

# **Teanaway Community Forest**

## **Written Questions and Comments from the 3/31/2014 Advisory Committee Meeting**

### **Questions**

- Can the public request the removal or addition to the advisory committee?
- What is the process or what will be the process for actual or perceived lack of adherence to the management plan after it is adopted?
- Will the management plan include a conflict resolution process?
- Will the management plan include a review and revision period?

### **Comments**

- Please post the names of the “core science group” on the Teanaway website.
- I was surprised when hearing of the provision that individuals are representing themselves, not their representative groups, that the makeup of the committee is comprised of people with organization affiliations, particularly national and state group affiliations. The only real exceptions are the Teanaway landowners. I find it ironic. Secondly, I am concerned that winter non-motorized users (ski, snowshoe, etc.) is not represented, nor are local trail groups for non-motorized (except horse).

Please pass the following article on to all board members:

<http://www.yakimaherald.com/news/latestlocalnews/2048818-8/illegal-activity-forces-closure-of-south-fork-ahtanum> YAKIMA, Wash. — To drive the South Fork Ahtanum Road is to tour some of the state's most scenic countryside, a land of rolling hills, babbling creeks and majestic evergreens. The first 3 miles of that drive into the Ahtanum State Forest west of Tampico, however, is also an ugly testament to the behavior of some of its vilest visitors and is why the South Fork area is about to be gated and closed to the public. The closure, scheduled for 8 a.m. Monday, won't be permanent. But, according to Ahtanum State Forest recreation manager Jeff Jones, it may take months to rehabilitate the areas damaged by indiscriminate "mudding," illegal roads created over and through the creek and the dozens of 120-foot ponderosa pines either illegally felled for firewood or literally shot down by thousands of rifle rounds. Jones said the South Fork portion of the state forest lost 33 live trees, most of them ponderosa pines, in December alone. Dozens more have gone down since. At least a dozen more bullet-riddled pines, many of them surrounding a campsite popular for teen beer parties, are already dead and enough of a hazard that they'll have to be cut down before they fall down. "It has," Jones said, "been absolutely unbelievable." So, too, the amount of garbage that continually accrues along the South Fork Ahtanum (A1000) Road. Along the first 3 miles of the dirt-and-gravel forest road beyond the pavement's end, one can find numerous dumped carcasses, from dogs and cats to horses, including a relatively new one still bearing the dried blood from the bullet wound that killed it. Nearly 5 tons of garbage have been removed from the South Fork over the past year and a half by volunteers and park staffers. Still, trash is everywhere — sometimes in obvious dump piles, sometimes simply a mosaic of broken glass and crushed or bullet-aerated beer cans, and punctuated by wide swaths of used toilet paper. "This would have been the girls' bathroom," Jones said, shaking his head last week as he surveyed the array of soggy tissues next to a bucket behind a tree on the fringe of that oft-used beer-bash party site. Yakima County Sheriff's deputies responded the night of March 22 to a large gathering of teens and 20-somethings at the site, and while no arrests were made, investigators are now following up on reports of a possible sexual assault at the party. That law enforcement officers were called to the South Fork Ahtanum is nothing new. The area — state trust land managed by the Department of Natural Resources to generate revenue for public education — has a long and spotted history as a magnet for lawbreakers. Anyone can obtain free firewood permits to chop up any of the unending supply of downed trees in the area, yet many opt instead to illegally cut down live ones — or shoot them until they fall over. The area is often used as a de facto receptacle not just for garbage, but for stolen cars, tires and other debris. Just last week a stolen car was brought to the Ahtanum Campground and stripped down for parts "right in the campground" and left behind, Jones said. There are no groomed snowmobile trails in the South Fork like there are in the Middle Fork and North Fork. But even if there were, Jones said, snowmobilers would probably avoid the South Fork anyway because of the area's reputation and the prospect of returning to a rig that had been broken into, vandalized or stolen. Like many of the road systems in the 76,000-acre Ahtanum State Forest, the South Fork is popular with four-wheel drive groups — several representatives of which toured the area to assess the very issues Jones has been dealing with. "We found the area where the party animals had been getting after it, of course," said Earl Nettnin, regional director of the Pacific Northwest Four-Wheel Drive Association. "There was some debris; there was a stolen car that had been wrecked and left, and a couple of dead horses." But Nettnin said his understanding was that, historically, the dumping issue had been even worse at various times in the road's history. That

