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2 **Washington Community Forestry Council Meeting**
3 **February 17, 2017**
4 **Natural Resources Building, Olympia, WA**
5

6 **Members attending:** Sheila Gray, Chair; Haley Galbraith, Terry Flatley, Juli Hartwig, Jheri Ketchum,
7 Linden Lampman, Kirsten Lints (9:30), Joe Scorcio, Lisa Ciecko, Angel Spell (11:00).

8 **Members absent:** Ken Armstrong, Paula Dinius, Daniel Layton, Kathy Sheehan, Cindy Deffe, Kathy Wolf,
9 David Miller, Peter Dervin

10 **Guests:** Ben Thompson, Micki McNaughton, Garth Davis, Chuck Hersey, Hilary Franz, Joe Smillie, Cori
11 Simmons, Bob Johnson, Gerry Day, Sarah Foster

12 **Meeting Convened:** 9:10 a.m.

13 **Welcome:** Chair, Sheila Gray welcomed members. Members introduced themselves around the table.

14 **Minutes and Agenda Approval:** Postponed due to lack of quorum.

15 **Welcome: Bob Johnson outlined his responsibilities at DNR and thanked the council for their work.**

16 Chuck Hersey, Acting Assistant Division Manager for Forest Health and Urban Forestry, welcomed
17 members. He described his background and related his understanding of urban forestry. Chuck
18 mentioned that a request for proposal for landscape scale restoration grants is currently open, though
19 March 10. Although funding has not been finalized, an urban forestry landscape scale project was
20 recommended for funding during the last round of grants. The proposal is to align iTree Hydro with the
21 hydrology of the Pacific Northwest to effectively quantify hydrological benefits of urban trees. Chuck
22 also recognized the value of the Urban Forestry Restoration Project. He emphasized that in the future,
23 project partners should be expected to provide greater financial contributions (project match) to the
24 program to ensure long-term sustainability.

25 **DNR UCF staff update:** Sixteen proposals were received for grants this year; twelve Community Forestry
26 Assistance Grant, requesting a total of \$174,492.00 and four TCUSA Tree Planting and Maintenance
27 Grants, requesting a total of \$38,300.00. The grant review committee, Linden Lampman, Ben
28 Thompson, Garth Davis, Kirsten Lints and Angel Spell, reviewed all grant proposals and recommended
29 eight projects for funding; six Community Forestry Assistance proposals, from the Cities of Bremerton,
30 Colville, Sammamish, Pasco, the Town of Coulee Dam and Tacoma Housing Authority, (total \$74,500.00),
31 and two TCUSA Tree Planting and Maintenance Grant proposals from the Cities of Spokane and Ritzville,
32 (total \$18,500).

33 Linden discussed Grants and thanked councilors who reviewed proposals this year. Joe asked how many
34 total funds were available. Linden said approximately \$120,000 was available for grants this year.

1 Joe inquired what is to be done with the balance of funds. Linden posed the question to the council. Joe
2 pointed out that maintenance Departments may not have the capacity of know to apply for
3 maintenance grants. Terry pointed out that the grants were somewhat of a surprise and expect more
4 applicants next year. Joe mentioned that not all budgets are approved in December when applications
5 are due.

6 **Hilary Franz, Commissioner of Public Lands:** Hilary introduced herself and asked council members to do
7 the same. She inspired the council with personal stories of her connections with urban forestry,
8 including, as a city council member, assisting to develop a tree ordinance for the City of Bainbridge, and
9 working with a previous employer, Futurewise, to develop the first equity atlas for the Cities of Seattle
10 and SeaTac. She supports the work of urban forestry in cities and towns especially to help focus on
11 social equity issues in Washington communities, including access to parks and green space. Hilary asked
12 whether canopy data was available statewide to support that effort. While DNR does have aerial canopy
13 data, it is limited in scope and is not specific to urban forestry analysis. UCF staff are aware of only
14 scattered canopy analysis projects within urban areas, many accomplished through UCF Assistance
15 Grants. Currently there is not a unified body of data that can be drawn upon to tease out urban canopy
16 information. UCF recently had a collection of tree data, acquired through its inventory grant program,
17 analyzed for ecosystem service attributes which staff will send to Hilary's attention. In addition to the
18 Inventory report, Hilary requested a copy of the forest action plan.

