

## Checkerboard Partnership Planning Committee Monthly Meeting Notes 10.31.23

*Attendees: Mitch Long, Laura Osiadacz, Darcy Batura, Martha Wyckoff, Larry Stauffer, Nicky Pasi, Vince Pruis, Cathy Cook, Patty O'Hearn, Gary Berndt, Jane Kiker, Nancy Lillquist, Anthony DiMeglio, Tonya Morrey*

### Notes:

#### Cle Elum Ridge Community Forest

- Phase 1 Planning
  - Plan to apply for extension for KCT's Community Forest RCO grant, extension lasts thru June 2025
- Economic Analysis
  - Looks at opportunities, challenges, and tradeoffs of transferring the Cle Elum Ridge to community forest status
  - Funded by TNC and Yakima Basin Integrated Plan
  - EcoNorthwest was the contractor
  - Planning team: Darcy Batura, Jane Kiker, Larry Leech, Arden Thomas, Cory Wright, Mitch Long
  - Attempted to use it to inform Large Landscape Forest Legacy proposal, however timing did not work out
  - Copy of report included in this meeting's agenda document
  - Compared 4 scenarios: community forest model, private timber, conservation development (a few large lots with conservation easements around them), and residential development
    - Compares recreation, public revenue, demand for public services, etc.
  - 'So what?' of analysis led to decision to form an MOU
  - Is analysis the whole ridge or Phase 2 & 3?
    - Analysis focused on whole ridge
    - MOU conversation focused on Phase 2 & 3
  - Difficulties around available data from COVID pandemic to now
  - Table ES1 – no discussion of watershed values, wildlife values, fire breaks, etc.?
    - Details on this are located in the discussion sections
- MOU Development (between DNR, Kittitas County, TNC & KCT)
  - Solution for resolving each party's concerns for implementing community forest model on the Cle Elum Ridge
  - Outlines benchmarks and commitments for future conversation about management challenge and concerns, allowing us to pursue the Large Landscape Forest Legacy grant before everyone's concerns are addressed
  - Adding WDFW to stakeholder list
  - How are we distinguishing this community forest model from others within the MOU? Conveying intention of identity of this community forest?
    - Intent to expand Teanaway Community Forest over the ridge, would be under same or similar management plan, management system, and identity

- Are we able to responsibly manage the land the way it needs when the TCF is expanded?
  - We are working on researching the feasibility of developing a stewardship fund to support responsible management
- Goal to have MOU signed by Thanksgiving

#### Teanaway Community Forest 10-Year Anniversary Update

- Advisory committee meeting
  - Retrospective on challenges and accomplishments from the last 10 years
  - Maintenance, recreation, and restoration. What it takes to manage a forest this large for the long term
  - No shortage of community support and passion for the Community Forest
  - Starting to build in education piece during these meetings (forum to learn about Teanaway)
  - Please come to the next meeting!!
- Celebration
  - 75-80 community members participated
  - Welcome from Perry Harvester/WDFW, Larry Leech/DNR, and Phil Rigdon/Yakama Nation
    - Spoke about how important the partnerships on this landscape are
  - The people here are the community of the community forest
  - Had folks join advisory committee after
  - Lots of story sharing and recounting of how much has changed over the last 10 years
- Successful day!!

#### Funding Updates

- Large Landscape Forest Legacy proposal
  - Synopsis included in the agenda
  - \$700M from Inflation Reduction Act in the Forest Legacy program
    - Previous limit was \$6M
      - Assumed we would need to go thru several grant cycles to get funding for ridge transfer
    - New limit is \$50M
      - Set amount of available funding for next 2-3 years
  - Our proposal is for 9,700 acres of Cle Elum Ridge for \$15M (\$21M total including match from RCO)
    - Greater than 25% match to be competitive, so proposal includes Phase 1 too
  - Will need to go for another RCO grant in the spring
    - Both RCO grants will be used for match
  - Find out on our success in Feb/March 2024, if we are unsuccessful we will turn around and apply again
  - Agreed set amount that we are focused on acquiring?
    - Fair market value
  - Sense of what we are up against for other competing projects?

- Ours was the only onesubmitted this round to the state of WA
    - State is expecting more in round 2
    - Each state gets to send on 1 proposal per round
    - Not sure about national competition
  - Discussion with LLC board about selling at rate they bought?
    - The board has not been willing to talk about this until it has been appraised
- Phase 1
  - KCT holds \$3M grant from RCO
  - Ongoing discussion between RCO, DNR, and KCT about implementing the grant
- Funding available
  - \$19K in checking account
  - \$153K from certificate of deposit
  - Match for RCO funding for Phase 1
    - Land match is based off sale price, good for us
  - Working with another large donor for another \$100K
  - Sending out newsletter to anyone that has donated to KCT in the past. Will include article on Cle Elum Ridge to seek additional funds for that
  - Working on Facebook campaign

#### Checkerboard Lands Updates

- In process in transferring >18K truly checkerboarded acres to USFS in the next 2 to 4 months
  - Includes parcels in Taneum, Cabin Creek, Little Naches, Amabalis Mountain
- Cabin Creek
  - Fully funded for DNR to acquire as trust lands (75% county, 25% state)
  - Not appraised yet, so likely won't fully close for another year

Future meeting holds and Zoom links will be coming from [tonya.morrey@tnc.org](mailto:tonya.morrey@tnc.org)

- Laura checking to see if we can use the Public Works Shop conference room for our November meeting