

**Washington Community Forestry Council Meeting**

**February 8, 2023**

**Zoom Conference Call**

**Members Attending**: Ben Thompson, Semra Riddle, Tim Kohlhauff, Jess Stone, Lynn Suksdorf, Jessi Bloom, John Bornsworth, Ian Gray

**Members Absent:** Juli Hartwig, David Bayard, Kathleen Wolf

**Guests:** Julia Kast, Zachary Mellema, Em Roberts, Andy Tate, Csenka Favoini-Csorba, Stefan Petrovic, Stephen Baker

**Meeting Convened:** 10:39 am

**Welcome:** Chair welcomed members. Roll was taken. Guests were introduced.

**Approval of Minutes and Agenda:** Serma led agenda review. Lynn Suksdorf approves, Tim Kohlhauff seconds, a vote was called for: motion passes.

**Briefing on Federal IRA Funding; DNR Proposal**

Stephan Baker (USFS) spoke on Federal IRA funding. Congress passes full year budget for 2023, with increase in urban and community forests. Inflation Reduction Act, $1.5 billion to address climate change and heat mitigation with equity lens areas. Feb 28th deadline on state level.

Ben Thompson shared increased amount in budget from last year, around $100-150 thousand at state level. USFS aiming to get information out quickly and obligated to states and other partners. IRA funding technically approved for 10-year timeline, but funding is on 5-year cycle. Funds are not guaranteed until agreements are made, but high likelihood of WA receiving the funds. USFS wants WA to apply for as much as they can, DNR originally looking at 20-50 million dollars request. DNR is not naming organizations specifically to avoid complications during contacts and to increase flexibility of spending. Current proposal at 26 million dollars, but looking to raise the amount knowing that the future is uncertain (e.g., Covid). Proposal to USFS is a maximum of 5 pages. There is an administrative component, including request staff positions in admin. Big umbrella for creating positions- looking for partnership and coordination for spending down funds. Component of proposal for additional mapping and analysis, tree equity mapping. DNR creating several new positions: data collector in the field, point person for pass through grants to triage questions and help understand the rules and an urban forestry education specialist. Future webinar hosted by DNR to further explain proposal.

Semra asked about what other states are looking at in their requests. Ben will have more specific information on Oregon later this month. Other states have mentioned: working with k-12 schools, expanding nursery capacity, and working with tribes. Semra spoke about possible opportunity to do construction with tribes- to keep money in the tribes and improve workforce development.

**Council to take 5-minute break**

**Council Elections and Committee Assignments**

**Chair**

Nominated: Semra Riddle, Margaret Brost, Jess Stone, John Bornsworth

Front Runners: Semra Riddle & Jess Stone

Elected: Semra Riddle

**Vice Chair**

Nominated: John Bornsworth, Jess Stone (Kathleen Wolf was not in attendance and Margaret Brost/Ian Gray did not accept nomination)

Elected: Jess Stone

NOTE: there was a tie between two candidates for chair, article of association was referenced, but did not provide clear and direct insight on how to address ties.

**Additional Committee Assignments**

Nominations: Lynn Suksdorf, joining John Bornsworth and Kathy Wolf as existing members

Equity: Tim Kohlhauff, joining David Bayard and Juli Hartwig as existing members

**April Meeting Scheduling**

Ben requests pushing April meeting to late April. April 18th: Lynn Suksdorf approves, Tim Kohlhauff seconds. A vote was called for: motion passes.

**Lunch Break: return at 12:10 pm**

**Recruitment for Grant Review/Interview Panels**

Grants Review (reading, getting to know applications, typically one day one meeting) three members that volunteered are open to grant review and/or being on interview panel

* Tim Kohlhauff
* Ian Gray
* Lynn Suksdorf

Interviewer (UF Outreach Specialist, UF Specialist, UF Technician-eastern, Grants Coordinator,)

* John Bornsworth
* Semra Riddle

**Legislative Briefing (DNR)**

Csenka Favoini-Csorba (DNR) providing legislative briefing with additional information from Ben.