19 Council comments and feedback: Sarah Foster reported on the success of the short-lived Evergreen
20 Community Act (ECA) and the Task Force, chaired by Joe Scorcio. Joe emphasized the need to
21 reinvigorate the momentum of the ECA, and suggested a good place to start would be to develop an
22 Evergreen Communities Award. It would raise awareness of the UCF program and the benefits of trees
23 to cities. The Department of Commerce was originally tasked to develop the program, but DNR UCF is
24 the logical program to jump start the program.

25 Hilary agreed that there are pressing issues that need to be addressed in Washington communities
26 including social equity, canopy loss as a result of rapid urbanization that equates to increased
27 stormwater and reduced water and air quality. Hilary requested a list of cities with high populations of
28 low-income/people of color, with stormwater issues, under the national average for tree canopy, and
29 that are rapidly urbanizing.

30 Hilary is interested in employing veterans and youth. She asked the Council, "How do we leverage
31 dollars to achieve that goal, especially in urban and fire-affected communities?" Micki spoke about UFRP
32 and the accomplishments of the program. Hilary mentioned her connections to foundations that are
33 interested in this type of work. Also talked about her work with non-profits as a means to raise
34 awareness for this work at the state level. Hilary requested additional information and success stories
35 about UFRP.

36 In closing, Hilary asked the council to focus on drilling down to core, actionable items that she can work
37 with and bring to foundations, NPOs and the legislature.

38 Council members agreed that the program should look closely to develop external partnerships with
39 other agencies, non-profits, and foundations for support to achieve shared goals.

1 Hilary thanked the council for their time, advocacy and advice. She assured members that she will
2 continue to be an advocate of urban forestry.

3 **Council discussion:** Council members discussed how best to leverage Hilary's support, and agreed that it
4 is important to communicate program successes, opportunities, and challenges. The suggestion was
5 made to invite Hilary to additional meetings, and to look at other opportunities to meet her where she
6 is; example, she will be in Yakima for Arbor Day this year.

7 Since federal funding reductions may be on the horizon, it is also important to determine programmatic
8 priorities and then work to engage legislation and foundations in support of the program.

9 **Minutes approved:** With a quorum now present, Sheila asked for a motion to approve minutes from the
10 October meeting. Haley, so moved. Joe, second. Passed unanimously.

11 **Council elections:** Sheila called for an announcement of the roster for council elections. Lisa Ciecko, is
12 nominated for Council chair, Kirsten Lints, for Council Co-Chair. Terry Flatley made a motion to approve
13 the slate of candidates, second, Joe. Motion passed unanimously. Linden thanked Sheila for her
14 leadership over the past two years. Lisa assumed the role of meeting chair.

15 **Gerry Day, Acting Deputy Supervisor for Wildfire and Washington State Forester** Gerry introduced
16 himself as the interim state forester through fire season this year. Gerry asked council members to
17 introduce themselves around the table. During the time he is working in his position, he is supporting
18 the Commissioner in relation to fire and budgetary matters, renewing relationships with local fire
19 managers in support of their role as first responders, and succession planning for the new full time
20 forester. Gerry related his personal connections to trees with a story about a lesson in civics he learned
21 when in high school. The community moved to retain a tree slated for removal as a course of
22 development. But with community engagement, the tree was retained. He understands the value of
23 trees, the conflicts that can arise within urban forests and the necessity of planning and partnerships
24 that work to achieve shared goals.

25 Council members discussed ECA. The legislation is still on the books, is currently unfunded. There has
26 been no movement at the state level to reinvigorate the program. Reiterated the idea to start with a
27 recognition program to raise awareness of urban forestry programming.

