

**Special Meeting of the Board of
County Commissioners
Tri County Forest Group
Friday September 20th, 2019 1:00 p.m.**

**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. Johnna Exner, Ferry County Commissioner
3. Mike Blankenship, Ferry County Commissioner
4. Steve Parker, Stevens County Commissioner
5. Merrill Ott, TCMRA
6. Travis Fletcher, USFS
7. Arne Johnson, WDNR, arnejohnson@dnr.wa.gov
8. Andrew Engell, CMR
9. Scott Nielsen, Cattle Producers of WA
10. Mike Petersen, Lands Council
11. Mike Paulson
12. Rodney Smolden, USFS
13. Josh White, USFS

Call to Order

Commissioner Mike Blankenship opened the meeting at 1:05 p.m. The attendees introduced themselves.

SRS discussion

Commissioner Blankenship said Ferry County receives \$400,000.00 plus. It is critical for our county. Harvesting timber and getting 25% is where we need to be. Commissioner Exner said everyone we talked to said if we are going to do stewardship we need 25%. She got the feeling that it wouldn't fly or at best a 2 year fix. Merrill Ott asked what the western region or state done to be helpful for counties. Commissioner Exner reported they are trying as hard as they can. Merrill Ott said it seems to be hands off when it comes to the county. Commissioner Blankenship reported that schools and roads get that money. Being that it is Washington State you would think that they would be pulling for SRS. Ferry County was described as being 40 million dollars behind in road work. That was 15 years ago. SRS is important in the short term, but we need to go to the 25% again.

Rodney Smolden said there was 65 mbf that went no bid at this time. So there is a risk to be had with the 25% concept.

Josh White said the housing has been in a lull and the volatility is stabilizing. Mike Paulson reported that there is legislation on PILT to extend it 10 years. Commissioner Blankenship said if the SRS goes away we will get more PILT.

Commissioner Parker asked if Forest Service could adjust what you send out for stewardship or timber sales.

Josh White said we lean on timber sales. Commissioner Parker asked if there was resistance from the environmental community for the 25%. Mike Petersen said there was no resistance from us.

Commissioner Parker hasn't seen what was provided for DC and would like to review it at the next meeting. Rodney Smolden said the bid wasn't accepted. Mike Petersen asked if they were nervous Chewelah won't get a bid. Rodney Smolden said yes, he is concerned. Commissioner Exner asked if there were a number of times you would open it up. Josh White said with BPA if they don't want it we could put it to free market. Commissioner Parker said it sounds complex. Rodney Smolden said it is complex. Josh White said even though it is complex, we get it into the hands of who is best. Commissioner Parker said that he would rather see counties tied to the economy. Commissioner Blankenship said that we know PILT is a smaller portion. Merrill Ott asked are you getting any feedback from NEWC or EWCOG. Commissioner Parker said they wrote a letter at the request of NEWC.

Rodney Smolden reported Kristen Bale is the new Okanogan Forest Supervisor. Commissioner Blankenship said we would go from a tri-county to a quad-county if the Tonasket Ranger Station transferred.

Land Management

Mike Petersen discussed Biochar. He has done extensive research on the subject. He talked to someone who has been biochar for years. One of the machines that is used is large and goes for around \$100,000.00. The other is small and could be thrown together for \$500.00. It burns hot and after you quench it, it's ready. There could be extended windows for burning. The person who Mike Petersen talked to about the Biochar is Kelpi Wilson from the Oregon/California border.

Commissioner Blankenship asked about the piles by the road. Josh White said it seems like it would work for that. Commissioner Parker likes the idea of the slow moisture release of the biochar.

Scott Nielsen asked does the product have value or does it go back to the soil? Mike Petersen said there is a market but it would be good if we could put it back into the soil.

Merrill Ott said that Biochar is different from coal. There is a molecule that is difficult to produce. It can be detrimental if it isn't properly produced. It is a microscopic analysis to see if it is ok. Biochar came out of Brazil.

USFS Forest Plan Revision

Rodney Smolden reported the notice of availability & FEIS for the forest plan will be this week. October 21, 2019 is intended to sign the forest plan revision. There will be a 30 day wait period until November 21, 2019. The 30 days is a legal challenge time frame. Travis Fletcher feels that they have made some good improvements from the draft to final.

Recreation report

Merrill Ott reported on the recreation side of things. Chewelah recreation plan is putting in a lot of effort to get their plan with the RCO. There is potential 49 degrees north. They went to look at the RV campgrounds in Pend Oreille County. Mike Liskgow has been leading the group in planning. There are motorized trails that are being proposed to get more connectivity recreationally. Eric McQuay has been really involved as well. Ferry County roads opening was announced about 3 weeks ago. There was about 130 miles opened up. Thank you very much! We would like to get the forest group to look at other connectors and give feedback. Stevens County GIS needs to be on the agenda for this group in November. Gary Prewitt recently passed and was an "Agent Orange" victim. He had spent a lot of time working on the WATV in Olympia. He is a big part of the creation of motorized recreation.

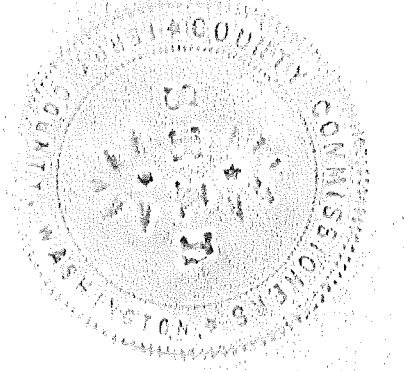
Cattlemen report grant received

Scott Nielsen discussed the grant they received. They have talked to Brad and going to talk to the 4 counties. They will have someone to do the work Jeff Flood is doing. Jeff seems like a natural choice. Jeff will be the primary guy overseeing the monitoring. Out on the ground it will be 1 person per county. Commissioner Parker said he got a chance to look over the grant application in terms of accessing equipment. Now it will be the implementation. Scott has put himself in a position to lead this. It will be helpful for Jeff as well.

Open Discussion

Commissioner Parker discussed an interesting call from a fellow wanting to talk about the forest issues. He asked why there is infrastructure here. Commissioner Parker couldn't really answer on how to replicate the success. Arne Johnson said this is the most active forest in the state. Commissioner Exner spoke about our active forest in DC and they gave kudos.

The next TCFG meeting is October 18th, 2019.



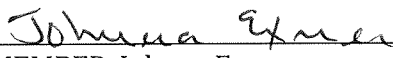
BOARD OF FERRY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FERRY COUNTY, WASHINGTON



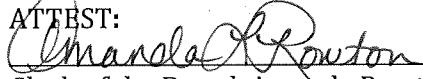
CHAIRMAN, Mike Blankenship



VICE CHAIRMAN, Nathan Davis



MEMBER, Johnna Exner

ATTEST:


Clerk of the Board, Amanda Rowton