**HB1078:** [**https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1078&Year=2023&Initiative=false**](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1078&Year=2023&Initiative=false)

Initially would have required tree ordinances to incorporate a tree bank as a tool to maintain and increase tree canopy while addressing housing crisis and development. Reaction was that it was too “prescriptive” it could be challenging for some and those it would be easiest would be most likely to already be doing it. Csenka answered questions regarding definition of development and “regulatory” aspect of original proposed bill. Council members shared experiences about development they faced in their communities. Through legislative session, HB was amended from requirement for communities to DNR putting out best practice tool. DNR to create a model/guidance for communities that do want to implement this tool.

**HB1381:** [**https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1381&Year=2023&Initiative=false**](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1381&Year=2023&Initiative=false)

Bill looks at salmon habitat and reducing heat island impacts. Possible creation of recognition program. Partnership with DFW.

**SB5372:** [**https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5372&Initiative=false&Year=2023**](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5372&Initiative=false&Year=2023)

Trust land transfer (TLT) program. It is a program where DNR trust lasts that are under performing can be transferred out trust status. An example of this in use would be a parcels that DNR holds but does not really manage anymore and will make it easier to facilitate transfer of land to the city. There must be a public entity to transfer the land to. Purpose of tool is conservation.

**HB1181:** [**https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1181&Initiative=false&Year=2023**](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1181&Initiative=false&Year=2023)

Improving the state’s response to climate change by updating the state’s planning framework.

**DNR Urban Forestry Budget Request:**

Original request of $8 million- request, is now closer to $6 million in the Governor’s budget. The request includes but is not limited to funds for: youth conservation corps, working with American Forests, tree equity mapping on state level, tree ordinances, staffing increases.

**MOU with American Forests**

Commissioner committed to increasing capacity when it comes to Urban Forestry. One avenue is partnering with American forests (non-profit) who have focus on tree equity. DNR & American Forests MOU and contract is an opportunity to upscale UF efforts. DNR plans to work with them to develop a strategy to create and reach determined goals. Will need additional funding, resources and partnerships (e.g. regional collaborative). Semra asked about land acquisition. American Forests & DNR to collaborate to provide tools for others to use on their lands, including private and public. American Forests has made verbal commitment for additional fundraising.

**Articles of Association Briefing**

Stefan Petrovic (boards and commissions manager) adding equity and environmental justice lens to articles of association for council. The notes are being moved to equity subcommittee, then to the full council for consideration. Everyone will be made aware and have an opportunity to look over document at April 2023 meeting. Stefan is first step in interviewing council candidates. April meeting will have two new members on the council. Ian Gray’s reappointment request to be approved. The changes being made are part of a pilot program for the agency- this will become the template and impact other board and commissions. Semra and Ben provided feedback about current articles language that articles did not address ties in terms of election and nomination of member who is not present.

**Break (5 minutes- return at 12:15)**

**Work Session**

Semra shared 2021 work plan for review during break. Ben uses work plan and the council’s alignment to help inform decisions. There is value in having big vision for document, even if council does not have capacity to complete each point.

Semra led open discussion walking through 2022 work plan and updated along the way for 2023. Council intends to reference work plan more frequently throughout the year.

Equity: Lynn requests definition on equity (inclusion, participation, voices to be heard). What does equity mean in this context? Semra recommends prioritizes time to define and realign on “equity”. Council discussed definition of equity, tree equity, and ecosystem benefits. Ben provided program perspective of equity vs equality & environmental injustice. Equity subcommittee to review articles. Articles of Association review will flesh out equity. Equity subcommittee to bring notes to April meeting.

Workforce Development: discussion of DNR related roles in education and workforce development (Claire Sobetski & Jacob Delbridge). Ben suggested we would benefit from outreach with private industries as potential for job creation and lean on them for experience in creating job opportunities. Lynn pointed out Inland Tree conference in Spokane as good opportunity to connect private and public.

Public Engagement: Ian Gray suggested to create more marketing and continue advocating for DNR UFC and the technical assistance available.

Evergreen Communities: Julia to provide updates at each meeting (written or verbal). Julia will be reaching out to the council for advice and feedback on various aspects of the program.

