

Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Polly Dyer Seattle Chapter Meeting Minutes

12:00 PM, November 16, 2023

Penelope Peterson's Home, 3514 E Conover Ct, Seattle, WA 98122

Members present were Penelope Peterson, Wendy Roedell, Cathy Gorrell, Kay Sanderson, Barbara Phalen, Susan Kostick, Esther MacIlroy, Marilyn Evans, Kate Bradley, Janka Hobbs, Margaret Rands, Genia Moncada, Nora Langan, Joetta Fort, Kendra Wanzenried, and Dave Cook.

1. Fun

We began with introductions, and we welcomed two new members. Then we shared our thoughts on gratitude. Each member mentioned the things for which she or he was grateful including being together in a community that supports protecting wilderness, loving hiking and the outdoors, appreciating trees and birds, and enjoying being with each other. Then we shared a delicious potluck lunch.

Penelope called the business meeting to order at 1:40 PM

2. Advocacy Issues

- a. Support and Protect urban forests.
Genia, Barb Muirhead, and Nora attended the Urban Forest Symposium at the University of Washington on November 2, 2023. Nora reported on some key events. It was an intense day with a combination of scientific information coupled with indigenous wisdom. Jeffrey Thomas spoke, and he noted that there is no tribal representation on the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Board. Therefore, native people have no say in how the forests are managed even though they are central to their tribal culture. Discussion then occurred at the conference about pathways that might result in better understanding between the two forms of knowledge—scientific and indigenous.
- b. Preserve Legacy Forests in Washington (Genia)
Genia reminded us that we are talking about very specific forest lands in Washington that we call “legacy forests.” We then discussed the advocacy statement (below) that was drafted by Janka and Genia. Dave Cook proposed revising the last sentence of the draft statement, as shown below. The original last sentence is crossed out, and the revised sentence is written in red. Our group then voted unanimously to replace the original last sentence with the proposed new sentences and adopt the following statement:

Polly Dyer Seattle Broads WA State Legacy Forest Advocacy Statement

We strongly support the preservation of forest stands with “old growth” and “legacy forest” characteristics. These are forest stands that retain the character of mature native forests. For those forests that have been logged, the tree cutting mostly occurred before the advent of modern power equipment—generally around 1945.

Legacy Forests are structurally complex, naturally regenerated, and exhibit genetic and biological diversity. These forest stands are not only refuge for bio-diverse organisms, they are exceptionally effective carbon sinks. They also promote groundwater recharge and regulation, are fire resistant, and help to moderate the climate.

Washington State manages 1.7 million acres of forest lands in Western Washington. Only about 77,000 acres of these are unprotected legacy stands. These forest stands are significantly more valuable standing than turned into board feet. We are not trying to stop logging in Washington State. ~~However, time is now for us to preserve our few remaining wild forests.~~ **Now is the time for us to preserve these 77,000 acres of remaining legacy forests.**

c. Other Discussion

Kate suggested that the state might use the carbon tax money to fund the schools instead of using timber sales from Legacy Forests. The carbon tax money is currently used to support alternate fuels, such as solar and wind. To pursue this idea, we first need to find out where in the state these decisions are made so we can be effective in our advocacy.

d. Next Steps

Genia shared a handout containing ideas from the Center for Responsible Forestry (CRF) website of different ways that we might be helpful in protecting legacy forests. Ideas included public education, community engagement, documenting timber sales, and statewide policy advocacy. Also included were helping to organize local communities, joining teams of volunteer forest monitors to gather data about legacy forests, and fundraising. Penelope suggested that some of us should dig into the CRF website and see what we think would be a good focus for us.

Janka suggested that we should monitor the legislative session to be aware when DNR and logging issues come up to alert us to when we should contact our

own state legislators about the issue. During the last legislative session, the legislature put money aside to preserve 2,000 acres of legacy forests. If we knew when the legacy forest issue might come up again, we could know to lobby our representatives. Genia suggested that Raelene would be someone who might help with this since she follows legislative happenings closely.

Genia will contact the Center for Responsible Forestry to see if the Center can let her know when the state legislature might bring up the legacy forest issue and who will be sponsoring the bill. Genia will then contact Penelope. For now, we should learn the names of our individual state representatives. We might want to contact them before a possible bill comes up to urge them to create a bill, letting them know that protecting Legacy Forests is an important issue for us.

Penelope gave the group the following “homework assignments:”

Before the next meeting, find out who your state representatives and your state senator are, if you don’t already know.

See if you can figure out when the issue of Legacy Forests might come up in the next legislature session.

Go to the Center For Urban Forestry website, find your county, sign up for the Center’s newsletter, and see what activities might interest you.

3. Upcoming Events

January 11, 2024, at 7 pm via Zoom, Book Club discussion of *Animal, Vegetable, Junk: A History of Food from Sustainable to Suicidal* by Mark Bittman. Let Penelope know if you are not a regular Book Club participant but would like to attend so she can send you the Zoom link

January 18, 2024 at 7 pm via Zoom, presentation by and discussion of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by Great Old Broads Advocacy Manager, Audrey Glendenning.

Save the date for our Regional Broadwalk on June 24-27th, 2024, at Cornet Bay Retreat Center, Whidbey Island. Barb Muirhead has reserved this site for us. Cabins, tent sites, and RV sites will be available. Barb, Suan Kostick, and Penelope constitute the program committee and will organize hikes, stewardship activities, speakers, and food. If you have suggestions, please send them to the program committee. Online registration will be available in January.

The meeting ended at 2:40 PM

Respectfully submitted, Wendy Roedell