sentiment echoed those of Ron Rutherford, a local four-wheeling enthusiast and a volunteer active in mapping and maintenance projects on both state and National Forest road and trail systems. Rutherford said the answer is more education and enforcement by both state officials and by law-abiding user groups willing to put more members in the field to dissuade the abuse. "When you close that road, you're just moving that problem to another spot," Rutherford said. "We know it's just the 5 percent who are the problem — and they're either just going to go up the North Fork or go up the (nearby) Nasty Creek now." Jones also abhors the idea of having to gate the South Fork Ahtanum, which, as part of the Green Dot System, is a road typically open to public use. "I hate gating roads. Hate it," Jones said. "But this is public trust land. These lands are to be managed to support the schools, and so ultimately you have to protect these resources. "The gate sends a pretty clear message that the DNR is not messing around. We're serious about protecting these resources from abuse. "If that means closing a gate, so be it."

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It is very important to remember that the Teanaway needs to remain a WORKING forest. Many interest groups are represented on the Advisory Committee, but having a healthy, well managed forest should be at the top of the list of goals. There is a serious spruce budworm problem in much of the area and especially in areas that have been set aside for the owl nest sites. Many of these sites are unoccupied and the forest NEEDS to be treated, i.e. thinned. Please keep responsible forest management in the forefront of your conversations! Recreation is great and all, but who wants to recreate in a dead forest?

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I think everyone is doing such a great job. Kudos!

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### **3.31.2014 TCF Board Advisory Meeting**

*This is a handout from ~20 families residing in the Teanaway Valley. We were instructed to not go over the allotted 3 minute speaking time. As this information represents more than 3 minutes worth of important material; we have put together this joint communication to share our thoughts and concerns with the advisory committee and other interested stake holders:*

My name is Richard Low and this is my neighbor Tracy Rooney, we represent approximately 20 Teanaway residents with full or part time residences above mile marker 6 on the Teanaway Road. We mostly live right off the Teanaway Road North Fork or in the Wagon Wheel community. Please excuse any repetition of questions already answered as our statement was drafted in advance.

Thank you Commissioner Goldmark and Director Anderson for being here and willing to address our concerns. As members of the residential community in upper Teanaway Valley we are disappointed that we have no actual residents on the TCF Advisory Board. Fortunately we have heard from some members of the board who acknowledged that we are underrepresented and appreciative that they will do their best to make up for it. For that we are thankful.

Commissioner Goldmark, please help us understand why this occurred and why you chose members from outside the community over those who live in the community itself. Most of us have been here a long time. We have the most to gain or lose by your advisory boards decisions and feel that we were misled. You went to great lengths to get us to participate. What happened? We also suspect that if you get specific in regards to the areas that your board members spend most of their time biking, hiking, riding, etc., in the Teanaway, you'll discover that a majority of their time is actually spent in the National Forest and not within the TCF boundary. Whereas, if you ask actual residents, they'll specify that the trails they use the most are right out their back doors located within the TCF boundaries.

We are obviously disappointed in our lack of representation but still remain committed to what's right for the valley. Here's how you can best help us to help you:

- Make sure that the meetings take place at the Grange. If you feel it won't accommodate the crowd, then move it to Cle Elum, not Ellensburg which is a 28 mile plus drive for many of us.
- Publish a schedule of meetings well in advance.
- Publish specific meeting agendas and all meeting materials well in advance on your web site.
- Publish meeting notes within 24 hours of the meetings themselves rather than the day before the next meeting.
- Publish each TCF Board members e-mail address so that we can communicate directly with them. Obviously privacy and coordination is an issue here, so please give each member a DNR or similar e-mail address specifically for committee use.

- Provide a public blog so that the public can easily contribute comments that others can review and provide additional feedback.

Thank you. Now Tracy Rooney is going to take a few minutes to layout ten very important actions that we feel will help make the TCF run smoothly.

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Hello and welcome to all 20 members of the Teanaway Forest Board,

Please understand that our group is not questioning your passion for doing the right thing or taking the time to understand the issues in front of you. We want the best for the valley that we live in and are counting on you to make it so. We were asked for our input, but we were not respected enough to be offered representation on the board. That now becomes your job.

That said, here are our top ten requests. They are not in order of importance. We accomplished this list via e-mail and without a whole lot of discussion, mainly because we quickly agreed on the list. We hope you will understand our point of view and if you have questions, encouragements, concerns or just wondering why, that you will contact us to get our reply.

