

CPPC Meeting Notes 2.22.22

Attendees: Cathy Cook, Melissa Speeg, Mitch long, Martha Wyckoff, Nicky Pasi, Gary Berndt, Katie Pofahl, Larry Leach, Pam Hawk, Patty O'Hearn, Vic Monahan, Nancy Lillquist

Recap

Katie provided an overview of the last meeting.

DNR Conversation/Lands Subcommittee Update/BOCC Meeting

Mitch met with Angus Brody, Laurie Benson, Peter Dykstra, Cathay Baker, and Justin Allegro (TNC gov't relations staff) to see if DNR was interested in pursuing a partnership on the RCO grant and even more important if they were willing to pursue conversations to own and manage these lands. In general, there was a lot of positive conversation. A lot of the right questions. One of the questions is around whether the Board of County Commissioners(BOCC) will support the project. We are setting up a meeting with the BOCC to discuss this. We are looking for someone who can represent the LLC and DNR in that conversation. It will be facilitated by Peter Dykstra and Cynthia from the YBIP lands subcommittee. We are looking at what the BOCC wants. We know some of these. One of these is motorized recreation on the Cle Elum Ridge. Another is the transferral of water rights since these lands have one of the largest green zones in Kittitas County.

The green zone is an area where you can purchase water rights to put in a well without requiring mitigation. There is enough water in that basin to support these wells and you can go purchase water for it. These conversations are focusing on the Phase 3 lands. The County is having issues with the sideboards that were developed by TNC. CPPC identified the Cle Elum Ridge as non-motorized and Taneum as motorized, and the County would like to discuss this. How does the county mitigate the impacts to the green zone? They might as for light development on the ridge or they might other mitigation to accommodate losing the green zone.

We need the BOCC to agree that they support a community forest on the ridge. We need to have the meeting so we can continue good faith negotiations so that DNR is willing to work on this project. We really need to have the BOCC support our efforts for a community forest on the Cle Elum Ridge. There may be some give and take on certain things and we need to have those conversations. We can hopefully have these conversations through the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan (YBIP) Lands Subcommittee.

Do we have a sense of where the county support fell through so we can understand how to approach this conversation? This might be a question for TNC. Broadly they were interested in pursuing a PDA before we applied to the grant but eventually felt that the risks were too high (costs, liability, etc). Think there is a broad base of support for DNR ownership. These are similar to conversations the county and other organizations/agencies had when the Teanaway Community Forest (TCF) was being developed. They are bringing up the same concerns that existed with the TCF but we now have new BOCC's bringing up the same points.

Are we talking specifically about the Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) that the state paid because of the perception of lost county revenue? Does this give an example of what did or didn't occur at the time that smoothed some of the waters for the BOCC? Is the green zone practical? The green zone would increase the wildland-urban interface, fire risk, emergency response need, etc.

Letter of Support

TNC learned that things come up really quickly and we need a tight turnaround to make it happen. We were able to put elected officials or public officials on the letter. In the future, we want to make sure we are protecting our agency folks and elected officials because it can be considered lobbying. We might want to update some of the names on our website. That letter went out and that is great.

TNC's Government Relations (GR) and Philanthropy Update

TNC has been engaging with Justin Allegro, who is the state government lead, to help develop a strategy and pull together meetings with DNR. These meetings are focused on the Phase 1 project. Also looking to support DNR for a budget request for the 2023 cycle. We are really wrapped up in the Phase 1 conversation but will eventually have a draft of this for the CPPC to see where the CPPC wants to engage. Philanthropy has also engaged. Want to develop an endowment to provide private money to support the community forest in addition to lobbying for O&M for DNR. TNC plans to develop a campaign committee with staff from TNC and donors in the area. Already doing prospect research. Will also need some representatives from CPPC to be on this committee. Questions: How much are we targeting? What exactly is it going toward? Who will manage it?

Does TNC's GR Team have a sense of where the budget reconciliation is on the WDFW/DNR budget request? Katie doesn't have info on it but will ask. Would be good to know where the agency request stands. Katie will follow up by email with the group. Katie will send out an updated letter to Gary, Patty, and Martha. This issue was brought up at the Cle Elum Council the other night and they discussed whether the mayor could sign it without the council's approval and it remains undecided. Larry said the senate funded DNR's request but the house did not. Katie will follow up with TNC's GR team on how we can further support this measure.

