**Great Old Broads for Wilderness**

**Polly Dyer Seattle Broadband Meeting Minutes**

1:00 PM, July 25, 2024

Location: Kate Bradley's house in Sammamish, WA.

Penelope called the meeting to order at 1:20 PM.

Members present: Pati An, Kate Bradley, David Cook, Raelene Gold, Janka Hobbs, Susan Kostick, Nora Langan, Cristi Lien, Genia Moncada, Penelope Peterson, Janna Treisman, Rebecca Wolfe, Pam Hawes, Sally Richardson, Susan Bocek, Raelene Gold, and Davida Wolf

**Guest Speaker on proposed amendments to the Northwest Forest Plan**

**Mike Anderson, Senior Policy Analyst at The Wilderness Society (TWS)** gave an update on the proposed amendments to the Northwest Forest Plan.  He has been with TWS since 1985, mainly in national forest management and policy, ranging from roadless area conservation to watershed restoration. He also coordinates The Wilderness Society's litigation activities.  He said the highlights of his career are his work on the **Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP)**, which was finalized in 1994; his work with the Wilderness Area Conservation Rule (the roadless act) which protected 58 million acres of wilderness from road intrusion; and his work on Forest Service Legacy Roads and Trails, which is a program converting old Forest Service roads to Trails and building culverts under the roads to provide fish continuous access to streams and rivers. He noted that Rep. Kim Schrier, 8th district, has been a major champion of this program, and she is up for re-election. Recently, Mike has been on the Federal Advisory Committee to make recommendations to the Forest Service for amendments to the NWFP.

Prior to 1994, national forests were managed as tree farms leading to the liquidation of many old-growth trees. With the adoption of 1994 NWFP, an important addition to the Plan was the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (to preserve salmon habitat) and creation of Late Successional Preserves (LSP). Logging was banned in the LSPs, but still allowed in National Forests outside of the LSPs. With the NWFP came money to retrain loggers and to modify sawmills to handle smaller circumference logs than they had originally been set up to cut. Washington community colleges started computer and other skilled programs aimed at loggers. Old-Growth logging nearly stopped, even outside the LSPs because of public protest and because of fire.

The NWFP also mandated rigorous monitoring. In thirty years since adoption of the plan, the air temperature has gone up .5 degrees, but the stream temperatures have gone down .5 degrees--an indication that the Aquatic Conservation Strategy in NWFP is working. But the wildfire suppression approach has not been working.

A couple of years ago, the Forest Service realized that the NWFP needed to be revised to consider climate change. An Advisory Committee was appointed, and after numerous meetings and much discussion, the Committee has issued their draft recommendations. The recommended amendments have to do with thinning old-growth and legacy forests; wildlife (beaver restoration); approaches to fire (prescribed fires in the wilderness); an end to salvage logging (with exceptions); and tribal inclusion. One third of the Advisory Committee are tribal members, and inclusion of the voices of Tribal members is an important change from the original NWFP.

The recommendations for thinning dry forests seek to protect any tree 150 years old or older whether it’s in an LSR or not.  The recommendations for thinning moist forest are protect trees that are 120 years old or older (advanced mature trees - old growth is 200 years old). The dry forest recommendations focus on the individual tree as the unit; the moist forest recommendations focus on the “stand” as the unit.

Salvage recommendations would mandate no salvage logging in moist forest LSRs, leaving all the trees even if they are dead. The Advisory Committee recommends salvaging smaller trees in dry forests, while leaving the larger trees in LSRs. The Committee also recommends salvage logging along roads.  However, questions remain as to what roads and how far from the road the salvaging could occur. Now that the Advisory Committee has submitted their recommendations for revision of the Northwest Forest Plan, the National Forest Service will spend the next month considering them.  Then the National Forest Service will issue their amendments to the recommendations on August 30, 2024.  After that, a 90-day comment period will occur for public input.  The Advisory Committee will also weigh in on the Forest Service amendments.  Finally, the National Forest Service will do another revision and come up with a final proposal. The final amended Northwest Forest Plan will be published in spring, 2025.

**Discussion**

A lively discussion followed Mike’s presentation.  Individual Broads raised questions about dry forests vs moist forests, salvage logging, high grading, and more.

For a fuller picture, see *The Making of the Northwest Forest Plan: The Wild Science of Saving Old Growth Ecosystems,* by K. Norman Johnson, Jerry F. Franklin and Gordon H. Reeves. Here are the amendments proposed by the Advisory Committee: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r6/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fsbdev2_026990>.  The original Northwest Forest Plan is [online](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd479477.pdf).

Mike agreed to keep us up to date on the process and what committee recommendations the NFS took and which they did not take. Mike suggested that individual Broads write comments during the 90-day comment period.  Genia said that our Broads Regional Advocacy Committee on Forests will be holding a webinar to help Broads write these comments.

**Next Meetings**

**Thursday, August 29 at 1 pm--**Broadband meeting at Janna Treisman's farm, 2621 316th Ave SE, Fall City, WA.  Janna will lead us in a discussion of the issues facing The Alpine Lakes.  She represents us on the committee to protect The Alpine Lakes.

**Thursday, September 26 at 1 pm-**-Broadband meeting at Barbara Phalen's and Kay Sanderson's house, 3425 SE 5th St., Renton, WA  98058. Barbara is arranging for the Director of Renton's Urban Forests to come and speak with us about their progress and challenges.

*Respectfully submitted, Susan Kostick*