



Pinchot Partners

FOREST COLLABORATIVE

May Meeting Notes Wednesday, May 21, 2025 9am-11:30am St. Mary's, Toledo, WA & Zoom

In attendance. * indicates participant attended meeting through Zoom

PP Staff: Janene Ritchie, Sarah Yeoman; *PP Board:* John O'Brien, John Squires, David Owen, Anjolene Ngari, Fred Norman, Matt Cominsky, Bob Guenther, Bill Little, Amy Boyd; *PP Advisory Group:* *US Forest Service:* Quentin Hall; *Fish & Wildlife:* Elliot Johnson; *Cascade Forest Conservancy:* Molly Whitney; Dalton Fry, Brooke Squires, Sheryl Hall*, Deidre Hayward, Christina Donehower*, Anna Nakae*, Kirsten Dodge, Ryan Ojerio, Jon-Paul Bowles

Today's Agenda. MOTION to approve: David Owen; Second: Bob Guenther; CARRIED.

April Annual Meeting Minutes. MOTION to approve: Fred Norman; second: Bill Little; CARRIED

Treasurer's Report, Janene Ritchie. Checking account balance is \$70,710.00. Credit card balance is \$107.99. It will be paid later today.

- Credit card cannot be paid online right now.
- Janene inquired about high-yield savings account. Best option is 2.25% interest rate for the first six months then 1.72% after that. These options are for Key Bank, but may not be worth the effort to switch banks.

MOTION to approve: David Owen; second: John Squires. CARRIED.

Action Items:

- Janene will fix credit card payment situation with KeyBank - completed
- Janene will forward Packwood Trails Day & Community Wildfire Event posters when ready – completed
- Janene will send joint collaborative letter to board members - completed
- Anjolene will connect Janene & Rich for mill tour in June - completed

Welcome Amy Boyd to the board!

Programming Meeting

South Packwood Fuels Reduction CE Proposal, Quentin Hall

- Currently very early in the planning process, but wanted to get it in front of partners from the ground up. Potentially build off of the plantation thinning to do more fuels treatment around Packwood.
- Growing fire risk and concern for treatment in the Packwood area and Skate Creek watershed. Capacity constraints impacting project development and they cannot predict what the timeline for that project will be. Down to about a 1/3rd of IDT workforce.

- Vast majority of high wildfire risk is on private land. Forest Service is somewhat limited in what they can treat on private land. Focused areas on forest service land that were identified as high risk wildfire. Can prioritize WUI areas.
- Ignition models show south Packwood is high risk regardless of wind direction. Want to start south of Packwood. It's a highly operable area with established roads, could possibly start reviewing this summer. Create continuous defensible space by removing fuels between plantations.
- Want to scope through PP and other avenues to make sure everyone is on board with what they are doing.
- Private land boundaries have not been surveyed, which means they cannot operate within a quarter mile of the boundary, which is the area they want to operate in the WUI. There are still areas outside the buffer in south Packwood that can be treated.
- The survey team also has low capacity—only three land surveyors for the entire region and they are booked several years out. Potentially could hire private survey teams, but are very expensive. Project feasibility may depend on boundary survey.
- Discussion around what can actually be cut due to large tree sizes in the south Packwood area. There is likelihood that they can't treat anything and have to pivot to other areas, however a CE is faster than an EA, and hopefully in the future they can lift the EA. Also considerations on viewshed if able to cut up to private land boundaries.
- Quarter mile buffer is non-negotiable, and that is a national directive. They usually buffer slightly more than a quarter mile. Suggested that there is potential in the state of Washington to use boundary line agreements among private landowners. Could maybe partner with DNR and GNA to fill survey capacity.
- Suggestion that PP could find money to help fulfill additional expenses.

Packwood Trail Project, Washington Trails Association: Ryan Ojerio, Kirsten Dodge, John-Paul Bowles

- Coldwater Trail Project update: Trail project was analyzed as a CE. Decision notice was signed in January. Project is nearing completion in that design phase is wrapping up in the next few weeks. Trail plan is then going to Mt Saint Helens Institute. Next steps will be another round of grant funding to cover construction and Tribal consultations. Construction may occur with volunteers or contracted crew. Some segments will be built to accessible standards. WTA and Mt Saint Helens Institute do trail maintenance once it's completed.
- WTA wants to explore where they fit in the mix that PP serves and is open to collaboration and ideas.
- **Packwood Trail Project through Destination Management Advisors: John Paul Bowles and Kirsten Dodge** - DMA helps small towns deal with tourism without getting crushed by it. PTP aims to develop and maintain trails for people who live in Packwood near where they actually live. Connecting Packwood to public lands, are easy to use, and can be used year round.
- Using shoulder season strategy to increase visitation outside high season to reduce inconsistent cash flow, decrease crowding, and stabilize employment. Aim to get ahead of locals being priced out and popular tourist towns becoming ghost towns.

- Keep visitors in Packwood instead of staying the night and driving out of town for recreation. Conducted informational survey for residents and visitors to gather data on active transportation, recreation, and what to do in town. Results paralleled well showing most people wanted to eat, walk and recreate in town and want lower-elevation trails that are easier to access.
- Seeing opportunity to integrate wildfire mitigation and recreation.
- Longterm strategy working with forest service on sustainable trails to reduce deferred maintenance backlog. Adding new trails that are easy to maintain and align with where people want to go.

Forest Service Updates, Quentin Hall

- Seasonal firefighters are onboarded. Four on station ready to go.
- Program of work for 2025 is being solidified. On the north zone, have gotten through most of the small NEPA. Quentin's team is switching into vegetation. Then will start doing plantation reviews for EA assuming it gets signed.
- Continuing to process special use applications.
- Working on finalizing program of work for 2026. Will be approved in the next month or so.
- South zone will be identifying first 3000 acres for forest wide plantation thinning, north zone will be identifying areas for fuels reduction near Packwood to build on that will contribute to their initial 3000, as well as stands that are about to age out.
- Shuffling around IDT staff to meet needs, but will hit critical mass at some point..

Operations Updates, Janene Ritchie

- Hampton Lumber will host a mill tour for PP during our regular meeting hours June 18. The South Gifford Collaborative is having a field tour on June 19. If anyone is interested, Janene can let them know. Our next field tour will be July 16.
- Partnering with DNR for wildfire preparedness workshop July 30 at Longmire Springs Brewing
- Longmire Springs has expressed interest in hosting more events with PP. Amy is also a fundraising consultant, and she and Janene will be meeting about fundraising plans.
- Janene has been attending meetings with Washington Forest Collaborative trying to get a handle on everything happening at state and fed levels. Collaboratives of Washington State have drafted a letter to send to Representatives and Senators. Letter will be shown to board members to get feedback, sent out in early June.
- Janene attended the AFRC conference.

Roundtable Updates

- David Owen went up to Iron Creek site. Says it's coming back quickly and the wildlife is thriving. Suggests it may be worth another visit.
- John O'Brien: Reminder for board members to submit letter of commitment to Janene.
- Jon-Paul: Packwood Trail Projects is hosting Packwood Trails event
- Amy Boyd: Spirit Lake Upper Cowlitz Valley workshop on Mt St Helens science June 12-13 at Cowlitz expo center.
- Molly Whitney: CFC has a film festival in Vancouver May 29th

- Sheryl: Shout out to volunteers to pick up trash. Before Skate Creek opened, volunteers picked up 2.2 tons of trash and cost \$831 to have the dumpster. Next clean up will be on the highway after the flea market. Cleanup at Skate Creek on 9 a.m. at Skate creek on 31st as well as cleaning up vegetation

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m. Minutes prepared by Sarah Yeoman