

Teanaway Community Forest kick-off meeting slated for Jan. 15

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OLYMPIA – One-hundred and seven days after New York commodities broker **John Rudy** sold 50,272-acres of pristine forestland to the state of Washington, the two agencies responsible for managing those holdings as the state's first of a kind community forest will host a kickoff meeting this month to get the ball rolling.

On Wednesday, Jan. 15, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., officials representing the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) convene at the Swauk Teanaway Grange in Cle Elum. Everyone is welcome.

"We put out a press release about the meeting," said WDFW South-Central Regional Director **Mike Livingston**, "but details of the agenda are still in the works. I can say that by March we will have selected members of the Citizens Advisory Committee, and we have until July 1, 2015 to have our management plan finalized."

As Livingston pointed out, the primary purpose of Wednesday's kickoff meeting is to collect input from the public, to discuss the process of developing the management plan and the application procedure for anyone who wants to become part of the Citizens Advisory Committee.

The Swauk-Teanaway Grange is located at 1361 W. Ballard Hill Road, about ten miles east of Cle Elum.

About the Land Sale

The state purchased Rudy's 50,272 acres in the Teanaway River Valley on September 30, 2013.

The land is designated as a Community Forest as defined by law and managed by DNR and WDFW with advice from an advisory committee comprised of residents and other stakeholders likely to be appointed by March 2014.

DNR officials have said the \$100M sale represented "the largest single land transaction in Washington state in the last 45 years and reflected more than a decade" of multi-agency negotiations.

As Washington's first Community Forest the land becomes a model insiders say will be watched closely by agencies across the country.

Money for the acquisition tracks to an \$87,000,000 capital appropriation that surfaced after deadlocks

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over the state budget forced lawmakers in Olympia into two special sessions in 2013.

A supplemental \$10,000,000 loan came from DNR's Real Property Replacement Account.

Up until the sale, the land was owned and operated by Rudy doing business as American Forest Land Company.

At one point Rudy targeted the land for what he described as a "self-contained community," but that project met with a stumbling block when skepticism and opposition surfaced after certain files connected to the project on record with the county were released without proper authorization.