

Grange hosts Teanaway Community Forest Citizens Advisory Committee

by **Jim Fossett**

jim@nkctribune.com

TEANAWAY – Monday, April 14, marked the second meeting of the newly appointed Teanaway Community Forest Citizens Advisory Committee, formed to propose a plan – by June 2015 – detailing just how the 50,000-acres comprising the state's first community forest should be managed.

To get things started, state-contracted facilitator **Lisa Dally Wilson** allowed time for introductions and opening remarks before aiming the committee at a brainstorming session focused on the state's five goals for managing the forest, which in brief include: Protecting and enhancing water and the watershed, maintaining working lands for forestry and grazing, expanding recreational opportunities where possible, conserving and restoring habitat for fish and wildlife and supporting what the state would like to become a strong community partnership with all stakeholders involved.

Committee Members offer insight

Opening remarks served to color the collective character of the committee, which on first impression seemed to reflect a balanced mix of agendas. Here are a few outtakes:

Gregg Bafundo: "I'm here to bring the sportsmen's voice to the table."

Andrea Imler: "I think [the management plan we propose must strike] the right balance with recreation."

Steve Justham: "I'm hoping for a win-win for the environment, fish, forest and the off-road vehicle community. I'm into off road vehicles, but I'm also an environmentalist."

Gary Berndt: "[This management plan] is an

opportunity for us to add to the Teanaway's [rich] legacy, the [region's] gateway to Mount Stuart."

Mark Charlton: "I'm a farmer and a rancher. We have a lot of interest in what happens in the Teanaway."

James Halstrom: "I'm dedicated to the preservation and well being of the Teanaway, to leave the forest as natural as possible, and whatever we do – we can't do it at the expense of residents here."

JJ Collins: "This is a huge opportunity to create a model community forest. We should adopt a century-long perspective. That will create the proper perspective as we work through this. And one more thing, with respect to the Spruce budworm and the other insects damaging the Teanaway: Who wants to recreate in a dead forest? We've got to keep that in mind."

Jeri Downs: "We've got to enhance the Teanaway for all to enjoy."

Dale Bambrick: "I'd like to see the forest managed as a community asset, while preserving ecological

aspects. The region presents an enormous opportunity for fish habitat."

Phil Rigdon: "I'm here for the Yakama Nation. The need for management is critical and we want to be a part of the problem-solving process."

Deborah Essman: "The forest should be maintained as a working forest. We should enhance outdoor recreation and we should become good neighbors."

Jason Ridlon: "We should develop a plan that supports recreation, but in doing so we should not compromise forest health."

What's Next

After the meeting adjourned the next meeting and a field trip to the forest – likely an all-day affair – was scheduled for May 8.

Because of the newness of the process and the challenge of scheduling meeting dates that work for all 20 committee members, readers are advised to first check the committee's website for schedule changes. It's also a good place to pick up meeting minutes.

Your Tax Dollars at Work...



**Medic One
Ambulance Service**

March 2014