Delayed 18 months, Teanaway recreation planning cycle is launched

by Jim Fossett
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TEANAWAY – In April 2015 lawmakers and state agency leaders with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Dept. of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) approved the Teanaway Community Forest Management Plan, but because of a lack of funding one of the most important sections was intentionally left out. That would be the component laying out high-level guidelines forest managers need to regulate outdoor recreation in the forest’s 50,241 acres, a place where — for decades and through the four seasons every year — locals, frequenters and vacationers have flocked for outdoor fun and relaxation.

That all changed on Tuesday, Oct. 25, when agency leaders convened a public kickoff meeting at Cle Elum’s Putnam Centennial Center aimed to trigger what insiders are saying will be the two-year process needed to produce the recreation component of the forest’s grander management plan.

Where did the funding for the effort come from?

Said DNR’s Rick Roeder, the agency’s assistant division manager based in Ellensburg in charge of agriculture, water and the Teanaway Community Forest (TCF), “It was a matter of re-prioritizing our operational budget. We were instructed to use Discover Pass dollars for this. Although that will leave us with other projects unfunded, we feel the shift was necessary to move the recreation plan forward. Recreation guidelines in the Teanaway Community Forest are critical to the success of the overall plan and the mandates we face to restore the forest and the watershed.”

New player

DNR tasked its statewide recreation program leader, Glenn Glover, to facilitate the TCF recreation planning cycle. Glover’s endgame is to appoint someone from his

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About Glover

Glenn Glover has been with DNR in his current position for about a month, though he has worked for the agency for a year. He came to DNR after five years as the lead for Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance. Why did he move to DNR?

“I wanted to take the experience and success that I had in serving and providing recreation to one user group, which was mountain bikers of Washington, and turn that into an opportunity to support a broader range of recreation users, whether that be hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, four-wheel driving, trail running, climbing, mountain biking, fishing, boating, ATV use – or a new emerging recreation.”

Glover’s team has several large-scale recreation plans under their belts, including the Snoqualmie Corridor Recreation Plan, the Naneum Ridge to Columbia Recreation Access Plan, and the Altamont State Forest Recreation Plan.

Said Glover, “We have a general structure we use as we approach recreation or landscape-level planning but it’s not a cookie-cutter approach.

“We recognize that the TCF is unique, just like other areas where we have helped to develop plans, and we will be guided by that and adapt accordingly.

“For other recreation plans what we have produced is a high-level document identifying the types of recreation to occur and where the land is most suitable for that recreation based upon a review of geology, biology, management, and social issues. Those areas are captured in the final objectives, strategies and priorities of the plan.

“The effort is not just a recreation plan in hand, we will be well-positioned to go after grants from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office in the next cycle.”

“Two years seems an awfully long time, especially when one considers the recreation component of the TCF Management Plan already has been delayed for almost two years. Is there anybody around that?”

“These kinds of plans take time because we need to be well informed beforehand. Although the process could move more quickly we want to take enough time to ensure that we hear from all who value the TCF.”

Glover said that doesn’t mean all recreation-oriented work in the TCF would come to a grinding halt.

“There are projects that need to be done. For example campground extension and renovation is the target for a grant we’re submitting this cycle.

“With respect to work on trails right away – signage and construction, for example – we’ll wait until we have more clarity and direction from what we learn in the planning cycle. Some projects may materialize more quickly but it’s also possible that some may have to be put on hold until the plan is complete.”

first ballot returns

First ballot returns at the Union County Convention on Saturday showed that the candidates for Union County Auditor, Assessor and Commissioner have been decided.

Election results showed that incumbent County Auditor Mike Eldridge was re-elected with 51% of the vote, defeating challenger Matt Reinhart with 49%.

Incumbent County Assessor Joe Baccari was re-elected with 60% of the vote, defeating challenger81313437 with 40%.

Incumbent County Commissioner Ted Stenberg was re-elected with 57% of the vote, defeating challenger Steve Cook with 43%.

Both Eldridge and Baccari were re-elected with a comfortable lead, while Stenberg barely managed to cling onto his seat. The results show a clear mandate for the incumbent candidates to continue their terms.
Oct. 25 kickoff meeting

TCF Citizens Advisory facilitator Eric Winford, a DNR forester working out of Ellensburg, said Tuesday's kickoff meeting was geared for public input.

"After Glover and others delivered brief presentations the meat of the event was the four or five stations set up at the Centennial Center to encourage discussions with outdoor recreationists: where they recreate, types of recreation they prefer, questions and concerns. We intend to move into another series of public meetings in the spring."

Winford said at this early stage meetings of the TCF Advisory Committee and forums involving the general public have not yet been scheduled for 2017, though he mentioned work on the recreation plan community Forest for access to meeting schedules, agendas, minutes, blogs, newsletters, progress reports, and upcoming volunteer projects.

TCF Citizens Advisory Committee

The oversight group for recreation planning in the Teanaway Community Forest (TCF) is the TCF Citizens Advisory Group, an entity serving the forest since those early days following the land purchase. Surprisingly, many of the original members are still on the committee. Here's the group's membership roster listed on one of DNR's many web-based outreach sites late last month. Word of caution: Unannounced, the membership roster does change from time to time for various reasons, and it takes

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Re-Elect Chief Justice

BARBARA MARGEN

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Society's Kitty Craig, local landowner Andrew Cromarty, Teanaway River Valley farmer Jeri Downs, Yakima Integrated Plan board member Urban Eberhart, Kittitas County Field and Stream Club's Deborah Essman, Roslyn resident and Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance member Scott Gray, The Nature Conservancy, Friends of the Teanaway board member James Halstrom, Washington Trails Association's Andrea