



1
2 **Washington Community Forestry Council Meeting**
3 **November 1, 2023**
4 **Conference Call- Zoom**
5

6 **Members Attending:** Ben Thompson, Jess Stone, Semra Riddle, Stephen Baker, Jessi Bloom, Zandria
7 Michaud, Lynn Suksdorf, Ian Gray, Tim Kohlhauff, Megan Dunn, Juli Hartwig, Joanna Martin, John
8 Bornsworth, David Bayard, Margaret Broast, John Bornsworth, Kathleen Wolf

9 **Members Absent:** Solay, David, John, Julie, Jesse, Kathy, Stephen

10 **Guests:** Rachel Santa Olalla (DNR), Scott Chambers (DNR), Andy Tate (DNR), Alyssa Chen (USFS), Isabel
11 Mosley (USFS), Michael Liang (DNR), Julia Kast (DNR)

12 **Meeting Convened:** 10:35 a.m.

13 **Welcome:** Call to order. Roll was taken. Chair welcomed members and guests, new members and
14 participants introduced themselves. Members shared if they are staying on the council for the following
15 year.

16 **Agenda Approved:** Motion to approve agenda. Jess Stone moved and Ian Gray seconded motion.
17 Unanimous approval.

18 **Meeting Minutes were voted on to be reviewed at the break**

19 **Introduction to new DNR UCF staff** Scott Chambers (Financial Assistance Planner).

20 **Stephen Baker USFS introduces new hires** Alyssa Chen, Program Specialist, and Isabel Mosley, Resource
21 Assistance

22 **Federal, Legislative and Budget Updates - Stephen Baker USFS**

23 There is no budget for the 2024 fiscal year as of October 2023 due to congressional dysfunctions. They
24 are on a 45-day resolution until December 17. The options are to receive a budget, another resolution,
25 or a government shutdown.

26 There is strong bi-partisan support for Urban & Community Forestry. The House of Representatives
27 marked 40 million for Urban & Community Forestry Program.

28 IRA Funding provides stable funding for the next 10 years until 2031 so long as there are no government
29 shutdowns, the USFS Urban & Community Forestry Program will be able to continue distributing these
30 funds. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is also providing funding for 5 years.

31 As previously shared, last year State agencies could apply for IRA funding, where there was 250 million
32 available for states to put towards establishing or expanding Urban & Community Forestry programs.

33 Nationally there was a large NOFO in the spring that closed in June 2023 and awards were announced in

1 September. This NOFO garnered 841 qualifying submissions, requesting 6.4 billion in requested funding.
2 The agency announced 1.13 billion in funding across 385 awards to partner organizations and those in
3 direct contract with USFS. 15 of those awards were granted to organizations in Washington, on top of
4 what DNR received, for a total of 36 million being awarded to Washington.

5 While there has been a large amount of funding through the IRA, the State Agencies remain a critical
6 role in supporting Urban Forestry work. USFS is encouraging all applicants to find their place within the
7 enthusiasm and funding for forestry work in the Pacific Northwest. Stephen thanks WCFC, DNR and Ben
8 Thompson for all their support and enthusiasm in this work.

9 Ben asks what the comparison is to the \$40 million budget. Stephen shares that over the last 5 years
10 there has been a steady up-tick in budgets for Urban & Community Forestry funding.

11 Semra shares that often in the past, funding like this was often moved away from UCF for Wildfire
12 needs. It's an amazing change to see how UCF and Wildfire funding has become increasingly separate
13 over the last 10 years.

14 Stephen shares that the approach is to display the need for, and use of, UCF funding to continue
15 advocating for the allocation of funds.

16 Lynn draws the similarity between congressional responses for wildlife funding and UCF funding. When
17 wildfires occur, people lose their homes and jobs, and the funding response is economic. Likewise, as
18 data shows, UCF projects lower economics costs for healthcare and the like.