28 Gerry thanked the council and reminded members that as an advisory board he welcomes two-way
29 conversation about issues important to the urban forestry program.

30 **Roundtable Reports:**

31 Jheri Ketchum, Yakima completed all requirements and will be recognized as a Tree City USA for the first
32 time this year. The Yakima Area Arboretum is planning its big Arbor Day event. This year's theme is 'Best
33 of Trees.' Hilary is expected to attend the ceremony.

34 Micki talked about the upcoming Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) training day at Bloedel Reserve

35 Sheila continues to work on the WSU on-line training program. Two retirements and one staff member
36 leaving the agency has slowed the committee's progress, however she expects that the training will be
37 offered to master gardener's and the public by summer.

1 Angel is anxiously awaiting the WSU on-line training program. She mentioned that Spokane Community
2 College is planning to offer anew UCF degree program. Organization and staffing changes in Spokane
3 have provided an opportunity for UCF to take on maintenance and management of natural areas in
4 addition to street trees. The neighborhood services program plans to give away free trees for residents
5 to plant on their properties this year.

6 Juli Hartwig, WA Department of Transportation, reported that she is working on a vegetation plan as
7 part of the state transportation asset management plan. The state is responsible to inventory and
8 monitor roadside vegetation on 100,000 acres, 30% of which are forested. The total vegetative resource
9 is valued at over ten-billion dollars. The plan will center on actions to preserve these important state
10 assets.

11 Joe Scorcio reported that from a planning perspective, there is concern that cities are losing ground on
12 the efficacy of Growth Management Act and State Environmental Planning Act regulations. Planners
13 continue to assess the situation. In SeaTac, a flight corridor safety study threatened the city with
14 significant canopy loss. After the city protested, only sixty trees will be removed or their height reduced
15 to accommodate air traffic. To offset the loss of assets, the Port was encouraged to create a Community
16 Ecology Fund.

17 Haley Galbraith reported that the PNW Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture recently
18 hired another part time position to assist the continuing education director. Micki McNaughton is
19 replacing Phil Bennett (who recently assumed the role of president-elect) as education director for the
20 chapter. The planning committee for the annual training conference, in Lynwood this year, recently
21 announced a call for presentations; due February 20.

22 Kirsten Lints reported that the Legislative Day for the combined WA State Nursery and Landscape
23 Association (WSNLA) and WA Association of Landscape Professionals (WALP) was cancelled due to
24 inclement weather. There are plans to reschedule. Ben Thompson is the invited speaker.

25 Terry Flatley reported that the City of Renton has had great success in hiring a consulting arborist to
26 inspect development projects with a landscape/tree component. Ann Thayer, a consultant with Davey
27 Tree Resources, has been the primary inspector working through the Community and Economic
28 Development Department on code compliance.

29 Garth Davis, Spokane Conservation District and Urban Forestry Technical Assistance in E. WA, reported
30 that the Tree City USA annual application process went smoothly this year. Recently, natural disasters
31 have driven his work plans; fires and storms.

32 Lisa Ciecko called council member's attention to the links listed at the bottom of the agenda which link
33 human health benefits to urban forestry.

34 **Staff report cont.** Ben Thompson reported that 90 cities in Washington are designated Tree City USA's
35 (TCUSA) this year. Garth and Micki assisted in the review process this year, but the process was
36 challenging in part due to revised Arbor Day Foundation interpretations of TCUSA requirements.
37 Changes made it necessary for several first year applicants to revise components within their ordinance
38 to meet standard two. As the number of TCUSA's increase, it is becoming more difficult to foster
39 personal relationships with communities. Several communities dropped out of the program this year.

1 Thanks to assistance from the Council, the name for this year’s seminar has been finalized, “Cultivating
2 Resilient Communities.” Ben is working on seminar content. Dates and locations will be announced in
3 the Tree Link newsletter.