- 1. Come up with a solid plan to improve forest health and reduce flooding issues. We believe that using sustainable harvests as one of the forest health tools you will see a reduced risk of wildfire threats for residents and visitors alike. In addition, we would like to suggest updated mapping for this area (Imagery/LIDAR)**

Rationale/comments: Olympia failed to fund a fire wising effort for the TCF this session, so please figure out a revenue neutral way to get it done. We're also convinced that getting the log trucks rolling sometime in the future is a big part of what is needed. We also think it makes sense to explore partnerships with the Yakima Nation mills to hopefully address high transportation cost concerns. Updated mapping would be a critical tool as to flood plain issues, stream slope analysis, road mapping and future design, species/vegetation and their related fire issues, fault identification and fish and wildlife applications.

- 2. Maintain AFR's policy in regards to no dispersed camping within the TCF boundaries.**

Rationale/comments: Minimizing the impact from fire danger, human waste, trash, erosion and other negative impacts is important to us. The change of ownership from private to public was to conserve the landscape while maintaining a working forest. It's not a park, nor does it have the funding a park needs. Current recreation within the forest hasn't impacted the working nature of the forest in the past and we would like to see low impact recreation continue. And it'll cost less to administer the forest in this manner. If visitors want a "dispersed" camping experience or to go back packing, they can simply drive a few miles north and do so in the National Forest. (FYI: There was a potentially devastating fire representing about a half an acre in size at the Dickey creek swimming hole 3 or 4 years ago. It wasn't officially reported and luckily they put it out before it got out of control.)

- 3. No curtailment or expansion of existing recreational activity types that AFR allowed along with continued user group access for trail maintenance just as AFR allowed.**

Rationale/Comments: Obviously mountain bikers and horses on the same trail can be an issue. The same can be said with snowmobiles and skiers. Please note that we co-exist right now. Attempting to decide/determine who can be in or go to different areas is simply unworkable. We also believe that common sense needs to prevail during hunting season. Most of us find it much easier to just stay out of the denser woods at that time of year unless we are actually hunting. It's just not that big of a deal...

- 4. Keep the cows but keep them out of the river and sensitive riparian areas. We believe it is preferably to keep cows off the road and causing damage to the new surface and shoulders that the county will be replacing. We also would like you to establish a policy against cowboy tourism and associated off-site camping that simply moves cows around the valley for entertainment purposes and not to rotate grazing areas or protect sensitive riparian areas. Furthermore, do not allow any habitat restoration projects to move forward if grazing impacts are the main cause of the damage without providing a solution to their negative impacts.**

Rationale/comments: The cows provide a livelihood for some and recreation for others. To others they are a sign of the way things once were and they just feel right. A lot of people also believe that they help eliminate wildfire fuel by eating the grasses and shrubs. There are also a lot of us that have seen their negative impacts and hope that you do not turn a blind eye to them. If fences become part of the solution please make sure that adequate access through them is maintained via gates or openings that are hiker, biker, snowmobiler, etc. friendly. In regards to the "cowboy tourism" comment, there was a group two years ago who spent a weekend moving the cows around the valley mainly for entertainment purposes. They set a campsite at the Lick Creek corral instead of using an established campground. Fortunately they were well behaved. As residents, we made a conscious decision to purchase land next to a commercial forest, not a campground. (If any of you do not think that cows "can" have a negative impact, then I'm happy to provide photos taken last fall that show an active salmon REDD on the Teanaway North Fork with cows walking right through the river and sloughing off the river banks and hillside.)

- 5. Improve the three campgrounds per the counties basic recommendation but do not add any new ones. Have the sheriff spend more time patrolling them and place a limit on the number of nights that a group can occupy them so that they do not become summer residences with dog runs and the like. (New fire rings, pit toilets, graveled access and parking. We are somewhat confused by the article in the paper that discussed providing potable water given the water moratorium and the need for water once logging and other forestry operations get underway.)**

Rationale/comments: Paying attention to costs is important along with the fact that many people simply like the primitive camping experience that is currently available. We are a “no services valley” with the exception of the Outpost and we are just fine with that. Please update the maps to make certain there is no confusion about a fourth campground at Dickey Creek as it washed out in the 90’s. And be sure to have some robust discussions in regards to campground fees, pass requirements and the positives and negatives of providing garbage service at the campgrounds!