19 Kathleen Wolf mentions the importance of research to share the understanding of Urban and
20 Community Forestry benefits communities that is unknown without research. Perhaps in subsequent
21 funding cycles there can be an approach that funds research in nature-based solutions to develop
22 evaluation protocols.

23 **8 Minute Break for council (reconvene at 11:20am)**

24 **Meeting Minutes were voted on at 11:25 and approved.**

25 Lynn Suksdorf asks about meeting minutes being taken as notes or if there is a need for them to be in
26 complete sentences. Note taking is fine, but if the council thinks the meeting minutes need to be in full
27 sentences and grammatically correct, then council members are welcome to request that. Andy adds
28 that the minutes need to be clear with correct information. Ben adds that larger context does not need
29 to be defined.

30 **UCF Program Update (11:27)**

31 **Ben provides a 2024 Community Forestry Assistance Grant update**

32 He asks that the Council members share about the grants within their networks. He shares the location
33 of the Grant RFA on the website and explains the amended schedule of procurement activities. There is
34 a Pre-Application Conference for potential applicants to attend, ideally after reading the RFA, to ask
35 questions. Applicants will have a chance to ask questions after they have thought about what they want
36 to apply for and how they will package it in the application form provided.

37 The UCF Program hosted [3 webinars](#) to explain what the DNR has funded in the past, what will be
38 funded in this cycle, general grant application information, and how to go through the application and
39 the RFA to share the most important information. All 3 of these webinars are posted to the website.

1 Grants are due January 8. There are three periods of performance tied to different blocks of funding. If
2 applying for:
3 \$10,000 - \$49,999 the project must be completed by June 1, 2025 (almost exclusively state funding)
4 \$50,000 - \$199,999 June 1, 2026 (mostly federal funding)
5 \$200,000 – \$350,000 June 1, 2027 (mostly federal funding)

6 Projects that take several years may need additional time to account for project changes within those
7 years. If there isn't enough demand for the state funds through the grant period, there is a plan for that.
8 There is less pressure to administer the federal funding because the timeline is longer.
9 Matching funds are not required, but applicants can convey that matching funds exist to thoroughly
10 explain their project.
11 Applicants may apply for a phase of a project as long as they show the deliverable at the end of that
12 phase.

13 **Ben goes on to discuss the maps relative to the grant cycle.**

14 Applicants are asked to enter their [Tree Equity Score](#) on the front page of the application. The score
15 does not affect their application review and is intended to spread awareness of the Tree Equity Score in
16 support of DNR's partnership with American Forests.

17 The [Climate and Economic Justice Tool](#) is being used to identify areas in Washington with the greatest
18 health disparities. Most of Washington's communities are in these gray areas, and 5 of the 7 million in
19 funding available can only be spent in these gray areas.

20
21 The frustration with this map is that some census tracts in the community are in the gray while other
22 census tracts in the community are not in gray. This makes it difficult to run projects like city-wide
23 inventory mapping with the USFS funding. Ben has been offering to applicants to use the [Washington](#)
24 [Health Disparities Map](#) in addition to the Tree Equity Score. Each map uses census tract data, but they all
25 have different inputs and thus different outputs. If an applicant were able to use the three maps to
26 show how their community is partially covered by each one, they could make a case for the proposal
27 being a full city-wide environmental justice project. This would be a case-by-case scenario and would
28 require USFS approval.

29 Excess funding that is not accounted for through the grant cycle, should that occur, will go to program
30 improvements that the program believes will help constituents, and to direct investments as depicted in
31 the [UCF Prioritization Tool](#).

32 Due to the confusion of all the variables in this grant cycle around maps and funding sources, applicants
33 are encouraged to apply for the project they want to complete, and the UCF program will decide what
34 funds to use when reviewing applications.

35 Federally recognized tribes are eligible applicants and are considered highly impacted and
36 disadvantaged communities. As Kathleen mentions, there has not been as much engagement or
37 awareness of this grant cycle to tribes. Several attempts were made to contact DNR Tribal Liaisons since
38 RCW 76.15, but now with Michael Liang (DNR UCF Policy Advisor) changes are beginning.

