

Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Polly Dyer Seattle Chapter Meeting
12:00 PM, August 29, 2024, at
Barbara Phalen & Kay Sanderson's House
3425 SE 5th St, Renton, WA

Penelope Peterson called the meeting to order at 12:20 pm.

Members present were Penelope Peterson, Wendy Roedell, Barb Phalen, Kay Sanderson, Janka Hobbs, Joetta Fort, Dave Cook, Kate Bradley, Susan Kostick, and Barb Muirhead.

1. Speakers

Our speakers were **Ian Gray, Renton's Urban Forestry & Natural Resources Manager, and Gabriella Golzarian, Arborist**, who talked with us about the Urban Forestry program in Renton and the challenges they face. As Urban Foresters in Renton, they manage all the trees in public spaces, including trees in parks, in right-of-ways, and in wild areas, especially the riparian areas along the Cedar River. They also are available to prune community trees upon request, and they oversee adherence to the tree ordinances for private property. The Renton urban area has approximately 28,000 trees in public spaces. Here are some of the main points they covered:

- Renton suffers a lot of tree loss every year as roads are widened. Cities across all the states are losing canopy cover, which makes climate change effects worse.
- Their job is to advocate for large trees in particular. They estimate that Renton's trees contribute several million dollars' worth of benefit to the community, considering carbon sequestration, land stabilization, clean air, shade, and other benefits.
- Gabriella said that she feels like a farmer, and her crop is shade! People don't realize that trees provide a community service.
- Native trees are important, but what trees survive best in Renton may change as the climate changes. Some nonnative trees can become invasive or don't thrive.
- It's hard to plant new trees since Renton has a very small watering budget. Our summers are increasingly long and dry, and new trees don't live without watering. Sometimes their Forestry Department can get agreements with homeowners around watering, if someone wants to plant a tree in their parking strip, for instance. The owners need to agree to water the tree for at least 3 years.
- The ordinance that they have in Renton says that you can't remove a tree larger than 23 feet in diameter, no tree topping in city limits, and you must have a certain number of trees on your property. To help people comply with these requirements, Ian and Gabriella are trying to do more community education and outreach.
- One idea to move social change around trees is to take a photo of your favorite tree, post it on social media, and tell what you like about it. This personalizes the tree.
- Most trees in Renton are on private property, but Ian and Gabriella don't know much about the trees on private property.
- When there are violations of the code that they find out about, they can only go after the owners, not the contractors.
- The California Fivespined Beetle is attacking many of the pines in the area. The Emerald Ash Borer attacks ash trees and is coming up from Oregon. It's best to plant lots of different species of trees in an area, so that if one species is attacked by an insect the whole area isn't decimated.

2. Report and discussion of federal and regional forest issues (Penelope)

As you may know, the US Forest Service released the [National Old-Growth Amendment \(NOGA\)](#). Our Broads' National Office has issued a draft position statement, and each Broadband may submit its own comment letter, provided it fits within the position of our National Office.

- The National Great Old Broads (GOB) Office has made a statement in favor of Alternative 2. There was a lot of heated discussion about this position and about the Amendment in general. Penelope explained that if people want to submit comments about Amendment that differ from the GOB position, they must do so as an individual, and they should not say they are responding as a Great Old Broad.
- Penelope will send out guidelines to write comments on NOGA. She will also email the position statement of the GOB National Office. Comments on NOGA are due on September 20, 2024.

Also under consideration are amendments to the Northwest Forest Plan (NFP). At our July meeting, we heard from Mike Anderson, NFP Advisory Committee Member, about these amendments. The National Forest Service said that they will issue a response to the recommendations on August 30, 2024, but now say October. After that, a 90-day comment period will occur for public input. This links to the Northwest Forest Plan proposed amendments: https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r6/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fsbdev2_026990.

3. Report on progress to save the Sequoia on Green Lake

Nora was unable to be present but she sent the following report:

- **Advocacy to stop the removal of the Sequoia on Greenlake.** The neighbors have picked up this cause and are amazing. They have set up an email list specifically for this tree: trees4greenlake@gmail.com and are monitoring the SDCI website for updates. The development plans are still under review. Since the ordinance allows the removal of trees, unless the builder changes his mind, there's no legal way to save the tree.
- **Protecting the 1.5 acre forest next to Kingway Apartments.** Nothing is firm and the plans remain under review, i.e. the final permit hasn't been issued. Sandy and Seattle Tree Alliance are keeping up the pressure and last week blanketed the neighborhood with 1000 flyers in 4 languages to save the forest.

4. Report from the Lower Snake River Dams (LSRD) BRAT (Penelope)

- The LSRD BRAT proposes to host three National Broadwalks to increase attention to the dam removal issue. The Broadwalks would be on the Elwha, and the Klamath, where there have been successful dam removals and salmon are returning, and finally, on the Snake River itself, where we still need to breach the dams. The first would be at the Elwha this coming summer and is being organized by Penelope and Debra Ellers.
- The LSRD supported a new documentary movie, *The Snake and the Whale*, which is being released locally (location and dates to be determined). The plan is to have us Broads either dress like people removing the dam, wearing overalls and carrying shovels, or dress as orcas. We need to be thinking about our costumes.

5. Upcoming meetings

Thursday, September 26th, 10 am to 2 pm. Three-mile hike at Brightwater Center.

<https://www.wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/brightwater-center-king-county>

The Center's easy three miles of trails offer a chance to experience wildlife, wetlands, and woodlands that serve as a protected enclave for native plants and animals. Come enjoy the fall colors! Meet in the parking lot at 10 am. Bring your lunch and water.

October 14 through 17th—Broads' National Conference in Estes Park, CO. Penelope and I will be attending. There was some discussion as to whether others might attend.

TENTATIVE: Meeting either at Janka's house in Kirkland at noon on Thursday, October 10th or Thursday, October 22nd at 7 pm via Zoom—Broadband meeting and speaker TBA.

Thursday, November 7th at 7 pm via Zoom—Polly Dyer Seattle Broads' Book Club. We will be discussing, *Downriver: Into the Future of Water in the West*, by Heather Hansman.

Thursday, November 21st at noon at Penelope's house—Gratitude potluck to usher in the holiday season. This is tentative depending on how we feel about COVID spread and our busy schedules. We will "take everyone's temperature" as the date approaches.

Respectfully submitted, Wendy Roedell