County Conservation District, ferryco.3@gmail.com
8. Gary Nielsen, TCMRA & SC PLAC, grnielsen@ultraplix.com
9. Dick Dunton, NEWFC, lrdunton@centurytel.net
10. Matt Scott, Vaagen/NEWFC, mscott@vaagenbros.com
11. Mike Petersen, NEWFC & Lands Council, mpetersen@landscouncil.org
12. John Conner, Stevens County Resident, 509-328-7654
13. Bob Whittaker, Ferry County, misterbobbywhittaker@gmail.com
14. Bill Way, NEWT, lbway321@gmail.com
15. Ron Gray, B2E Consulting, woodhog250@gmail.com
16. Nathan Hutchens, nate@evergreeneast.org
17. Joshua White, USFS, jpwhite@fs.fed.us
18. Holly Weiler, hweiler@wta.org
19. Nancy Harshman, Back Country Horsemen, nancyhars47@gmail.com
20. Andrew Spaeth, aspaeth@sustainablenorthwest.org
21. Scott Nielsen, Cattle producers of WA, rsnielsen@plixtel.com
22. Russ Vaagen, Vaagen Brothers, rvaagen@vaagenbros.com
23. Will Stone, Evergreen East, will@evergreeneast.org
24. John Boyd, NEWT, lifeinthegorge@yahoo.com
25. Tim Coleman, KRCG/NEWFC, tcoleman@kettlerange.org
26. Josh Weatherman, Motorized Rec, jweatherman50@gmail.com
27. Eric Weatherman, Motorized Rec, ericw1962@gmail.com
28. Andrew Engell, Representing C. McMorris-Rodgers, andrew.engell@mail.house.gov
29. Don Dashiell, Stevens County BOCC, ddashiell@co.stevens.wa.us
30. Craig Newman, Colville National Forest, cnewman03@fs.fed.us
31. Merrill Ott, USFS OHV Ambassadors, merrillott@centurytel.net
32. Mike Herron, USFS, mherrin@fs.fed.us
33. Jeff Koffel, TEDD
34. Kinsey Larsen, TEDD
35. Stan Christie, TCMRA

Introductions

Commissioner Blankenship discussed the meeting with Cathy McMorris Rodgers regarding the SRS funding. Schools & Counties have received 25% of the sales of trees (timber dollars). This funding has been reduced over time. Discussion was held on special interest groups. Motorized, non-motorized and grazing were mentioned.

Supporting Colville as a priority maintenance region under the National Trails Stewardship Act of 2016; Nathan Hutchens

Craig Newman discussed this topic and handed out a news release that included budget information and looking for partnerships.

Nathan Hutchens asked about how we can jump in with our recreation sub group for partnership.

Craig Newman said that there is not a lot of appropriated funding. He discussed the four person staff for recreation and how they managed the different locations. He also discussed trails that needed help.

Mike Herrin discussed forming the smaller groups and how some initiatives make more work for a limited staff.

Eric Weatherman said if a group from the table can identify issues, would that be something that could be supported by a RAC grant.

Bob Whittaker said he is excited by the retained receipts and perhaps creating a big project.

Eric Weatherman asked when those funds will be available.

Nancy Harshman asked if the NOVA funds had been released.

Commissioner Blankenship discussed the NOVA funding for motorized projects.

Nancy agreed with Mike.

Mike sat on the NOVA committee for 5 years and he reported that 25% goes to DNR and some funding is earmarked just for motorized. Match funding use to weigh heavy on the decision process. Gas tax & road tax went into the NOVA funds.

Discussion was held on the local groups and how they can get match funding. NOVA is a good source of potential funding.

Promoting the Colville flagship trails (PNT, Kettle Crest) and ensuring sustainable trail standards are utilized during maintenance work; Nathan Hutchens

Discussion was held on the proposed wilderness.

Jeff Koffel discussed a website that TEDD manages that lists all the trails and that they are always looking for more trails.