Task Force Report Out

Future Funding

We talked about the need to support KCT, who has been providing support and leadership at no cost, but they can't continue to support on that level. The funding gap is \$25,000. The group identified this as a goal for this year. We are looking at how we can make this happen. It will show that we have the capacity as a group of people to provide financial support for this project. If that Phase 1 grant comes through it will provide some funding for administrative expenses. The Future Funding committee decided that was a reasonable request and to support it. Looking at the various ways to raise this funding. Open to ideas and suggestions. The future funding committee is responsible for coming up with ideas but not explicitly responsible for raising the money. Will need support from the larger group to make this happen.

Mitch put the \$25,000 out as a goal and suggests putting it in our account, for now, to build up our war chest. We won't be able to use the admin money for the grant for our work with the CPPC. It has to be directly tied to the acquisition. Should focus our fundraising on stuff that is easy (capacity is harder to fundraise for). It keeps appearing to Martha from the public view that TNC is offloading the property on the public without paying for it. Need to make sure that we are combining the efforts and not creating the "new bling" and taking away from TCF. Really need to link arms to ensure both community forests are supported through this process. KCT's main goal is to conserve this property. Whether we are tied to this community forest in the long term or not is up for discussion, but conservation is the ultimate goal.

Outreach Committee

Letter of support update provided above. If we want to update the names on the letters, would be good to update the website as well. The snowmobile community wasn't supportive of DNR taking ownership of the ridge. So Gary and Katie went to the Kittitas Groomers Association Meeting and Gary told the story of this land and why we are supporting this path. We are the group working to maintain this public access and snowmobiling is permitted on this property. Understand that snowmobiling is allowed both on this land and in TCF. If there is a future letter of support, might be able to engage this group. A really good step towards improving community relations with the snowmobiling group. Put together a list of groups that we know have an interest in the ridge. Identified the groups we can provide regular updates or decision point updates to. Also identified the groups that we also want to keep an eye on.

We need to consider giving a presentation to the full City Councils to understand whether they do or don't support the effort. It is different than individually sitting down with the city councils/planning commissions. Will be helpful to sit down first with the BOCC first to hear firsthand what their concerns are. We want to be careful that we aren't pitting City versus County. Outreach can give a brief presentation for now on where we are at and where we are going. We can provide different avenues on how they can participate and support the effort. Find some new ways to figure out how to elevate some of the voices in the community as it relates to this effort. We can provide an update on Taneum and Cabin Creek too.

Governance

Rolled into the next conversation.

CPPC Charter

Learned in the last meeting CPPC wanted to look at potential changes to the Charter since it wasn't meeting the needs of the group. The governance group wants to understand what can be better in the charter and why so that we understand how deep we need to go into the document. Patty thought there needs to be a small amendment. In the introduction, the charter refers to the CPPC as an advisory committee, and it gives the perception that there is a separate group.

Have we gotten to the point where we are defining ourselves as a different type of entity than we were? In the existing charter we are informal and a group of people who are unified in the desire to establish a

community forest. But do we want to add this element of philanthropy and fundraising? There might be three phases:

- 1) working to secure the land to become a community forest
- 2) Advising the owner/manager
- 3) Providing resources to the owner/manager

If CPPC is going to have oversight of private funding, we need to make sure the funding is properly managed and that we have created a structure to allocate that funding in a way that makes sense. KCT has offered to provide financial management. We can plug short-term funding goals into that structure. Will CPPC be advising or managing those funds?

Mitch advises that we wait and see what DNR agrees to and then understand what they will need from us. We have funds sitting in a bank account, but we will need a way to formalize how we spend that money. Wait until we have a more formal picture. We can continue to use the model for signatures that we used for our last letter of support. The group agreed it would be best to wait until we know where DNR stands to inform what changes we might need to make to the charter to support their acquisition of the land.

Questions Around Fundraising

What is the capacity for fundraising? How do we bridge the \$25,000 gap? What opportunities do we have? We have already thought about our administrative needs. CPPC could draft a letter to TNC to request funding for administrative support. Melissa said that we shouldn't close the door to using funding for administrative costs because that is part of supporting this effort. Nancy suggested we create trailhead signs with a QR code encouraging people to donate. Looking for other ideas as well. Is there capacity for the broader group to help? Take it back to Future Funding and develop some more strategies. You can set an endowment goal based on the \$57/acre cost estimated provided by Larry. It is \$313,500 per biennium. Martha suggested that we incorporate the administrative costs into it now because it is harder to ask for it later. Raise awareness that maintenance and stewardship are what costs a lot in the long run. No better fundraisers on the planet than TNC. TNC's team is really excited about the project.