

# Agenda

## Checkerboard Partnership

February 27, 2024 – 10:00 am to 11:00 am

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### Session Objectives:

1. Cle Elum Ridge Update
2. Teanaway Comm. Forest Update
3. Funding Update
4. Taneum & Cabin Creek Update

*Attendees:* Gary Berndt, Larry Leach, Mitch Long, Anthony DiMeglio, Mel Babik, Darcy Batura, Nancy Lillquist, Tom Krippaehne, Judy Hallisey, Martha Wyckoff, Catherine Waterston

### Cle Elum Ridge Community Forest Update

- MOU signed between KCT, TNC, DFW, DNR, Kittitas County
  - Had initial meeting of the MOU working group in January. Feb meeting was cancelled due to scheduling conflicts. March meeting will focus on service providers (sheriff, fire districts, search and rescue etc.) to understand service needs and impacts of designating the Cle Elum Ridge as community forest versus other uses.
  - KCT had initial meeting with DNR and DFW to talk about what the community partnership will look like moving forward. Clarifying KCTs role in supporting the community forest effort, local community involvement, and overall management of the forest.
  - Expectations for recreation and access are huge and will increase with the addition of the Cle Elum Ridge. Are there mechanisms to support these efforts (like search and rescue etc.)?
  - The CPPC will continue to be a good sounding board for community needs.
  - Next MOU working group meeting is March 15.
- Private Stewardship Fund Update
  - TNC released an RFP to help scope the development of a private fund that could support the ongoing operations and maintenance costs associated with the addition of Cle Elum Ridge to the Teanaway Community Forest.
  - Received four bids and selected Sustainable Northwest to complete the project. We expect the project to be completed in early June.
  - The contractor will help us answer the question of how we get private funds into state land managers hands.
- Outreach Subcommittee Meeting
  - The outreach subcommittee is looking at what outreach efforts that we can do this year. Looking for feedback from the CPPC. We discussed creating a short teaser video for TCF that can be shown at Roslyn theatre and used in social media. Intent is to get more people to view outreach materials already developed. There is a possibility of a broader film night in advance of the summer bikes and brews event by Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust.
  - We are also working on an elevator speech and talking points.

- Ellensburg community television – there might be space on that platform to include our videos in regular broadcasting.
- Ellensburg radio will have a 3-mile broadcast for Ellensburg, probably looking for content. Could be another avenue to tell our story.
- Planning for mid-week activities like birding in the community forest. Audubon would like to get involved, could lead field trips.
- Northwest Community Forest Coalition winter meeting is this Thursday 2/29/24. Forest Service research team is presenting about community forest ownership models and equity and access. Updates from Washington Association of Land Trusts and RCO around community forests. The larger in-person meeting is happening May 7-9 in Enterprise, OR.
- TNC has been advocating for 1168 funding, state funding dedicated to implementation of the 20 year forest health plan. This funding makes a lot of TNC management work on the Ridge possible. 1168 funding covers state fire resources, community resilience, grants that DNR awards. TNC has been successful for a lot of the grants to do fuel mitigation. Prioritized fuel break along the Ridge, top priority for DNR. Been a great partnership for fire resilience for Cle Elum, Ronald and Roslyn. TNC will update next monthly meeting when the legislative session is done.

#### Teaway Community Forest

- Teaway Advisory Committee meeting - WDFW gave a great presentation on the work they're doing including their game cameras, forest health work being done on the ground, and west and mid-fork Teaway restoration. Encourage folks to attend TCF AC meetings.
- DNR - looking good to get everything in place to use virtual fencing for grazing operations in the north fork. DNR and DFW have started discussing capital request for the next biennium. Some things on the list include finishing the scenic driving loops, trails, fencing, wetland restoration, Forest Service trails that are on the CF and how we can better align to reduce impact on water quality.
- The loan that the legislature took from DNR to help pay for the Teaway Community Forest comes due July 1, 2025. That will be a significant part of our legislative conversations in the next year. DNR needs that loan repaid. It sets in motion the future of the Teaway and is a determining factor for DNR acceptance of the Cle Elum Ridge.
  - Will DNR be working with the YBIP on loan repayment?
    - Yes, been in conversation. Haven't mapped out a plan yet but will be synchronized with the integrated plan.
    - Let us know if there will be a need for CPPC to engage in advocacy or other strategy to move this forward.
  - The loan is \$10m.
- Monthly Goal 5 meeting. Keep us posted. Nicky and Vince can be a conduit for information between the CPPC and the Goal 5 groups.

#### Funding Update

- Cle Elum Ridge account - \$177,717 in the fund. Considering reinvesting into a 3-month CD. Two commitments from private funders, payment will happen closer to the acquisition. These commitments are in the form of email pledges. Is there more official documentation that we should do for these? TNC will reach out to philanthropy team for templates.
  - This is the match for the first RCO Community Forest grant plus two \$100,000 pledges and land match (20 acres that TNC purchased ~\$425k). Really close to meeting match

for current RCO. Waiting to see how the rest of the funding will play out. Federal funding could match both RCO grants.

- Working on grant writing. TNC submitted Forest Legacy Large Landscape grant and expect to hear Spring 2024. We are hopeful.
- Current RCO CF grant, requested and received a year extension to June 2025.
- Working on a second RCO CF grant. We won't define phase 2 parcels, we will do an envelope project to accommodate potential outcomes from the MOU discussions. This approach will provide us more flexibility in working with all the partners. TNC has contracted with a grant writer who worked on the Forest Legacy application and is very familiar with the project

#### Checkerboard Lands Update

- Taneum- still waiting on federal budget to move that project forward.
- Cabin Creek - moving forward with due diligence expected in June.
- Hoping that both will close in the next 8-16 months.

#### Other

- County Commissioner Laura Osiadacz presented to the Ellensburg City Council about the Northwest Forest Management Plan Amendment. Included a video from the 1980s that discussed how small communities rely on the forest. Her presentation is available online.
- TNC shared slides from a wildlife camera project on the Ridge.