

Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Polly Dyer Seattle Chapter
Meeting: 12:00 PM, October 26, 2023
Location: Cathy Gorell's Home
3805 SW Orchard St., Seattle, WA.

Penelope Peterson called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM

Members present were Penelope Peterson, Wendy Roedell, Barb Muirhead, Barbara Phalen, Kay Sanderson, Janka Hobbs, Susan Bocek, Susan Kostick, Cathy Gorell, Genia Moncada, Nora Langan, Joetta Fort, Anne Shields, Cheryl Conklin, and Margaret Rands.

1. Introductions of new members

Everyone introduced themselves.

2. Stewardship Activity for Forest Week/Green Seattle (Barb Muirhead)

Multiple stewardship opportunities are available during Forest Week/Green Seattle, October 30 through November 4. Barb suggested registering for the one at Magnuson Park on Nov. 4 for which she has signed up. You can sign up for this or activities at other parks at <https://seattle.greencitypartnerships.org>. On the website you can also find partnerships with other cities if you don't live in Seattle. Barb asked that you let her know if you plan to participate in an activity so she can include it in our report to the Great Old Broads Central Office.

The Urban Forest Symposium at the University of Washington also took place on Thursday, November 2 as part of Seattle Forest Week. The symposium was entitled, *Interweaving Indigenous Eco-Ethics & Healing into Urban Forestry*. It lasted all day and included a traditional Native lunch. You could attend in person and participate in the Native American lunch, or attend virtually. More information and registration can be found on the website. Barb, Genia, and Nora planned to attend.

Penelope asked Nora if Seattle had hired their new urban forester yet. Nora responded that she would find out the name of the urban forestry person that has been hired for Seattle and will tell Penelope so she can invite that person for one of our meetings.

3. Advocacy Issues

- a. **Breach the Lower Snake River Dams** (Penelope and Susan Kostick)
There are four dams on the lower Snake River that prevent salmon from reaching their spawning grounds. Many different attempts to help the salmon have failed.

Even if the salmon get up the river to spawn, the baby salmon can't get back down, and often perish in the warm water that has gotten warmer because of the dams.

Penelope reported on several recent developments to support breaching the dams. First, a new lawsuit has been filed over the rising water temperature that has been killing the salmon. Second, President Biden recently issued a proclamation stating that it was a federal priority to support the recovery of salmon and steelhead populations and to support Native American treaty rights to fish on their native lands. Third, new federal money has been allocated to build up the railroads so that they can transport all the grain, removing the need for the dams, at least for this activity. This will enable farmers to use rail to transport their grain to market rather than relying on barges which will be unavailable with the breaching of the dams. Finally, Advocates for the West is working with a lawyer on behalf of PUD ratepayers to start a lawsuit against the PUDs for using ratepayer dollars to lobby against taking down the dams. The Snohomish PUD is the largest in Washington, and Susan Kostick is a ratepayer in the district so Susan will be listed as a plaintiff in the lawsuit.

b. Protect Icicle Creek

"The Icicle and Peshastin Irrigation Districts (IPID) owns and operates a 90-year-old dam on Eightmile Lake, located in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. As a result of flood damage and erosion caused by the impacts of the 2017 Jack Fire, a state of emergency was declared and IPID made emergency repairs to the dam. The Department of Ecology's Dam Safety Office designated the Eightmile Lake Dam as a "high hazard" for failure and a threat to lives and property downstream. IPID is required to repair or remove the dam." (quoted from The Mountaineers website).

Environmental issues around this project include: How much damage to the wilderness area will result from repair of this dam? How much noise will there be during the construction work? How much change will occur in the elevation of the lakes?

Barb Phalen reported that they are still moving forward with the dam even though there was lobbying for the dam to be removed. Janna is also following the Icicle Creek situation but was unable to attend due to illness.

c. Stop the construction of the asphalt plant on the Cedar River (Barbara Phalen and Nora Langan)

King County is planning to build an asphalt plant near the Cedar River, close to residential neighborhoods. The plant could endanger nearby residents since fire

is a frequent hazard of asphalt plants. It could also impact the river with pollution from hazardous wastes. The County wants to put the plant in this location because it is close to I-495, where asphalt will be needed for road building. Asphalt does not travel well, so it will be helpful to have it manufactured close to the building site.

King County does not want to do an Environmental Impact Statement before building the asphalt plant. Community members who do not want the plant to be built are planning a lawsuit to slow down the process and try to keep the asphalt plant off the property.