4 Preparation is underway to visit several northwest and southwest communities.

5 Micki reported that the urban forestry restoration project is in full swing. All crews will be visiting the
6 Bloedel Reserve later in the week for an educational tour and service project. Last year the crews
7 cleared *four acres* of invasive plants from Reserve grounds. The Bloedel maintenance staff invited them
8 back for a second year in a row.

9 **USDA Forest Service Report:** Kathy Sheehan was unable to attend the meeting, but submitted the
10 following written report:

- 11 • Budget: For the current federal fiscal year, Congress has approved funding for roughly the first 7
12 months (through late April) for most federal agencies, including the Forest Service. However,
13 we don’t know what the total amount for the full year will be yet. This uncertainty also affects
14 our state forestry partners, especially for programs such as DNR’s Urban & Community Forestry
15 program, which is almost entirely supported with FS funding. So far, there are indications that
16 the UCF budget will be about the same as last year’s budget – and given the recent major
17 changes in Washington DC, that’s probably very good news.
- 18 • Storm Damage Response: The recent winter storms in the Pacific Northwest and the resulting
19 widespread damage to trees in many communities has restarted some previous conversations
20 among USFS UCF program managers about exploring possible options for “urban forest strike
21 teams” like those in the south and eastern US. These are joint state and USFS teams that help
22 communities include storm damage to trees in their emergency response plans, and who might
23 also travel to hard-hit communities to provide arboricultural expertise when needed.

24 **Report on NUCFAC 10-year Action Plan:** The National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council
25 (NUCFAC) guided the development of a ten-year action plan with assistance from the urban forestry
26 community. The plan seeks to expand awareness of the benefits of urban forests, including green
27 infrastructure. Angel explained that the 10-year action plan was completed last year and lists goals,
28 actions, and recommendations. She was on an advisory team as the plan was developed. WCFC Council
29 member Kathy Wolf was on the project team for the ten-year urban forestry action plan focus on
30 research needs. The US Forest Service and other federal agencies use the 10-year plan as a guide to
31 improve the status of urban and community forestry for the United States and its Territories. Alignment
32 with NUCFAC goals and strategies can help strengthen state urban forestry programs, while supporting
33 urban forestry at the national level.

34 Angel passed out copies of the Action Agenda Toolkit for council members to review.

35 **Council Plan of Work:** Lisa led the council in a discussion of next steps to follow this meeting. Council
36 members agreed that a letter thanking Hilary and offering advisory assistance would be a good follow-
37 up to the meeting. The council also had questions about DNR leadership transitions and how those
38 might affect the urban forestry program. As chair, Lisa volunteered to draft the letter.

- 1 It was also agreed that compiling a collection of success stories would be a good way to communicate
2 the importance of urban forestry program assistance that is provided in support of community partners
3 and others engaged in urban forestry.
- 4 Council also advised that there should be an assessment of the state program as it currently stands, to
5 determine and prioritize a list of issues that could be addressed, and to chart a course forward.
6 Outreach, legislative actions, technical/analytic assistance, and alternative financial resources are topics
7 to explore. Using existing guiding documents will help focus thoughts and efforts. Documents include
8 the NUCFAC plan, Policy and Operating Principles of the Sustainable Urban Forestry Coalition, and the
9 Washington State’s Forest Action Plan which contains the urban forestry strategic plan.
- 10 Angel, Jheri, and Lisa volunteered to begin the analysis before the meeting in June.
- 11 Motion: Council will send a letter to Commissioner of Public Lands, Hilary Franz, thanking her for taking
12 the time to meet council members, acknowledging her request for additional information and assuring
13 that the council is working to provide it to her. Motion Jheri; second Joe. Motion passed unanimously.
- 14 **Meeting Adjourned:** Lisa called to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned 3:30 p.m.
- 15 **Next meeting:** June 14, 2017, Evergreen Arboretum, Everett, WA