39 **Break for council (lunch- reconvene at 12:30 pm)**

1 **Semra shares the “Composition of the Council” Articles Document for Council’s review.**

2 Article 1 -

3 Lynn asks about updating the Council’s name. The Council is not specifically named in the RCW. Ben
4 shares that the final decision was that “Community Forestry” included urban areas, whereas “Urban
5 Forestry” is exclusive of more rural communities that have and rely on community forests more than
6 strictly urban forests. The concern with changing the name is that the council could get confused with
7 the UCF Program, and the UCF Program is named as it is to coincide with the USFS Urban and
8 Community Forestry Program name. Margaret Brost adds that changing a name has huge implications to
9 established program infrastructure for constituents and partners like websites, searches, and the like.

10 A line was added to the body of legislature: **“To advise the people of Washington the best ways to
11 preserve, expand and protect Washington’s community and urban forests.”**

12 “Policies and purpose related to community forestry”

13 Changed other verbiage based on what the Council has been doing: assisting with the strategic plan,
14 providing input to the statewide vision; and language was changed to “Enhancing the health of urban
15 forests” and “Increasing awareness of urban forests.”

16

17 After part C: “To provide leadership on urban and community forestry issues” and emphasizing
18 “educating on principles of environmental justice and environmental equity.”

19 Letter H was moved to B to become more prominent.

20 More mapping and imagery were added when adding the Strategic Plan and the Forest Action Plan.

21 These are accurate examples of what the Council has been providing input on.

22 Margaret mentions that changes to bylaws and things like this and recommends using general language
23 rather than specifics. The group did not feel that there was a risk in this concern.

24 Article 2 Section 2 was deleted. Ben shares that section 2 wasn’t entirely Council’s responsibility, but
25 that Council is welcome to participate in Section 2.

26 Article 3 – Recruitment has been a challenge with the process. There was language added to include an
27 equitable and diverse council. There is a nomination committee made of council members to assist with
28 the recruitment process.

29 Semra and Ben review the councilmember commitments with attending meetings as the minimal
30 commitment. Beyond that, the hope is that councilmembers will take messages from the program into
31 their networks but is not enforced.

32 Reducing the number of seats filled to do business from 15 to 13 is a proposed change.

33 **5 Minute Break for council (reconvene at 1:30 pm)**

34 **Julia provides updates on the Evergreen Communities Recognition Program**

35 The Evergreen Communities Steering Committee has met twice, and has another meeting planned for
36 December. There is a draft application out for the Steering Committee’s review, the logo is being
37 developed, and the program will be pilot tested soon. The goal is to have a formal roll out of the

1 program by fall 2024 with recognition materials. The draft application will be in Smartsheet or
2 something similar.

3 The council suggests the Evergreen Communities sign ought to include the DNR and WCFC logos to
4 reference the umbrella organizations. The logo doesn't give a sense of location in Washington. The sign
5 should remain simple while conveying it's a Washington program sponsored by DNR and WCFC.

6

7 **The Council does a round-robin to gauge potential interest in new Council seats**

8 Jess Stone is nominated for Chair

9 Ian is nominated for Vice Chair

10 **2023 WCFC Meeting Dates**

11 February 8, 2023 – annual meeting (Completed)

12 April 18, 2023 – (Completed)

13 June 7, 2023 – (Completed)

14 September 13, 2023 - (Completed)

15 November 1, 2023 - (Completed)

16 **Next Meeting:** February 7, 2024. Via Zoom.

17 **Meeting schedule for 2024:**

18 February 7

19 April 24 (to avoid spring break scheduling issues)

20 June 12 (in-person, location tbd)

21 September 11

22 November 13

23

24 Juli and Semra share their final thoughts during their last meeting. They love this work, this council, and
25 are going to miss the group.

