

REGIONAL NEWS

Teaway grazing subcommittee adjourns, \$150K grant for fencing in the wings

by Jim Fossett

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TEAWAY – Thursday Oct. 20, contracted facilitator **Jim Huckabay** brought his gavel down on the tenth and final Teaway Community Forest (TCF) Grazing Subcommittee meeting.

After three-hours subcommittee members left the Armory building in Elensburg around 6 p.m. with a tweaked copy of the final grazing plan, a document approved by the TCF Citizens Advisory Committee in early September.

The plan represents one of the last two components of the grander Teaway Community Forest Management Plan approved by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Dept.

of Fish & Wildlife, and the legislature in April 2015.

The remaining component, intended to define high-level guidelines for recreation in the TCF, is expected to be finished in two years time. That effort launched Tuesday, Oct. 25, with a public forum held at Third Street's Putnam Centennial Center in Cle Elum.

The good news for some stakeholders is that a \$150,000 grant promised by the Washington State Department of Ecology to kickoff the Teaway fencing project in the spring – looks like it will be awarded. Why fence?

The subcommittee, charged to protect and restore the TCF watershed and critical areas where wa-

terways are at risk from roaming cattle, has elected to use fencing as the methodology of choice for short and long-term results.

Although areas in the TCF targeted for fencing have been prioritized, types of fencing to be used have not been specified at this writing.

In all likelihood, as subcommittee members have said, that decision will be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the topography of the areas targeted for fencing and other factors.

Some of the fence types discussed include wire, natural terrain acting as a fence line, wooden fence that could conceivably come from TCF forest thinning projects underway, logjams,

or strategic placement of fallen trees to act as natural barriers on the ground.

Other items discussed at the Oct. 20 meeting included nailing down a rough idea of how and when the implementation team, comprised of agency scientists and other experts, would continue to meet, be that monthly or annually, and at one juncture landowner **Tracy Rooney** lobbied the group to close down **Sam Kayser's** corral at Bussoli Field because of the risks to public safety along Teaway Road.

After a somewhat edgy discussion in which Rooney's lack of empirical evidence and his overall justification for the closure

were challenged, the committee opted to remain aware of Rooney's concern.

With the final version of the grazing management plan complete, the Department of Natural Resources has a green light to author lease agreements for the 2017 season before the agency commences the bid cycle in November.

Eric Winford, DNR liaison and grazing subcom-

mittee chair, said he would likely be lobbying agency leaders for five-year leases starting in the spring.

Currently there are three cattlemen leasing grazing land in the Teaway: **Sam Kayser**, **Gary Fudacz** and **Jeb Burke**. Whether or not other grazers in the region will insert themselves into the bid cycle is unknown at this writing.

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