

# Milestone in History

## Teanaway Community Forest Management Plan ready for adoption

by **Jim Fossett**

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**UPPER COUNTY** – Five years after the state purchased the land known today as the Teanaway Community Forest (TCF), the forest's Recreation Plan, the fifth and final component of the broader TCF Management Plan – is done, as is the plan's requisite State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review.

If all goes according to schedule, before the year is out the completed Plan will go to Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Commissioner of Public Lands **Hilary Franz** and to Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) Director **Kelly Susewind** for final review, approval and adoption.

According to and staff in

Olympia, "This plan reflects the contributions of dozens of community members and interested parties from across the state, including members of the TCF Advisory Committee, hundreds of residents who provided comments online and at public meetings, and a cadre of WDFW and DNR, staff and scientists."

### SEPA review comments

Speaking to the Recreation Plan's SEPA review, TCF Advisory Committee facilitator **Doug McClelland**, a WDFW-DNR planner brought back from retirement to facilitate the committee's monthly meetings, said, "We received 559 comments during the environmental review.

"American Whitewater discovered we hadn't talked about boating access and commented on that. We made adjustments in the plan to reflect two important places along the river to launch and takeout boats.

"Another comment reflected the need to include standards for the scenic drive so everyone could navigate the road in a standard passenger vehicle.

"Other comments reflected a strong interest in trails connecting the forest with the communities of Cle Elum, Roslyn and Ronald.

"Overall, the vast majority of the comments were in support of the plan. Only about 25 were not. Many of those were from people who

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...wanted to increase ORV access. The committee agreed we should continue access for the three U.S. Forest Service multi-use trails that include motorcycle use, plus we added the scenic drive. Those were important decisions."

McClelland said the Draft Teanaway Community Forest Recreation Plan and related State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) documents were released to the public for formal review and comment on Oct. 24. The comment period closed at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 7. A public meeting was held on Wednesday, Oct. 24, to present the draft plan and explain how public comments would be accepted under SEPA rules.

## Wrapping it up

Last week McClelland said he would carry the final plan to Franz and Susewind today, Thursday, Dec. 6.

"I'll travel to Olympia with field staff from DNR and WDFW to provide the two agency leaders with a briefing on the process, comments, conclusions and final recommendations. Then, hopefully, they'll approve the plan."

The next meeting of the Teanaway Community Forest Advisory Committee will be Thursday, Dec. 13, 3-6 p.m., at the Swauk-Teanaway Grange.

"At that meeting I'll present the final management plan, including the recreation plan to the advisory committee in its entirety. This will be a way for me to show them the results of their hard work and thank them for their commitment and volunteerism."

## Extraordinary work ethic

Indeed, if you add up years of monthly meetings, field trips, homework, networking, sharing information with forest user groups, grant and budget support, and travel time to and from meeting places, on average each member of the committee sacrificed upwards of 500-plus hours



**DOUG MCCLELLAND** played a key role in facilitating Teanaway Community Forest Advisory Committee meetings as members worked to pull together a Recreation Plan for the state's first community forest.

over the five years. "That's a lot of time and it's probably a low estimate. It's amazing what they have put into this."

## Projects on the horizon

Moving forward he said depending on funding the forest might get next year, the trail is well signed for implementation, meaning projects have been prioritized.

"In fact, we already have funding from grants to improve Indian Camp and Teanaway Campgrounds with new campsite layouts, tables, fire rings, bathrooms and improved driving loops. You'll probably see a lot of activity on those projects next summer."

As he emphasized, the task of prioritizing projects was guided by the five legislative goals established on Day One: protect the water supply and the watershed, manage with best practices in forestry and grazing, enhance recreation, protect fish and wildlife habitat, and develop strong community partnerships.

"What that means is - we can't meet the goals of the Community Forest if we focus on just one or a few of the five goals. Most of the community's interest in the forest is what it can provide in terms of recreation, but we can't be successful in recreation without working on all five goals equally."