26

27 **Adjourn: 2:04 PM**

28

1 **Meeting Chat:**
2 Lynn Suksdorf, PhD 10:36 AM
3 Semra, thank you so very much for your leadership, diligence, and great work. You will be missed.
4 Messages addressed to "Meeting Group Chat" will also appear in the meeting group chat in Team Chat
5 Michael Liang, DNR joined as a guest
6 Ian Gray - Municipal Forestry representative joined as a guest
7 BayardD joined as a guest
8
9 Megan Dunn, Snohomish County Council 10:40 AM
10 https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/rp_urban_forestry_wcfc_roster.pdf
11
12 Ben Thomspson - UCF Program Manager to You (Direct Message) 10:41 AM
13 Please make sure you distinguish who is a WCFC member and who is a guest. You, Scott, Andy, Michal
14 Liang, , Alyssa, and Isabel are guests. Everyone else is a WCFC member.
15
16 You to Ben Thomspson - UCF Program Manager (Direct Message) 10:42 AM
17 Okay, thank you
18
19 Tim Kohlhauff 10:43 AM
20 Thank you Semra, Julie, and (maybe) Jessi!
21 Zach Mellema-DNR joined as a guest
22
23 Lynn Suksdorf, PhD 10:44 AM
24 Megan, just FYI, I am not listed on the roster you sent the link for. It appears to be out of date.
25
26 Megan Dunn, Snohomish County Council 10:46 AM
27 I grabbed the roster from this DNR page, sounds like it needs to be updated:
28 <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/about/boards-and-councils/washington-community-forestry-council>
29
30 Ben Thomspson - UCF Program Manager 10:55 AM
31 In total, more than 42 million in IRA funds were awarded to applicants from Washington State
32 John Bornsworth (Peninsula Environmental) joined as a guest
33 Kathleen Wolf joined as a guest
34
35 Stephen Baker (USFS R6/10) 11:06 AM
36 UCF IRA Awards: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests/ucf/2023-grant-funding>
37
38 Lynn Suksdorf, PhD 11:08 AM
39 Well said, Kathy.
40 Zach Mellema-DNR left
41
42 Ben Thomspson - UCF Program Manager 11:26 AM
43 <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/urbanforestry/#grants>
44 Julia Kast (Washington State DNR) joined as a guest
45
46 You 11:50 AM
47 It is on page 8
48
49 You 11:51 AM
50 Page 8 of the RFA. Here is the link as well: <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5>
51

1 David Bayard, SCL (He/His) 11:57 AM
2 Tree Equity, Env. Health Disparities, Climate and Env. Justice Screening Tool links are on Pg 22 of the RFA
3 Isabel Mosley left
4 Scott Chambers-WA DNR Urban and Community Forestry left
5 Megan Dunn, Snohomish County Council left
6
7 Stephen Baker (USFS R6/10) 12:05 PM
8 I'm sorry but I'll have to leave early. Portland schools are closed because of a teacher strike and I'm
9 juggling kiddo duty. Take care!!
10 Stephen Baker (USFS R6/10) left
11 Michael Liang, DNR left
12 Alyssa Chen left
13 Zandria Michaud left
14 Zandria Michaud joined as a guest
15 Kathleen Wolf left
16 Zandria Michaud left
17 Zandria Michaud joined as a guest
18 Megan Dunn joined as a guest
19 Kathleen Wolf (she/her) joined as a guest
20 Michael Liang, DNR joined as a guest
21
22 Andy Tate 12:38 PM
23 RCW 76.15.020: (3) The department may appoint a committee or council to advise the department in
24 establishing and carrying out a program in urban and community forestry.
25
26 Lynn Suksdorf, PhD 12:46 PM
27 Thank you, Margaret and Semra. The difference between c ommunity and C ommunity.
28 Zach Mellema-DNR joined as a guest
29
30 Andy Tate 12:50 PM
31 It's also duplicative of item G above.
32 Scott Chambers-WA DNR Urban and Community Forestry joined as a guest
33 Jessi Bloom left
34 Jessi Bloom joined as a guest
35 Daria Gosztyla joined as a guest
36 Michael Liang, DNR left
37
38 Lynn Suksdorf, PhD 1:01 PM
39 If allowances for missing a meeting is clarified later in the document, Section 6 should be fine.
40
41 Kathleen Wolf (she/her) 1:01 PM
42 Section 6 is about meeting attendance AND committee service. Shouldn't the service be a separate
43 Section? And to include voluntary acceptance, rather than elected or appointed without acceptance of
44 the responsibility?
45
46 Lynn Suksdorf, PhD 1:03 PM
47 My error for not being more clear. I was referring to the discussion of Article III, section 6.
48
49 Tim Kohlhauff 1:04 PM
50 Here is the newest language, "When recruiting new council members, the agency shall seek candidates
51 who represent the diversity of communities across Washington State. The agency shall also seek

