

**Special Meeting of the Board of
County Commissioners
Tri County Forest Group
Friday July 19th, 2019 1:00 p.m.**

**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. Nathan Davis, Ferry County Commissioner
3. Johnna Exner, Ferry County Commissioner
4. Mike Blankenship, Ferry County Commissioner
5. Steve Kiss, Pend Oreille County Commissioner
6. Steve Parker, Stevens County Commissioner
7. Travis Fletcher, USFS
8. Stan Christie, TCMRA
9. Craig Newman, Colville National Forest
10. Kevin Arneson, Boise Cascade
11. Josh White, USFS
12. Mike Petersen, Lands Council
13. Jennifer Knutson, Colville National Forest
14. Scott Nielsen, CPOW
15. Andrew Engell, CMR
16. Kurtis Vaagen, Vaagen Brothers Lumber

Call to Order

Commissioner Mike Blankenship opened the meeting at 1:05 p.m. The attendees introduced themselves.

Land Management Plan

Commissioner Blankenship discussed the grazing and wilderness. Travis Fletcher received instructions from Allan Rowley. All of the objectors should have received the letter. The uses are consistent with wilderness. The characteristics were discussed. The language Tri County came up with included some grazing. Anytime you start building a list, there will be something missing. Eric said that it would be cleaner if we didn't include that extra language. May authorize or may not authorize are the two columns in recommended wilderness. The actual language the group crafted was more restrictive than the current wilderness. Travis Fletcher discussed the changes in the plan. Mike Petersen discussed wanting the certainty of the language. He still thinks it is important to keep it for protection of the certainty. He is concerned about a possible staff change that would impact the rights to use the land. Mike Blankenship said that someone who is unreasonable won't look at this information the same way.

Josh White asked if there was a way to define or codify the way it is. Is there a way to without further restricting wilderness to outline a clearly identify with permitting grazing. Travis Fletcher said there are few absolute. It is with intent and design to be a little squishy. It is not an absolute. Craig Newman said perhaps an asterisk to further define what authorized grazing would be. Travis Fletcher gave an example of how it was worded. Mike Petersen said that the letter that Tri County

sent really says a lot. It keeps us engaged and working together. Travis Fletcher agreed with Mike Petersen and thinks it is the next step. Josh White said there was support for the letter on July 8th, 2019. Definitely supportive of the back country motorized.

Scott Neilsen said the one thing is that the ranchers are not ok with wilderness. He does not trust the language. If there was examples of where it could be workable it would be better. Even recommended wilderness is a threat and no rancher is ok with it. We want to protect those characteristics. Josh White asked how we could craft language that gives more certainty. Mike Blankenship said that some of the wilderness overlays do not have grazing allotments. Steve Parker said we have the right group to do this. We have all the right people represented so that we can cover all of these things. Maybe take the "may" out of the words and say the language will be approved if the... and not approved if the... He does not see a downside and looking forward to a plan we can discuss. When is the close?

Travis Fletcher said September is the plan. Josh White said we already have a barrier removed by having this plan. Travis Fletcher said congressional grazing guidelines defined what was ok and they kept it. We do have a history where the agency was going above and beyond the law. Scott Neilsen said Jim Caruso does not understand what Travis is talking about but it is comforting to hear Travis talk about it.

Mike Petersen said this conversation has him thinking that there is 50% grazing that has been lost. He is going to do some research and report it at the next meeting in August. Scott Neilsen said that our area is unique. The landscape is not like others. I bet a lot of places are vast and open with natural barriers. Montana has wolves that stay in the timber and they don't have the same problems. We have timber throughout the grazing allotments. Travis Fletcher said that we are unique and we have areas that have evolved. We got the instructions. We are either going to incorporate or we can explain why not to incorporate. July 26th, 2019 it needs to be complete. It is moving along fast. Scott Neilsen asked if they could talk about the letter.

Josh White said that Rodney Smolden shared with him that there is support for the letter. Josh recommended looking at those sentences. Travis Fletcher said that it is likely that it will be in the plan.

Steve Parker asked to hear from industry. Kevin Arneson came to listen.

