

Protecting critical areas from cows grazing in the Teanaway means mapping

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TEANAWAY – Following Washington's \$100M purchase of 55,000-acres now known as the Teanaway Community Forest, a significant section of the river valley zoned as open range became a priority for Washington Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) and the Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR), the two state agencies chartered to protect the watershed, woodlands, and the fish and wildlife that have for centuries painted the valley as a portrait of pristine outback – but to meet the challenge a better set of maps was needed.

On Thursday, April 28, the subcommittee chartered by the Teanaway Community Forest Citizens Advisory Committee to develop a long-term grazing plan ... got those maps.

Said **Eric Winford**, a DNR ex-

pert who has been with the advisory committee for years, laid the new maps on the table for subcommittee members to see.

"These maps," he said, "show the community forest as well as surrounding properties owned by the U.S. Forest Service, the Nature Conservancy, farmers, ranchers and homeowners.

"Note the color codes we've used to identify roads, woodlands, areas likely suitable for livestock, streams, wetlands, floodplains and other features of the terrain."

Winford said the maps, with some exceptions, would likely be enough for the subcommittee to identify critical, sensitive areas and target them for protection against grazing cows, ungulates and outdoor recreationists, as long as walking surveys are integrated into the evaluation process.

"This is a good starting point," said contracted subcommittee facilitator **Jim Huckabay**. "Our charter has been to get to a starting point, a place where we could come to agreement and move forward with the long-term plan."

With the new maps on the table subcommittee members broke into separate groups and discussions leading to what appeared to be a painful realization.

"This is going to take time," echoed NOAA Fisheries scientist **Sean Gross** and colleagues on the subcommittee representing various agencies. "We're not going to turn this around by the time our next monthly meeting convenes. Let's not get too ambitious."

Gross's comment led to further discussion and eventually the decision to push the next meeting to