1 candidates from overburdened communities that have been disproportionately harmed by
2 environmental harms and risks."
3
4 Ben Thomspson - UCF Program Manager 1:04 PM
5 Section 1. The Council shall be composed of not less than thirteen (13) and not more than twenty-one
6 (21) members. In recruiting and nominating prospective members for appointment to the Council by the
7 Commissioner of Public Lands, the Council shall seek diverse, statewide representation. When recruiting
8 new council members, the agency shall seek candidates who represent the diversity of communities
9 across Washington State. The agency shall also seek candidates from overburdened communities that
10 have been disproportionately harmed by environmental harms and risks.
11
12 Lynn Suksdorf, PhD 1:08 PM
13 Margaret, "best practice" from who's (person, agency, entity, etc.) perspective?
14
15 Lynn Suksdorf, PhD 1:09 PM
16 Just curious.
17
18 Margaret Brost, Certified Forest Therapy Guide 1:14 PM
19 Mostly from us lawyer types who have experience with endless revising. It costs a lot of money to do so.
20
21 Andy Tate 1:15 PM
22 Ben - did Stefan review this against RCW 42.30 to ensure it's compliant with the open meetings act?
23
24 Kathleen Wolf (she/her) 1:20 PM
25 While discussing membership. Perhaps U of W could be expanded, simply U of WA. There are other
26 departments now at UW that are aligned with urban greening, and may be more interested in some of
27 the underserved issues the current grant programs are addressing.
28
29 Ben Thomspson - UCF Program Manager to You (Direct Message) 1:27 PM
30 You're probably already knowing this, but I am going to need your help incorporating the council's
31 feedback on this. Semra too.
32
33 You to Ben Thomspson - UCF Program Manager (Direct Message) 1:27 PM
34 Why aren't these meetings recorded? This is a lot of stuff to keep up with 😊
35
36 Kathleen Wolf (she/her) 1:36 PM
37 In my experience with logos, consider visibility. It shouldn't fade out due to less contrast. Consider
38 looking at this from a distance, if I understand that this will be posted in communities.
39
40 Kathleen Wolf (she/her) 1:37 PM
41 I even have a vest. We once did a group order of clothing.
42 Zandria Michaud left
43
44 You 1:39 PM
45 Ben you sent it to me, not the group :)
46 Margaret Brost, Certified Forest Therapy Guide left
47
48 David Bayard, SCL (He/His) 1:47 PM
49 I need to jump to prep for the next meeting, sorry to bail early. Thanks for good updates and important
50 process work, all!
51 David Bayard, SCL (He/His) left

- 1 Daria Gosztyla left
- 2 Scott Chambers-WA DNR Urban and Community Forestry left
- 3
- 4 Andy Tate 1:50 PM
- 5 The big thing we need to work around is conflicts with the Forest Health Advisory Committee.
- 6
- 7 Lynn Suksdorf, PhD 1:50 PM
- 8 I appreciated the in-person meeting this year and would like to see that continue at least once each
- 9 year.
- 10 Zach Mellema-DNR left