

**Meeting of the Board of  
County Commissioners  
Tri County Forest Group  
Friday March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 1:00 PM**

**Location: Tri county Economic Development District 986 S Main St. Colville, WA 99114  
Meeting Room**

**Introduction of Attendees:**

1. Amanda Rowton, Clerk of the Board, commissioners@co.ferry.wa.us
2. Scott Nielsen, Cattle Producers of WA
3. Jeff Koffel, TEDD
4. Gloria Flora, SOS & NEWFC
5. Mike Petersen, Lands Council/NEWFC
6. Maurice Williamson
7. Mike Paulson, CMR representative
8. Shane Robeson, Colville NF, Republic
9. Dave Hedrick, Ferry County Conservation
10. Merrill Ott, Colville NF Ambassadors
11. Bill Way, NEWT
12. Bob McKellar, WA DNR, Robert.mckellar@dnr.wa.gov
13. Kevin Arneson, Boise Cascade, kevinarneson@bc.com
14. Angel Glenwinkel, angelglenwinkel@yahoo.com
15. Eric McQuay, Colville NF, emcquay@fs.fed.us
16. Julia Petersen, Evergreen Magazine
17. Jim Petersen, Evergreen Magazine
18. Craig Newman, Colville NF
19. Kurtis Vaagen, Vaagen Bros, kvaagen@vaagenbros.com
20. Steve Parker, Stevens County
21. Matt Scott, Vaagen Brothers
22. Josh White, USFS, jpwhite@fs.fed.us
23. Greg Frohn, Avista, greg.frohn@avistacorp.com
24. Nancy Harshman, NE & Ferry Country BCH, nancyhars47@gmail.com
25. Mike Blankenship, Ferry County Commissioner
26. Shelly Stevens, TEDD, sstevens@teddonline.com
27. John Boyd, NEWT
28. Nathan Davis, Ferry County Commissioner
29. Gary Nielsen, TCMRA
30. Mike Lithgow, BAIA & KTI

## Introductions

Commissioner Blankenship opened the meeting at 1:05 PM.

Commissioner Blankenship discussed the notes and briefly touched upon the mission statement. Gary Neilsen discussed the packet he submitted for the record. The letter he discussed was distributed to the group. He proposed looking at the proposed roads on the overhead screen. Gary Neilsen discussed the potential ATV routes. He pointed out the 1500/Sheep Creek as a good option. Gloria Flora asked about the designation of the road. Josh White said it is currently opened to OHV's. Scott Neilsen discussed the travel management project and asked why it hasn't been opened yet. Gary Neilsen said it was due to a safety assessment. Merrill Ott said it was a USFS decision we are presenting as a part of the process.

Gary Neilsen is requesting the approval of the roads he is presenting to be open. Craig Newman said that this is not like other projects. (South End) Steve Parker said a mixed analysis had to be done on South End? It was pretty quick? Craig Newman said yes that's true. Mike Petersen said ATV use in a new area requires a NEPA analysis. Josh White said I would disagree. You are asking to predict an unpredictable event. Maurice Williamson asked about connectivity. Does it have anything to do with the disabled hunting route? Josh White said the disabled hunting is closed roads with gates. This would not impact it. Maurice Williamson asked if the county is assuming liability if a 15 year old kid decided to ride. Gary Neilsen said from a liability standpoint, you would have to ask someone who knows.

Merrill Ott said it doesn't change the parameter at all. These are forest service roads. That is why we are presenting it to this group. There are fill out forms to express your thoughts on the project. Mike Petersen said it looks like the Pacific NW trail. Have you considered the impact? Craig Newman said in the comp plan the trail would find a new home. Eventually the trail will not be on this route even though it currently is. The road will not be the trail. Josh White discussed the mixed use analysis. Craig Newman said the PNT is on mixed use in various areas. Gary Neilsen discussed the Mac King Trails. Merrill Ott said we have to have a permit as a group to use the trails. Gloria Flora asked about the mileage estimate. Gary Neilsen gave estimates of 12 miles. These roads are open to all vehicles. Josh White said we are encouraging people to go where they shouldn't go by not having logical connections.

Merrill Ott said people ask where they can ride around here. There is a huge confusion for people outside of the area. It would be nice to create a document so riders are more informed and have access. Better behavior and higher appreciation from the riders. Loop routes with connectivity could solve these issues. Commissioner Mike Blankenship said what Gary Neilsen is asking for is the only vehicle that's not allowed on that road to be allowed. (ATV's) Scott Neilsen discussed Sheep creek as a good place to put ATV's. The forest service determined that something else needed to be done. Gary Neilsen discussed Vulcan Mountain road and the connectivity possibilities with 10 miles. Gary Neilsen discussed the South Huckleberry Trail. There is 100 or so miles in all on the proposed routes. Merrill Ott said that so much depends on the analysis which is a USFS issue.

