



# Pinchot Partners

WORKING ON COMMON GROUND

**JANUARY 18, 2023 | 9:00 AM-11:30 AM**

Location: St Mary's Mission, Toledo, WA and via Zoom\*

## **In attendance**

*Board Members:* Pete Krabbe, David Owen, Ashley Short, Anjolene Ngari, John O'Brien, Bill Little, John Squires, Matt Comisky, Fred Norman\* *Staff:* Janene Ritchie, Constance Mears

*USFS:* Theresa Tanner, CVRD Ranger; Elizabeth Robinson\*, Environmental Planner; Josh Chapman\*, USFS

*Guests and Visitors:* Emery Cowan\*, Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition ; Peter Sandifer\*, aide to Congresswoman Marie Gluesenkamp Perez; Anna Baklund\*, Lewis Trails; Sean Tran DNR Federal Lands Program, Christina Donahower\*, Cowlitz Indian Tribe Natural Resources Department; Sheryl Hall\*, GP Trash Force; Brooke Squires, Packwood resident; Gina Owen Randle resident\*

## **Introductions**

## **BUSINESS MEETING**

**Today's agenda.** MOTION to approve: John O'Brien. 2nd: David Owen. **CARRIED.**

**December meeting minutes.** MOTION to approve: Fred Norman. 2nd: John O'Brien. **CARRIED.**

**Treasurer's report.** David Owen: Current balance of **\$6,349.44**. No unusual activity. After incurring expenses of \$40 and \$20, MasterCard has been paid and is at zero balance.

Janene: \$7,000 from WA Department of Natural Resources and \$8,000 from the Forest Service will arrive soon, then invoiced again in March 2023. MOTION to approve: Bill Little. 2nd: Ashley Short. **CARRIED.**

## **Action items / Key Tasks**

**Janene** will send a link to Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition's Forest Service Planning to Implementation Guidebook as well as the slideshow that Emery Cowan presented.

✓ Due: Jan. 25, 2023. Status: Completed.

**Janene** will send information about available grant funds to Christina at the Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

✓ Due: Jan. 25, 2023. Status: Completed.

**Theresa Tanner** will work with Janene to schedule a meeting specifically about implementation.

● Due: As soon as possible. Status: In progress. Theresa and Janene are working on a list of topics to tackle at 2023 monthly meetings.

**Constance** will present another round of logos based on feedback from the board.

● Due: March 15, 2023. Status: In progress.

**Bob Guenther** will inquire with Pac Mountain regarding the Discovery Team.

● Due: As soon as possible. Status: In progress.

## **PROGRAMMING MEETING**

### **Forest Service Project Planning to Implementation Guidebook – Emery Cowan, Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (RVCC)**

Emery described RVCC's Forest Service Planning to Implementation Guidebook, which aims to help collaborative groups and other partners understand the full "lifecycle" of a Forest Service project.

Traditionally, Forest Collaboratives in the Pacific Northwest have engaged with the Forest Service on management activities during the planning stage. In recent years, some collaboratives have begun exploring opportunities to engage during post-NEPA project implementation and monitoring.

In its research to create the guidebook, several agency staff said it is not uncommon for the total treatment acreage authorized in the NEPA document to be reduced by one quarter to one third as a result of on-the-ground reviews. Also the Forest Service emphasized that even if aspects are included in a NEPA decision, timelines are still very flexible.

RVCC also found that collaboratives have an opportunity to ensure that values and language from the planning stage get translated from the decision into the contract process. Many collaboratives have seen the NEPA decision as the end, when the NEPA EA is really the beginning of the work.

Emery then presented a slideshow that illustrated how Region 6 collaboratives are getting involved at all phases of projects, including post-NEPA and implementation phases.

Examples from the vignettes:

Upper Willamette Forest Collaborative created a separate Implementation Advisory Committee.

North Central Forest Collaborative created an up-to-date tracking sheet of regional wood products buyers. It also created a document that outlined economic rules of thumb to help the Forest Service plan a timber sale. It identified capacity for ground-based, cable or helicopter logging, and volume-to-unit comparisons, so a sale doesn't go to "no bid" because it's not economically viable.

Theresa: Suggested we schedule a meeting specifically about implementation. It's important that we do what we say we're going to do in the NEPA document and that we do the right thing in the right place. Internally, we run into capacity issues, particularly with not enough engineers.

Sean Tran, DNR: Shared a real-world experience of these concepts with the Ferris timber sale. The NEPA plan designated 500 acres, but after ground review DNR determined that 100 of those were on the other side of a steep ravine that would have required installation of a 100-foot bridge for extraction. Economically that would sink the timber sale. No one timber sale can generate enough to cover the cost of a bridge. Even with NEPA approval, there are often real-world limitations that affect the ability to implement the project literally.