Kurtis Vaagen said regarding the restrictions on wilderness, the language is confusing. He would like to work through it. He is aware the cattlemen are hard to win over but suggested some give and take. Leadership will change and Vaagen's supports wilderness.

Travis Fletcher said the timeline final impact statement is August 23rd, 2019. There are a lot of approvals from the Washington office and final reprint and the EIS. He is not sure if the EIS will be printed or the addendum will reprint in September. They are planning on signing the record of decision September 2019.

USFS Personnel Changes

Mike Blankenship asked for an update from the Forest Service on the personnel changes.

Jennifer Knutsen replaced Franklin Pemberton. She said this job renewed her love to work with the community. Josh White said that Holly Hutchinson is leaving the USFS. Lisa Larsen is replacing her at this time. Brendalynn Dugger will be filling in the 120 days for the admin and budget position. They are working to finalize our fiscal 2020 budget. There is a 20 year plan to go through all the areas in the forest. They will work on one area in the west zone and one area in the east. The 20 year plan is the forever plan because it repeats itself. Josh White said the motor vehicle use map is working through proposals made by the motorized community. Draft plans may be an addendum. Craig Newman said that they will release an addendum listing the roads that are available to ride that is open to all vehicles. It will probably be an addendum on the website or a printed map for 2020.

Travis Fletcher said they had to do a NEPA like process. Stan Christie asked if they were going to put the addendums in all of the kiosks. Travis Fletcher said there will be stickers and we can work together to get some in to your hands. Craig Newman said that TEDD took the Chewelah A-Z project under its wing to plan for tourism. Jennifer Knutsen discussed the RAC dollars. She said that they don't have a quorum yet but are working towards increasing the 4 people they currently have to 12 people. They are looking for specific positions. Mike Blankenship is on as an area school official and that appointment expires in 2020. Jennifer said she would bring the list on Monday.

USFS Projects update

Travis Fletcher said 5 and 6 years of growing have improved the tree growth. Josh White said they are working on Sherman. This will be a timber sale. They are working on Orient Water shed. The following spring Deadman ridge will be sold. Bulldog project will have draft EA next spring. Mill Creek A-Z is ramping up. They will be closing that contract 2023. South Fork of Boulder objection period stated Wednesday July 17th and goes for 45 days. Discussion was held on the USFS update on projects.


General Discussion

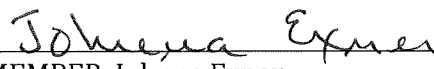
Mike Petersen discussed more receipts going to the county and has been working with Montana where the trail could go through Republic and a town in Montana instead the middle of nowhere. Kevin Arneson thanked the commissioners for forming this group. Mike Blankenship said we have hope if we can keep our people engaged. He wants to work on this wilderness with the other commissioners and Mike Petersen and Scott Nielson. Steve Parker made an observation on Yellowstone that said this forest was built in 1992 & 1982 and you could see that it needed to be cut. It helped him appreciate what we are doing here. Wood straw is good for erosion control. Travis Fletcher said that the USFS used wood straw for stabilization. Steve Parker said it would be a good start up for a side business. Kurtis Vaagen said that he has seen it and it comes in bales like hay. It is like a shaving.

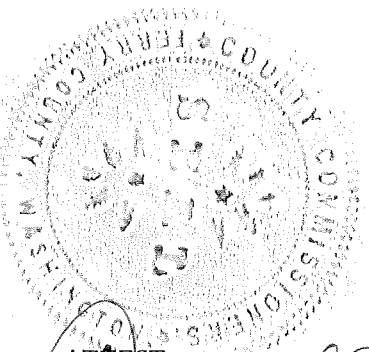
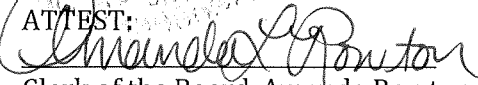
The meeting was adjourned at 3:00p.m. August 16th, 2019 at 1:00 pm is the next Tri County Forest Group meeting.

BOARD OF FERRY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FERRY COUNTY, WASHINGTON


CHAIRMAN, Mike Blankenship


VICE CHAIRMAN, Nathan Davis


MEMBER, Johnna Exner


ATTEST:

Clerk of the Board, Amanda Rowton