

# Teanaway Community Forest Management Plan approved

by **Jim Fossett** | jim@nkctribune.com

OLYMPIA – On Tuesday, June 2, the Teanaway Community Forest reached another milestone in its story when the Washington State Board of Natural Resources unanimously approved the high-level forest management plan authored over the period of a year by the state's appointed, 20-member Citizens Advisory Committee.

Said Kittitas County Commissioner **Gary Berndt**, "There is always a risk and a challenge in bringing diverse perspectives into a first of a kind process. Officials hailing from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) worked long hours and long days with the advisory committee to build a solid foundation for the future of the Teanaway that will add to the legacy of a great place."

**Matthew Randazzo**, senior

advisor to Commissioner of Public Lands **Peter Goldmark**, had this to say: "It's official. We're ecstatic. It's been a wonderful project. Everyone involved has exhibited patience and diplomacy. To have unanimous support from the board shows this has really been a successful effort, a huge achievement. We're grateful to the advisory committee and the general public for their input."

## Next Step: Fund the plan

Although the plan has garnered a green light, over the next 18 months the advisory committee must hammer out details for the plan's recreation section. More immediately the Dept. of Natural Resources must lobby lawmakers to fund the plan before the legislature adjourns for the summer.

Said **Rick Roeder**, speaking from Ellensburg for the Depart-

ment of Natural Resources, Southeast Region, "We requested \$1.9M from the state's operating budget. That would give us staffing, infrastructure support, and biologists and managers, for instance, on the ground. It would also help with day-to-day campground maintenance, noxious weed control, law enforcement, and costs associated with the development of the recreation plan.

"From the state's capital budget we requested \$350K for forest fire reduction projects, \$180K for campground improvements, and \$600K for improving fish habitat and roads."

At this stage of the process insiders say the House and Senate are still debating operating budget particulars and that there are no clear indications DNR's \$1.3M request would be fulfilled to the dollar.

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As for the capital request Roeder said until it reaches the floor for debate it's too early to predict how the two branches of the legislature will respond.

## The recreation plan

After the advisory committee adjourned earlier this year to await a decision from the Board of Natural Resources, it had already been decided to give the recreation section of the management plan another 18 months of

fine-tuning.

**Mike Reimer**, an advisory committee member charged to represent off-road vehicle users had this to say about what will likely become the focal point of much discussion in the coming weeks and months.

"There will be some challenges.

"Right now we're waiting for maps DNR is generating from LIDAR-equipped planes that flew over the forest recently. The maps will show critical

slopes, wetlands and other features that will help us see where recreation can exist, meaning suitable places for hiking and motorized activity.

"It'll be an exciting process. We may get some new faces on the next advisory committee and I hope there is a better balance with more motorized-friendly people."

## Background

The recently approved forest management plan addresses five key objectives defined by lawmakers:

- Protect and enhance the water supply and protect the watershed.
- Maintain working lands for forestry and grazing while protecting key watershed functions and aquatic habitat.
- Maintain and, where

possible, expand recreational opportunities, consistent with watershed protection;

- Conserve and restore vital habitat for fish and wildlife, and

- Support a strong community partnership to advise DNR and WDFW about ongoing forest management.

Earlier this year the 20-member Citizens Advisory Committee completed a one-year term culminating with the approval of the forest management plan they helped to author.

Wednesday, June 10, marked the deadline for anyone who wanted to apply for an appointment to the committee chartered by the state to pick up the baton. At this writing state agency officials are reviewing those applications with the intent of appointing and reconvening the new committee in July.

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