Gary Neilsen discussed SHT, the opened trails and the proposed possibilities. This is currently opened to all vehicles including ATV's the additions were proposed on the map. Mike Petersen said you would eventually like to have a loop. Gary Neilsen said that it sure would be nice. Scott Neilsen asked what was open and what is asked to be open? Josh White discussed the possibility of the connector. Kurtis Vaagen said a concern is the private property. I agree with the proposed route. There aren't adequate turn arounds. Merrill Ott asked why are some of these roads closed to ATV's?

Josh White said it has to do with the definition of highway legal vehicles. The agency has determined that a highway legal vehicle is one that travels on the highway. Mike Paulson asked how objective is it. Merrill Ott said region 6 and region 1 are vastly different. Almost all roads open on region 1 and not at all on the other.

Craig Newman said it's subjective and the analysis is just that. The decision is the Line Officer/District Rangers. Josh White said if there are concerns we can come back and discuss signage and options. The likelihood of risks was also discussed. Gary Neilsen discussed the Owl Mountain Trail and showed the connector they are proposing which include some side roads and hunting access. Gary Neilsen discussed the Bodie Mountain to Empire Lake region and asking for the proposed additions. Commissioner Mike Blankenship discussed the connector by Lundimo that we are working on to connect Republic and Curlew.

Gary Neilsen discussed the Thompson Ridge Trail and the proposed additions. He also discussed the Swan Lake region with proposed additions to open areas. Merrill Ott discussed the options to connect in this area to connect to Wenatchee/Okanogan. Gary Neilsen asked everyone to fill out a support form. Kurtis Vaagen asked if they could circle areas that may be a problem. Merrill Ott brought out maps to have people circle areas of concern. Gary Neilsen said please provide any concerns in the comment section of the form.

Matt Scott thanked the presenters for their approach to presenting this road by road. Kevin Arneson asked for it in digital format and for the time to respond. Kurtis Vaagen asked for it in digital format as well. Commissioner Steve Parker said that this addressed an area of concern with a concise presentation. Research still needs to happen. We wouldn't want to finalize anything until we come back together. Merrill Ott said that he will get out all the maps and an expanded comment page. Mike Petersen said he was perplexed by region 6 with closures. It makes sense for the most part but he wants to research. Kurtis Vaagen said the population has a lot to do with it. Maurice Williamson said we need to consider the time requirements for compliance. Gloria Flora asked if the USFS would look at the history so we don't step on a minefield. Josh White said that Craig has been doing the research.

### **USFS update**

Josh White discussed the Orient watershed. It has been reviewed and potentially radically different as what has been seen. Comment period will be shortly. He discussed Bulldog scoping in the next couple months. Strategic shaded fuel breaks on the west side of the forest. There will be scoping in a couple of months regarding fire suppression. Is there a more environmentally friendly way to do that work?

Maurice Williamson said an omnibus bill was signed today. Commissioner Mike Blankenship asked where we are with the Republic Ranger position. Shane Robeson said maybe Monday morning we will know.

### **Forest Plan Revision update**

Josh White said the latest information we have is that we are in the same place we were a month or so ago.

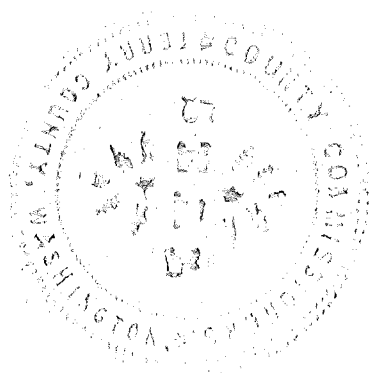
Commissioner Nathan Davis discussed changes with a new chief of the USFS. Vicky Christianson is the interim Chief.

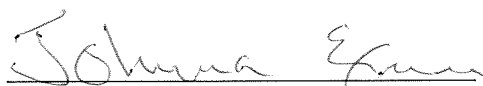
Maurice Williamson said that he thought it was permanent. Kurtis Vaagen said she knows stewardship and she is familiar with the area. Maurice Williamson said she is a good person for the job. Gloria Flora said she read it was a 6 month appointment. Josh White said that regarding the FPR, talking to Holly we are ready to implement our communication plan. Nancy Harshman discussed an email about 2 million taken out of the NOVA funds? Matt Scott said A to Z 2.0 in Chewelah area interest around ski hill/possible new project. Bill Way said A to Z is good to get involved in. A follow up conversation would be good. How decisions would be made?


Mike Petersen discussed A to Z project and how the governor is skeptical of collaborations. With collaborative groups, we have a say so with the forests. I hope our process here turns into a collaborative. Scott Neilsen said that we do collaborate. He has a concern on grazing on the front of LeClair. Is there any decision? Gary Neilsen asked what the status of SF mill A to Z? Josh White said that we are within days of accepting. It is references as Mill A to Z. Gary Neilsen said region 6 put out a report and asked if there were copies? Josh White said he could get that out. It came out a couple of months ago.


The next meeting is going to be April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

BOARD OF FERRY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FERRY COUNTY, WASHINGTON



  
CHAIRMAN, Johnna Exner

  
VICE CHAIRMAN, Nathan Davis

  
MEMBER, Mike Blankenship

ATTEST:

  
Clerk of the Board, Amanda Rowton  
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