**Meeting Adjourned: 1:58 PM**

**Next meeting:** April 18th, 2023

**Zoom Chat:**

You to Everyone 10:41 AM

👋Hi Everyone! Happy to be here with you all again today.

Tim Kohlhauff to Everyone 10:42 AM

Welcome Zach and Em!

Jessi Bloom (she/her) to Everyone 10:45 AM

Hi everyone! I am having wifi issues so will turn off video to make it easier and may need to jump on a phone if needed. Also I need to step away for a client meeting around 1130 and will try to jump back on when that is done.

Ben Thompson WA DNR to Everyone 10:46 AM

No problem Jessi!

Ben Thompson WA DNR to You (Direct Message) 10:46 AM

Yes please!!!

John Bornsworth to Everyone 10:47 AM

Hello everyone!

Jess Stone, Pierce County Parks to Everyone 11:06 AM

Hmm, supporting local municipalities in growing out trees for urban areas?

lynn.suksdorf to Everyone 11:09 AM

Might workforce development apply to community college, college and university forestry programs, allowing them to expand capacity to increase the number of students OR is workforce development tied to private enterprise use?

Thank you.

Ian Gray - Municipal Forestry representative to Everyone 11:29 AM

Please remove my name from consideration for any executive post. Thank you for the vote of confidence all the same.

I won't be voting as my eligibility for WCFC membership renewal has yet to be confirmed

lynn.suksdorf to Everyone 11:33 AM

Perhaps we can revote on just the two tied candidates.

Since we have 7 votes with two tied at 3 and one for a third candidatre.

Em Roberts to Everyone 11:45 AM

Very welcome!

lynn.suksdorf to Everyone 11:46 AM

I would be interested in serving on either of these.

Tim Kohlhauff to Everyone 11:47 AM

I'm free all day the 18th or the 19th

Jess Stone, Pierce County Parks to Everyone 11:48 AM

Agreed, third week.

Ian Gray - Municipal Forestry representative to Everyone 11:48 AM

18th is better

lynn.suksdorf to Everyone 11:48 AM

18th would work for me.

Ben Thompson WA DNR to Everyone 12:22 PM

HB1078 can be found here: https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1078&Year=2023&Initiative=false

Csenka Favorini-Csorba (she/her) WA DNR to Everyone 12:34 PM

I"m going to sign out from my vpn in hopes of helping my connection

Ben Thompson WA DNR to Everyone 12:36 PM

1381: https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1381&Year=2023&Initiative=false

lynn.suksdorf to Everyone 12:37 PM

Thank you for letting me speak to the bill.

Ben Thompson WA DNR to Everyone 12:37 PM

Of course Lynn! You have good insights

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HB1181: https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1181&Initiative=false&Year=2023

Jennifer Watkins to Everyone 12:56 PM

We are entering exciting times! Thank you to the councilmembers for working with and advising us as we look take advantage and leverage of all these funding opportunities and partnerships in WA.

lynn.suksdorf to Everyone 1:15 PM

Can we review the definition of equity in this context since the word has several definitions in various Council activities?

lynn.suksdorf to Everyone 1:24 PM

Thank you, John. Very helpful.

Andy Tate to Everyone 1:26 PM

We often fall back to the definitions provided in law as well. The HEAL Act has some, but not for equity specifically. HEAL Act session law (https://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2021-22/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5141-S2.SL.pdf), RCW 76.15.010 (https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=76.15.010), and RCW 19.405.020 (https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=19.405.020)

lynn.suksdorf to Everyone 1:29 PM

It seems to me that equity in canopy and even access under current circumstances and practices may be economically limited, but I am certainly not certain about that.

Andy Tate to Everyone 1:32 PM

Jacob Delbridge

Claire Sobetski

lynn.suksdorf to Everyone 1:33 PM

And I do understand the difference between equity and equality 🙂

Jennifer Watkins to Everyone 1:33 PM

We could invite them to come to speak to their work at a future meeting.

lynn.suksdorf to Everyone 1:33 PM

Good idea.

lynn.suksdorf to Everyone 1:41 PM

I certainly second that thought, Tim.

Tim Kohlhauff to Everyone 1:42 PM

Thank you Lynn.

You 1:55 PM

Woohoo!