Mike Blankenship discussed the interns' discovery of short comings in regard to resupply in Ferry County. Pend Orielle County doesn't have enough traffic to empty shelves.

Bob Whittaker addressed the need to define the trails better because they are fuzzy where all the trails are. He suggested all the groups could submit a premium trail to identify and highlight defined trails to help us market the area.

Bill Way asked if there is any current information in regard to the status of the trails. He recommends that as an improvement to a website.

Jeff Koffel said it doesn't have those capabilities yet.

Craig Newman said it would be hard for the four staff members to walk all the trails.

Nancy Harshman said that occasionally people call her for details on the current status of the trails.

John Boyd mentioned a website that carries that information. (Trail forks off of the pink bike website)

Mike Blankenship said that conditions change daily. How do we promote what we want to do.

Scott Neilsen asked how this group promotes. We could be effective with grant writing. How are we different? I want to better understanding of how were going to do that.

Mike Blankenship discussed Albion Hill. There are no signs for ATV usage. You can snowmobile and bike only. Signage needs to be on the highway to let people know. Promotion needs to start in signage. Bring proposals to the group so we can see what we can do as a group to support it. That is how I envisioned this working. Non-motorized, grazing and timber would all be supported here.

Merrill Ott said letters of support could be provided by subgroups.

Mike Blankenship said the diversity on this group is good.

Nancy Harshman said collaboration with mountain bikers has gone well for the equestrian group.

Bob Whittaker discussed his vision of the subgroups.

Scott Neilsen said if it stays together, it's a more powerful group. I represent grazing so I will not be attending this recreation group.

Mike Blankenship said it goes back to the NEWFC issue. They stand alone as they are established. This group doesn't supersede those groups. WE could work together for a common goal.

Jeff Koffel said he would like the information. This group is a mechanism to get things on the map.

Mike Herrin said you would be more powerful with the diverse group. If a diverse group came together with a proposal, it would be hard to ignore.

Russ Vaagen discussed the discernment of comments. Identify the hat you are wearing when you talk here.

Mike Blankenship said if recreation groups want to meet, I would be willing to organize it. That way we can make sure no one is stepping on each other's toes. It doesn't have to be a large group every time.

Scott Neilsen asked how we can effectively interface with the Forest Service.

Mike Blankenship asked when a proposal is proposed to the whole group before any support is given.

Josh White said as long as there aren't too many groups there might be value in having the Forest Service stuff at the tables.

Craig Newman said if we aren't physically at the table, I don't think I will be surprised about anything. I think I will hear about it.

Gary Neilsen said the cause of concern was the several motorized groups. How can we get all that information?

Mike Herrin said the agency is not fond on funding new stuff if we can't take care of what we already have.

Ron Gray applauds our large group & thanked Mike Blankenship for bringing it all together.

Mike Blankenship said the groups need to participate. All we can do is offer the opportunity. Each individual group needs to reach out to other people. Meeting the needs of the immediate community, but there is no way we are going to solve all the problems.

Mike Blankenship asked Dick Dunton about rehab on Taylor Ridge and said it was up to the smaller groups to bring together what is most important to them.

Maurice Williams said larger groups vs. smaller groups based on Forest Service. Maybe the group could vote.

Mike Blankenship said the proposals need to go by the forest service and others before the larger group.

Maurice Williams said I would like to not see that whoever comes first goes with support. Communication and ground rules are important.

Russ Vaagen said what NEWFC is doing is reactionary. Recreation over here and vegetation management over there, people wonder where to connect. What can this group work on right now for emphasis to be weighed evenly?

Craig Newman the forest plan provides guidance to what we can do in this group.

Josh White said not a larger group but a diverse group.

Nathan Davis said this larger group needs to come up with the groups to start the recreation group. Maybe four groups to not water down the diversity too much. Maybe recreation is one and timber harvest is another.

Bob Whittaker said due to the confusion there is already a sub group that had an impromptu meeting. Chainsaw certification could be a group bonding activity.

Scott Neilsen said we need to a focus project recreation component for this group. It will be huge. It should be done right.

