

Applicants sought for Teanaway Community Forest Citizens Advisory Committee

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TEANAWAY – Last week state agency officials kicked off a process aimed to lead taxpayers toward a June 2015 inauguration of Washington's first management plan for the 50,000-acre Teanaway Community Forest. On Wednesday, Jan. 15, Teanaway River Valley neighbors, area locals, longtime visitors to the region and public officials – packed Ballard Hill's Swauk-Teanaway Grange for a meeting hosted by the Dept. of Natural Resources and the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. Those are the agencies chartered to manage the forest.

First order of business was to recap the land sale that lead to the creation of the state's first Community Forest and then to deliver a wakeup call.

"We want everyone interested in applying for a position on the Citizens Advisory Committee to submit an application now," said **Matthew Randazzo**, Senior Advisor to the Commissioner of Public Lands. "I can't stress how important it is for us to have the community well represented."

Moving along, Randazzo then invited attendees to visit what he called staffed "listening stations" set up in the Grange Hall, where questions could be answered and input from

stakeholders logged, but back to the application Randazzo's office prepared for citizens interested in volunteering their time to the Advisory Committee.

Before attendees dispersed to listening stations, Olympia lobbyist and Ellensburg resident **James Halstrom** stood up and interrupted the meeting to call attention to the application. "I know you're not fielding questions at large from the audience at this time," he began, "but I think it's important for everyone to hear your response to the question I have about the application."

After Randazzo deferred to Halstrom, Halstrom asked, "After reading the questions on the application, it appears they were fashioned to solicit specific answers you're looking for. Is that true?"

Without pause Randazzo replied, "Absolutely not, and if anyone has any questions about those questions or suggestions for another format, it's my job to advise the Commissioner of Public Lands. I'd be happy to do that for you. We want this process to be open and transparent. So no, it's not as you describe."

With that said the crowd dispersed to listening stations, but it was clear that at this stage of the public process Halstrom's question, if nothing else, illustrated the prevalence

of many unknowns one would expect of any project at this early stage of the process.

Leavenworth's **John Betz** and **Dennis Rudolph**, hunters who for the last 25 years have claimed the Teanaway as their favorite hunting ground: "We just wanted to drive over to this meeting to make sure we can continue to hunt here. We're not sure what it's all about or what will happen."

Miles Ballard, a senior at Cle Elum-Roslyn High School: "I had some time and figured I'd see what was going on. My family has land that joins the Community Forest."

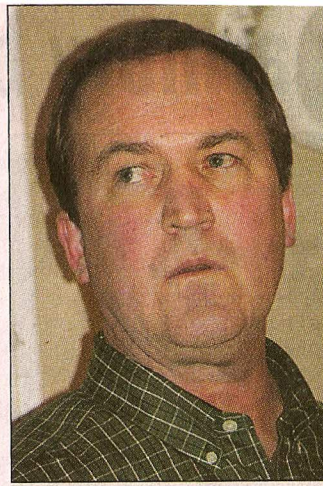
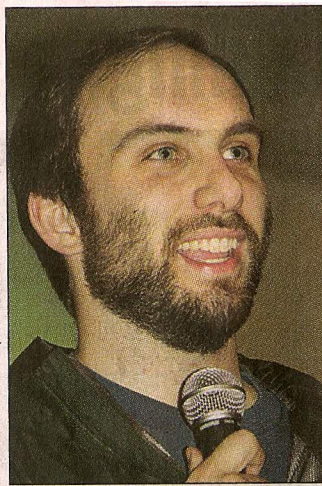
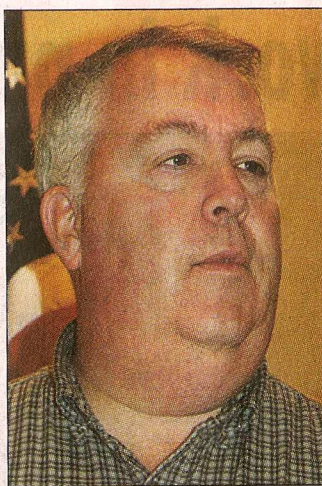
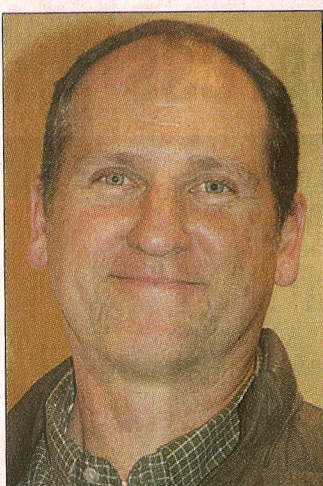
Kittitas Commissioner **Gary Berndt**: "Commissioners **Paul Jewell** and **Obie O'Brien** are here with me tonight. We want to make sure we're on top of this. I think this has got some of the greatest possibilities for putting the county solidly on the map – and we want to make sure this project carries forward in that vein. We also want to make sure we meet the requirements spelled out in the legislation and that we all come together to build a great Community Forest."

What happens next

The timeline laid out by Randazzo has the advisory committee application deadline set for February 14. By March, he said the committee would be appointed and the first meeting scheduled for March.

"Everybody is invited to apply," Randazzo reiterated, "but we want everyone engaged, so we're making the committee meetings open to the public and offering plenty of opportunity to get involved outside the framework of the committee."

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ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, managers to whom the Teanaway Community Forest Citizens Advisory Group reports were introduced. Pictured (L-R): Mike Livingston (WDFW), Rick Roeder (DNR), Matt Randazzo (DNR) and Joe Stohr (WDFW). Randazzo emphasized the committee is not a legislative body, charged with advising Community Forest managers, who in turn report to the Commissioner of Public Lands, who in turn liaisons with stakeholders involved with the Yakima Integrated Plan.

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Randazzo added that in the interest of efficient and effective deliberations his agency has hired a professional meeting facilitator for the advisory committee.

Questions on the Advisory Committee Application

For the public record, listed here are the questions appearing on the application created for volunteers interested in serving the Teanaway Community Forest Citizens Advisory Committee. Applications are available online with a visit to teanaway@dnr.wa.gov.

- Why do you want to be a member?

- What do you think the major issues or decisions that need to be made or considered regarding the Community Forest?

- What skills would you bring to the committee (e.g., knowledge of the landscape, natural resource management, outdoor recreation, working lands, outreach, communications)?

- List the clubs, groups you are affiliated with that have an interest in the Teanaway (i.e.: user groups, conservation groups, professional associations.) Have any of these groups designated you as a spokesperson or representative for their group on the committee?

- What are your concerns or expectations re-

garding the future of the Community Forest? What is your desired outcome for becoming a member of the committee?

- List all the activities you participate in or have participated in with regard to the Community Forest.

- Provide examples of your experience working with diverse interests in a collaborative setting.

- What would be your approach to your work on the committee and working with others you may disagree with?

- Explain your understanding of the connection between the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan and the Community Forest.

- Please list three references.

The Hierarchy

As Randazzo explained,

the Citizens Advisory Committee reports directly to a group that equally represents the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

That group is split into two tiers: A pair of regional leaders, and a pair of leaders in Olympia.

Regional leaders are **Mike Livingston** (WDFW) and **Rick Roeder** (DNR).

Leaders in Olympia are Randazzo (DNR) and Joe Stohr, WDFW Deputy Director.

Those four men work with the Commissioner of Public Lands, who interfaces with stakeholders involved with the Yakima Integrated Plan. Why? Because, by law, the mission of the Community Forest must synch with the mission of the Yakima Integrated Plan.