Nora is looking into possible green alternatives to asphalt for road building to recommend to the county. She is in touch with a source who will get back to her.

d. **Stop logging of the Legacy Forests in Washington (Genia)**

The Center for Responsible Forestry defines Legacy Forests as those with these features:

- o Pre-1945 origin
- o Unplanted, naturally regenerated
- o Structurally complex (different stages of life cycle)
- o Genetically and biologically diverse
- o If protected, Legacy Forests become old growth forests

Currently 77,000 acres of unprotected Legacy Forests exist in Washington, constituting only 3% of state managed land. According to the Center for Responsible Forestry, the state manages 1.7 million acres of forest land in Western Washington. 2,000 acres are being permanently conserved. Through the Natural Climate Commitment Act the Legislature affirms the carbon storage benefits of these lowland forests (per Center for Responsible Forestry). The state (DNR) manages three types of forest lands described on the DNR website. These are State Trust Lands, State Forest Lands, and Community Forests. Genia read from the DNR website the sections that describe these types of forest. These sections are quoted directly below.

State Trust Lands. At statehood in 1889, the U.S. Congress granted Washington millions of acres of land to support public institutions such as funding the construction of public K-12 grade schools statewide, state universities, other state educational institutions, and prisons. Today, DNR manages 3 million acres of these federally granted trust lands to provide a continuous flow of revenue to [beneficiaries](#) through revenue-producing activities such as:

Harvesting [timber biomass](#) byproducts, and [other forest products](#)

Leasing lands for [agricultural](#) purposes, such as orchards and vineyards, irrigated agriculture, dryland crops, and grazing.

Leasing [communications sites](#), [mining and mineral leases](#), [wind farms and energy production](#), [commercial properties](#), and [rights of way](#).

In addition to earning income, activities on trust lands are managed to [protect habitat](#) for native plant and animal species, provide clean and abundant water, and offer diverse public [recreation](#) opportunities. As a trust land manager, DNR is obligated to follow the common law duties of a trustee, which include generating revenue, managing trust assets prudently and acting with undivided loyalty to trust beneficiaries (Washington Supreme Court: Skamania vs. State of Washington, 1984)

State Forest Lands. DNR also manages hundreds of thousands of acres of state forest lands that help fund services in many counties and contribute to the state General Fund—earmarked for education. About 546,000 acres are State Forest Transfer trust lands that were acquired by 21 counties in the 1920s and 1930s through tax foreclosures. Unable to manage these mostly harvested and abandoned lands, counties deeded them to the state to manage as trust lands. In exchange, the county and the taxing districts in which the land is located are given most of the revenue from timber sales and other revenue-producing activities. These lands are managed in a manner similar to the federally granted trust lands. An additional 80,000 acres are State Forest Purchase trust lands—chiefly, they are valuable forestlands either purchased by the state or acquired as a gift.

Community Forests. As Washington’s population grows, more suburban development occurs in previously forested areas. When lands are converted from forestry, the state loses the vital benefits that forests provide in the ecosystem—wildlife habitat, clean water for people and salmon, recreation, clean air, and carbon storage. Conversion also puts local natural resource-based industries and jobs at risk, along with the ecological, economic, and social values these forests provide to the community. In 2011 the state Legislature, the Governor, and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) created a new tool for local community partners to participate in protecting working forestlands that benefit their communities—the Community Forest Trust.

Community forest trust lands are different from other state trust lands that DNR manages for the long-term benefit of the trust, where revenue generation is the primary focus. In contrast, community forests can be managed for other benefits, including watershed protection, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, grazing, and

timber production. In 2013, lawmakers designated the [Teanaway Community Forest](#) as the first community forest in Washington.

Discussion ensued about these three different types of Legacy Forests. Penelope stated that we need to get our language clear for our advocacy on this issue. Janka and Genia will collaborate to write a statement for the next meeting. For now, we decided to focus on Legacy Forests in King and Snohomish Counties. In addition, we decided we will collaborate with the Center for Responsible Forestry. Genia will be responsible for this collaboration.

4. Fun and Education

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, Susan 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. Suze Woolf has already volunteered to hold a sketching/painting class on June 25th. Janka noted we should contact the Pacific Rim Institute in Coupeville which is restoring a native prairie and has a Native Plant center.

Upcoming Events:

October 24th at 7 pm via Zoom, Book Club discussion of, *The Entangled Life: How Fungi Make our Worlds, Change our Minds, and Shape our Futures* by Merlin Sheldrake. 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.

November 16th at noon–GRATITUDE potluck and meeting at Penelope's house (3514 E Conover Ct., Seattle, WA 98122). We will gather to celebrate our steady advocacy for the environment these last five years and to give thanks for the learning we have done, the fun we've had, and the friends we have made along the way.

The meeting ended at 2:35 PM

Respectfully submitted, Wendy Roedell