- 6. Do not try and out engineer nature and put downstream residents at flood risk or do any projects within a mile of the nearest resident as unintended consequences happen. (For example, do not allow any large wood in the river projects below Dickey Creek as has been proposed. We have enough log jams to deal with already.) And for those habitat projects you consider, get local resident involvement ahead of time vs fixing the issues after the fact. (You can simply Google or Bing fencing and snowmobile... and see that they are a very dangerous combination! Fencing impacts were an afterthought to the Jack Creek rehab project. Fortunately the Mid-Columbia Enhancement folks were very understanding of the issue and the local snowmobile club worked hand in hand with them on signage and hazard markings. )**

Rationale/comments: We feel truly gifted to live so close to the river. We also feel that time heals most habitat issues if you remove the damaging causes. It’s been said that the sandstone river bed was partially caused by moving logs down the river via splash damming. This is no longer an ongoing factor as it’s been about a 100 years since this was a forest practice. If trees are given a chance to grow streamside versus just being tasty forage for cows then nature will heal the river without expensive and potential unintended consequences.

- 7. Come up with a solid financial plan that makes the TCF self-sustaining by the 2025 deadline that allows the TCF to be sold off if goals are not met.**

Rationale/comments: We want the community forest concept as it was originally envisioned in 2011 to be successful. The key to accomplishing this is to keep expenses to a minimum. We realize that the personnel required to manage forest health, roads, security, timber cut cycles and associated tasks will require more resources up front than in the long run. Please make sure that all but essential personnel are deemed temporary and that you pay very close attention to future budget projections and their need to be self-supporting. FYI: One person managed the campgrounds, gate access, signage, security, etc. in the past. Obviously fees were not charged, but also it was understood that amenities would also not be provided and this kept costs at a minimum.

- 8. Provide a local contact to report problems and issues to and a resource to coordinate gate openings and closings, trail work, etc.**

Rationale/comments: In the past, the local AFR and Boise contacts lived in the community itself and it was very easy for us all to help police the woods, perform trail/road maintenance and get things done.

- 9. Provide a detailed TCF “annual report” listing financial, personnel, timber inventory, and other pertinent metrics and information that helps all community members better understand how their forest is being managed.**

Rationale/ Comments: Better knowledge will hopefully get more locals involved over time.

- 10. Make sure that local residents are members of the next TCF Advisory Board when the current member’s initial term is completed.**

The following upper Teanaway part and full time residents have read and support what is being said:

- Tracy & Julie Rooney, 13610 Teanaway Rd NFrk, Cle Elum tracyr@msn.com
- Richard & Jonica Low, 13620 Teanaway Rd NFrk, Cle Elum richardlow5@gmail.com
- Jerry & Nancy Everson, 90 Hub Lane, Cle Elum jerrye@superfloors.com
- Mark Craemer, Teanaway Rd NFrk, Cle Elum markcraemer@comcast.net
- O. Charles Johnson & Emily K. Millar, 10330 Teanaway Rd, Cle Elum ochasjohn1@mac.com
- Alan & Bonnie Unsell, 101 Hub Lane, Cle Elum bunsell2000@msn.com
- Bob Ballard, 830 Sandy Ridge Rd., Cle Elum reballard@gmail.com
- John & Carole Windh, 880 Sandy Ridge Rd., Cle Elum berknuts@net-venture.com
- Tom & Gail Smith, 4390 MF Teanaway Rd., Cle Elum tsmith@crfloorsinc.com
- Drew & Jeanell Nelson, 1041 Wagon Wheel Rd., Cle Elum jeanell@codyjames.com
- Michael Ross and Rita Coss, North Fork Ranch Rd., Cle Elum mross@semaphore.com
- Barb & Barnaby Peters, 13341 Teanaway Rd., NFrk, Cle Elum petersbb@comcast.net
- Bob Barkshire 10441 Teanaway Rd., Cle Elum ROBERTBARKSHIRE@COMCAST.NET
- Gene McDonald 571 Teanaway Triangle Road, Cle Elum
- Don Owens 342 Middle Fork, Cle Elum
- Doug Owens 830 Middle Fork, Cle Elum dougowens78@gmail.com
- Wes Everson 92 Hub Lane, Cle Elum
- Dick Walker 13461 Teanaway Rd, NFrk, Cle Elum dickwalker55@gmail.com
- Larry Marquette Cle Elum (Forest Service cabin leaseholder) marquetteconstruction@gmail.com

*Please note: Some of the addresses listed above do not have local postal delivery available.*