

# Minutes of Meeting of Polly Dyer Seattle Chapter Great Old Broads for Wilderness

7:00 PM, January 18, 2024

Location: Zoom

Penelope Peterson called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Members present were Penelope Peterson, Wendy Roedell, Karen Lee, Kate Bradley, Susan Kostick, Cathy Gorrell, Genia Moncada, Margaret Rands, Audrey Glendenning, Kelle Hollowood, Esther MacIlroy, Peggy LovellFord, Pati An, Raelene Gold

**NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act ) Presentation** by Audrey Glendenning, Great Old Broads Advocacy Manager. Audrey provided an overview of the National Environmental Policy Act and why it is important. Here are some key points:

- Signed into law by President Nixon in 1970
- Requires all agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions. If an agency finds that their activity will have a major impact on the environment, the agency must conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This is the origin of Environmental Impact Statements for activities viewed as having a possible significant impact on the environment.
- Is designed to create and maintain conditions for man and nature to live together in productive harmony.
- Audrey described the case of the Calvert Cliffs' Coordinating Committee v United States Atomic Energy Commission. Calvert Cliffs said the Atomic Energy Commission was not doing a rigorous enough EIS. The Commission said it didn't have to do any more. The court said that NEPA was meant to do more than regulate the flow of papers; agencies should give the process of the EIS a hard look and pay attention to creating a detailed EIS.
- In the case of Robertson v Methow Valley Citizens Council, citizens complained that the Forest Service had identified some issues with putting a ski resort in the area, (e.g. disruption of a mule deer herd), but didn't have a plan to fix it. However, the court said that Robertson did not have to have a plan to fix it. Robertson just had to identify the issues and reveal the issues to the public through the EIS process.

- NEPA requires that agencies release a lot of information to the public. Sometimes advocates can use the information to bring court action against a proposed activity if they believe that it will be detrimental to the environment or wildlife.
- The Washington State Environmental Policy Act. (SEPA) is very similar to NEPA, only at the state level.
- Audrey recommended that we read the Earthjustice article on NEPA (<https://earthjustice.org/feature/national-environmental-policy-act>)

After Audrey's presentation, Penelope led a short Broadband meeting.

## **Broadband Meeting**

### **Progress and Plans for Protecting Legacy Forests in the State of Washington**

- Homework from our last meeting was to visit the website of the Center for Responsible Forestry and check out your county and the legacy forest activity in it. You can look at their county reports for a list of legacy forests. Broads reported on what they learned from this homework assignment. It was noted that there's no legacy forest legislation going on right now in the state legislature.
- Raelene reported on a proposed bill to encourage the introduction of beavers in places where they could be helpful, to help people who are having problems with beavers, and to help relocate those beavers to a place where they might be useful. Below are the details on the bill. This bill was introduced into the Senate on January 8.

**SENATE BILL 5846** State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session  
By Senators Salomon, Liias, Lovelett, Saldaña, and Van De Wege Prefiled  
12/14/23. Read for the first time 01/08/24. Referred to the Committee on  
Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks. p. 1 SB 5846 NEW SECTION.  
Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 77.12 1 RCW to read as follows: 2  
The department must create and implement a statewide beaver 3 ecosystem  
management plan. The plan must define the role that beavers 4 play in  
maintaining the health of ecosystems and biodiversity in 5 Washington including,  
but not limited to, providing benefits in 6 watersheds including natural ground and  
surface water storage, stream 7 temperature moderation, improved water quality,  
reduced stream 8 velocities, reduced stream sediment transport, moderation of  
extreme 9 flood events, habitat and biodiversity provision, reduced nutrient 10  
transport, increased pollutant and greenhouse gas sequestration, and 11 the  
improvement or creation of habitat for other species. The plan 12 must define  
beavers as a keystone species and prioritize the 13 provision of resources and  
services to resolve human conflict with 14 beaver activity including education,  
coexistence, relocation, and as 15 a last resort, lethal removal services. The plan

must recognize that 16 people are part of ecosystems and that ecosystems cross 17 jurisdictional lines. The plan must fulfill the mandate identified in 18 RCW 77.04.012 by including recommendations and guidance for: 19 (1) Protecting beavers and reducing beaver mortality in priority 20 habitat, freshwater habitats of special concern identified in WAC 21 220-660-100, as that section existed on January 1, 2024, and fish and 22 wildlife conservation areas as defined in WAC 365-190-130, as that 23 section existed on January 1, 2024; 24 (2) Managing beaver conflicts and mitigating property damage 25 caused by beavers; 26 (3) Providing education and outreach to landowners and community 27 members regarding the benefits of beaver habitat; 28 (4) Providing technical and financial assistance for protecting 29 beaver habitat in situ or participating in a beaver relocation 30 project; 31 (5) Identifying locations where the reintroduction or protection 32 of beaver provides benefits to salmon habitats; 33 (6) Restricting recreational harvest at release sites and 34 monitoring beaver survival and establishment at release sites; 35 (7) Monitoring beaver populations and take; 36 (8) Building partnerships with land managers, local governments, 37 tribes, the scientific community, recreational beaver trappers, 38 riverscape restoration practitioners, and other stakeholders; and 39 p. 2 SB 5846(9) Involving volunteer and nonprofit organizations in beaver 1 education and outreach programs. 2

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 77.12 3 RCW to read as follows: 4 (1) The department shall establish a grant program to provide: 5 (a) Beaver education and outreach; 6 (b) Technical assistance and resources to assist landowners in 7 living with beavers on their property; and 8 (c) Support for beaver relocation programs consistent with the 9 beaver ecosystem management plan adopted under section 2 of this act 10 and the relocation requirements as specified in RCW 77.32.585. 11 (2) The department shall establish grant criteria, including 12 eligibility and cost-share requirements, for participating in the 13 program.

- We each listed our state senators and representatives
- Kate noted that she was worried about a possible fire occurring in the Tiger Mountain Forest, which is close to her house. We hope to discuss the fire issue at a future meeting.

### **Next Meeting: February 22 on Zoom**

At our next meeting, we will hear from Joanna Nelson DeFlores from the King County Urban Forestry Commission. We hope to have a good discussion about urban forests. Kate might ask her questions about fires at this time. Joanna knows about the entire county and will be very helpful in giving us an overview of what's happening with urban forests throughout our area. Please let Penelope and Genia know if you hear about any forest issues coming up in the legislature.

**Meeting ended at 8:50 PM**

*Respectfully submitted, Wendy Roedell*