Bob Whittaker said he is looking for support for grant projects.

Mike Petersen said motorized and non-motorized need to be in the same group. Maybe NEWFC could be a sub group for timber and there could be a grazing group perhaps.

Maurice Williams said grazing/ranching doesn't have as frequent of projects. Ten years between redistribution of leases.

Eric Weatherman said how can a group be so big regarding OHV and have no participation. We need to be careful in the group so people don't feel like their opinion doesn't matter. We need to come up with a win. What would scare me off is spending all my time applying and then having the group squash it. He discussed the quick shift test around the table some are compensated and some are not. It is hard to get people not paid to be here to participate especially if people get discouraged.

Merrill Ott discussed motorized trail the hardest thing to overcome is the negative publicity by one or two people. We try to stay quiet about our projects. We are an older crowd with excursion riders, if we can get rid of the bad actors. We have taken very measured steps. The enthusiasm is mounting. The next step motorized group would like to step up and be represented. The forest service has been so helpful with it is doable.

Will Stone said that he is not a fan of more meetings on his schedule. This is super cordial.

1. Being sanctioned by TEDD is fantastic under County tutelage maybe quarterly.
 2. Relationship with the forest service does make sense for cattle. The forest service is integrated.
- How many meetings can you handle?

Bill Way said what will help is to meet as early as possible.

Nathan Davis discussed the heavy doubt in receiving SRS funding. He met with FEMA, who is changing the meeting and there is a 9 million dollar threshold is much harder. Incheilium has a bypass. Where is that money going to come from? We can't afford to lose and more money in the budget. They want to do a bill for fixing our forest. It is going to take time and it makes my job tough.

Mike Blankenship asked for comments.

One group should remain focused on; 1. Forest Plan for today and in the future. 2. Timber and vegetation management NEWFC 3. Recreation (all kinds)

No one should be excluded. Originally we talked about the Forest Plan Revision.

Tiana Luke discussed the field trip and how it might be useful. There is interest for that trip and Tiana will work with Mike Herrin to organize the trip.

Mike Blankenship said they pushed Cathy McMorris Rodgers to get rid of stewardship because it doesn't help the counties. When stewardship projects take money it doesn't go back to DC. Funding to the county is unlikely.

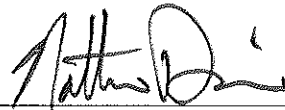
Maurice Williams said we can bring a report. There is more than one way to skin a cat.

Russ Vaagen said some of the retained receipts need to go back to the Counties. We need to apply pressure to Cathy McMorris Rodgers to get the Counties the retained receipts. This is a real solution. 20% to the County and 5% to the fund percentage based on forest in your county. Maybe we can do a letter from this group.


Mike Blankenship agreed and said that Cathy McMorris Rodger said we should as well.

The next meeting is going to be 29th or the 8th, 2017 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

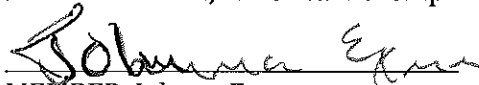
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FERRY COUNTY, WASHINGTON



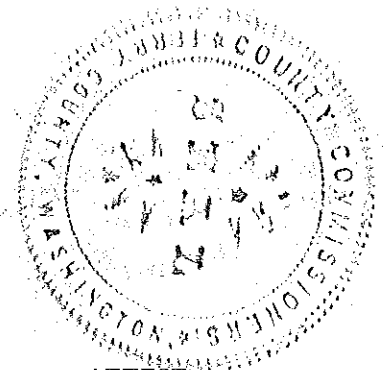
CHAIRMAN, Nathan Davis



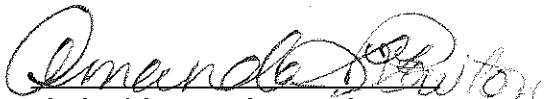
VICE CHAIRMAN, Mike Blankenship



MEMBER, Johnna Exner



ATTEST:


Clerk of the Board, Amanda Rowton