

Teaway Community Forest Recreation P

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UPPER COUNTY — Thursday, May 10, the Teaway Community Forest (TCF) Citizens Advisory Committee met for the last time until September.

At the meeting committee members reviewed a draft of the Recreation Plan's Strategies & Tools section, the last section in the grander Teaway Community Forest Plan to be finalized. The committee started on the plan five years ago. After approval this year, the Recreation component will have been about two years in the making.

Overview in short

The Strategies & Tools section targets camping, commercial recreation, guide services, groups, events and environmental education.

Advisory Committee facilitator Doug McClelland said one of the most important parts of the section deals with enhancing opportunities for overnight and backcountry camping. The Teaway, Indian

Camp, and 29 Pines Campgrounds are the three facilities in the TCF today.

The strategy is to relocate campsites outside of floodways and enhance campsites in ways that are consistent with guidelines established for watershed protection.

The goal is to provide a mix of individual and group sites with amenities such as picnic tables, fire rings, signage, designated parking for cars, trucks, trailers and RVs, and kiosks with a variety of information useful and helpful to visitors, such as maps, alerts and emergency numbers.

Improving access to the river from camping areas is also planned, along with the potential for day-use shelters for picnic and environmental education.

Backcountry camping has always been popular in the Teaway. The idea is to provide designated areas to do that and develop maps identifying where they are. Campfires will not be allowed in the backcountry, and Leave No Trace principles will apply.

User groups and volunteers might provide assis-

tance with the management of remote backcountry campsites.

If all goes well, partnerships with adjacent landowners such as the USFS would allow for the development of a trail system connecting backcountry sites.

For a look at the complete draft Recreation Plan in detail, visit the TCF website. Google: **Teaway Community Forest**, and on the right side of the home page look for a button labeled **Advisory Committee Documents**. Over the summer additional draft sections will be posted on the website as they are completed.

Future Meeting Dates

McClelland said the committee would no longer be meeting monthly.

"Instead we'll be meeting quarterly. At this writing July and/or August meetings have not been scheduled. We'll schedule an additional meeting to air the Recreation Plan's SEPA, likely at the Putnam Centennial Center in Cle Elum, probably from 6:30-8:00 p.m."

On Thursday, Sept. 13, the committee returns to the Swauk-Teaway Grange for

a quarterly, 3-6 p.m. review of all components of the management plan.

Thursday, Dec. 13, the committee holds another quarterly meeting at the Swauk-Teaway Grange to once again review all components of the plan.

McClelland said he hopes the final Recreation Plan is approved well before the end of the year so that TCF stakeholders have lead-time for grant writing and capital budget requests before lawmakers convene in January.

One more thing

McClelland noted that the committee voted to change the way they would approach the development of connector trails to popular USFS trails emptying into the TCF — in the West, Middle and North Forks.

He said originally the plan was to work on the three trails first and then circle back around with trailhead improvements. Instead, the plan is to work on a trail and its trailhead before moving forward to the next.

Stay engaged

Plan at the finish line

McClelland and committee members emphasized how important it is to them to have residents and other stakeholders continue to attend quarterly meetings.

“Over the past five years the bulk of the heavy lifting, in terms of the effort needed to create a management plan, is done, but it’s how we implement it that counts. Input from stakeholders is very, very critical to success in that regard, so I encourage everyone to stay engaged.”

TCF on Facebook now

McClelland said the committee launched a new Facebook page. Visit Face-

book and search for Team-
away Community Forest.

McClelland’s kudo

At the May 10, meeting, attendees and committee members enjoyed a potluck supper, a celebration of the work done over the past five years. McClelland said it was a milestone moment.

“The biggest thing is that when you have citizens, agencies and communities come together to work on one project like this – something’s going right. People involved with this effort have taken the time to create an amazing Community Forest, the first in state history. They all can be proud of that.”