Anjolene: The Planning to Implementation Guidebook can be a helpful tool for onboarding people as they join a collaborative.

An economic subgroup could work together to give the FS a list of mills and contacts, what products they make and what species they buy, updated so bids can be more accurate. It could identify capacity for ground-based, cable or helicopter logging, and realistic volume-to-unit comparisons.

Elizabeth: Often folks do not understand what happens after a NEPA EA is signed. We used to give semi-regular updates with Interdisciplinary Teams (IDT) to PinchotPartners.

Josh: The Gifford Pinchot is working with Matt Comisky, AFRC, to host "Foresters Group" with the Forest Service on March 22, 2023, with acting Deputy Forest Supervisor Johanna Kovarik.

### **Forest Service Update: Theresa Tanner, Cowlitz Valley District Ranger**

Theresa is celebrating her 3-month anniversary as Ranger.

Internally, the CVRD is addressing staffing and capacity concerns. The southern end has a problem with timber sales. The road costs are huge and the timber value coming out doesn't add up.

The Forest Service is revisiting contracts, agreements and partnerships for restoration projects.

In terms of implementation, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe is the Forest Service's primary partner, based on a decision signed in 2020. The FS is looking now at the Yellowjacket pond area with 300 trees staged in partnership with Cascade Forest Conservancy's Instream Wood Bank program. That window of operation has started. Before March 1, staff will work with Fish and Wildlife on ground-based activity.

### **Timber Sales (incomplete list)**

Nisqually: Catt, Berry, Cora Stewardship, Bear Stewardship - awarded, but not complete. Horse - coming out soon.

Silver Creek: Bromo, Willie Stewardship, Linx Stewardship

Iron Crystal: Wake GNA

Kraus Ridge: Skinner, Judd, Soldier, Mo, Ames, Cato - upcoming

Some of these decisions were signed 10 years ago.

### **Hiring.**

The FS has increased capacity funding, because of fires. They are adding positions and upgrades to positions that existed in the past: Fire shop, timber shop, and a new position in recreation in Randle.

A fuels and fire management program planner, Jennifer Harris, has been hired to work Forest-wide.

The Forest Service is meeting with the Union for forest staff (not supervisors).

Staff are working on updated organizational charts. Theresa is waiting for final approval and wants to be transparent about hiring challenges. Attracting qualified applicants has been a challenge across all agencies, nationwide.

Housing is a real problem here to hire for permanent positions. Gas is too expensive to commute from outlying communities. All of the CVRD housing units are full. The FS is looking into leasing a bunkhouse in Packwood. RV parking pads still need to be NEPA-compliant.

Theresa also indicated a desire to give new hires time to be mentored. She wants to get them up to speed without burning them out.

Janene: Pinchot Partners has discussed the idea of hosting hiring workshops to assist local folks in applying through the USAJobs site. Job listings are being forwarded and posted on social media.

### **Yellowjacket update: Elizabeth Robinson**

The last public document posted was the Environmental Assessment in June 2022. Staff have spent time reviewing comments, talking with commenters to get clarification on issues regarding regeneration harvest and also a mixed-use HOV proposal. Some site-specific design criteria from the original plan created by former CVRD Ranger Nikia Hernandez was inadvertently omitted and needed to be added.

Interdisciplinary teams (IDT) are meeting for discussions. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has returned the biological opinion and completed the Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) option.

Next steps: Completing sensitive species surveys, which are contracted and waiting on conditions, specifically weather and humidity. Once the documentation is complete, there is a legally required 45-day Public objection filing season and a 30-day comment period, which can also be extended.

Forest Service staff will be able to give you a better timeline in February. No timber sales are planned for this year at this time.

### **Communications Update: Constance Mears Newsletter.**

Constance presented newsletter stats, such as the ratio of people who open the email, clicks to the website, and unsubscribe rates. While non-profits average about a 25% open rate, Pinchot Partners' rates have gone from 56.76% to 84.62% in four months. The number of people on the newsletter list has steadily grown as well.

### **Logo.**

Board members gave feedback on three logo options that were based on the design chosen at the December Board meeting. While the third option was the unanimous favorite, some board members wanted to see alternatives that included either a river or fish element. Constance will provide options at the March meeting.

### **Operations Update: Janene Ritchie**

We have two invoiced contracts awaiting payment.

Washington DNR has unspent grant funds that can be used for NEPA-approved, shovel-ready projects that can be completed by June 30. It also can be used to buy supplies for work to be completed later. It would be helpful to compile a list of small restoration projects for opportunities such as this. Janene will send information about this to Christina at the Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

Lewis County Chamber of Commerce invited us to its meeting April 26 or May 24. This is a great outreach opportunity. Board members are welcome to attend with Janene.

### **Other business:**

None at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 11:36  
Minutes prepared by Sharon Hanna  
Notes taken by Constance Mears