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2 **Washington Community Forestry Council Meeting**
3 **Nov. 2nd, 2021**
4 **Conference Call- Zoom**
5

6 **Members Attending:** Ben Thompson, Semra Riddle, Juli Hartwig, Kirsten Lints, Lisa Ciecko, David Miller,
7 Margaret Brost, Ian Gray, Cindy Deffe, Kathleen Wolf, Dave Bayard

8 **Members Absent:** Gary Stamper, Angel Spell, John Bornsworth, Jessi Bloom

9 **Guests:** Jess Lloyd, Brandy Reed (Whatcom Conservation District), Liz Graham (USFS), Andy Tate, Terra
10 Rentz

11 **Meeting Convened:** 10:37 a.m.

12 **Welcome:** Call to order. Roll was taken. Chair welcomed members and guests. Review and approved
13 agenda and last meetings minutes.

14 **Minutes Approved:** Motion to approve agenda. Cindy moved and Margaret seconded motion.
15 Unanimous approval. Motion to approve minutes from Sept 8, 2021. Ian moved and David seconded
16 motion. Unanimous approval.

17 **Q&A for program update:** Ben spoke about program updates and grants, noting that he would need
18 assistance from council to help promote the grant program and open council positions.

19 The original plan for the grants was to combine federal dollars (\$100,000) and state dollars (\$550,000)
20 together for a single grant program. State money is intended to be used to help communities prioritize
21 work and actions for community management plans. Federal funding is available for other types of
22 projects like public outreach and education, updating ordinances, tree planting, training, and
23 maintenance. For the 2022 grant program the decision was made to remove the federal funding and use
24 for other purposes. Federal funding can be open for a 5 year period so there will be opportunities to
25 spend in the future either within the state grant or its own program. HSB1216 requires the UCF program
26 to dedicate 50% of program resources to highly impacted communities. Semra asked about the
27 matching component. Matching component is 50% for highly impacted communities, and 100% for all
28 other communities. In previous years there were 2 grant programs; one specifically for environmental
29 justice grants. In the past there have been challenges with using the full amount of funds available, and
30 with returned funding. It's important that all communities applying for the grant review the
31 Environmental Health Disparities map. Ian asked about how locations of highly impacted communities
32 will be evaluated. Ben responded that they majority of the project must be within ¼ mile of highly
33 impacted community to have the 50% match rate. There would be exceptions for projects that impact
34 the entire community, such as a canopy analysis. Maximum request will be increased to \$40,000 (up
35 from \$20,000) but the minimum request will stay the same at \$5,000. The timeline is also changing to be

1 in line with the state fiscal year. UCF hopes to advertise the grant in the next TreeLink, but certainly
2 during the month of November. Applications will be due in early February. Successful and unsuccessful
3 applicants will be notified at the beginning of April. Successful applicants will have from April to June to
4 finalize grant agreements and are expected to start projects July 1st. We will encourage people to attend
5 webinar on grants which is tentatively planned for late November-early December. Semra asked about
6 the start dates for projects. Ben responded that they can't start projects until July 1st, but that an
7 applicant could work on components of the grant before July 1st that won't need reimbursement (for
8 example: staff time, selection of contractor, other prep work) so that they can hit the ground running on
9 the start date. David asked about the length of the grant period. Ben responded that the grant project
10 has to be completed within 1 year. Ben also emphasized the need for applicants and for new partners
11 with the increase of funding and highlighted roles that nonprofits could play.

12 Lisa asked if non-profits receive the funds directly, and that non-profits don't apply to state and federal
13 funds because of the complicated processes in place. Ben responded that funding would go directly to
14 the city and recognized the length of the application as a barrier. Ben is hopeful to further streamline
15 the application. Lisa highlighted the Environmental Justice grants through the Sustainability office at the
16 city of the Seattle as an example that has helped reduce barriers for applicants
17 [[http://www.seattle.gov/environment/equity-and-environment/equity-and-environment-](http://www.seattle.gov/environment/equity-and-environment/equity-and-environment-initiative/environmental-justice-fund)
18 [initiative/environmental-justice-fund](http://www.seattle.gov/environment/equity-and-environment/equity-and-environment-initiative/environmental-justice-fund)], and asked about the role for the WCFC to bring up structural
19 barriers for equitable access to grants to DNR. Margaret asked about the potential for bottom-up
20 projects and looking to communities with higher health disparity scores about their needs and how they
21 could be best supported. Ben considered that there could be a place for DNR to do additional outreach
22 and promotion to help fund grassroots efforts.

23 Kathleen urged council to step back to consider the purpose of the funds; and to move away from
24 thinking about environmental justice from a specific place on a map to a broader scope. She expressed
25 concern about gentrification and displacement, and spoke about the emergence of urban community
26 trusts to bring development resources to a community, and to think about trees as a means to an end to
27 expand our ideas of potential projects. She also mentioned the important role that the Council has a
28 voice to the Commissioner to engage in dialog about changing contract structures to promote equitable
29 distributions of funding.

30 Semra brought the council to a break and suggested to continue the conversation after the speaker to
31 follow the agenda.

32 **5 Minute Break for council**

33 **Guest Speaker: Brandy Reed, Whatcom Conservation District: "Promoting Stormwater Benefits from** 34 **Urban Canopy Cover in Puget Sound"**

35 Ben provided some background information on the project which received 4 LSR grants during Linden's
36 tenure as the UCF Program Manager and Brandy was the project manager. Brandy was involved with the
37 development of many programs at KCD, and one of the aims of this project was to align tree canopy
38 cover priorities with stormwater priorities and to start a conversation and build movement across the
39 two professional disciplines.

1 Brandy’s presentation highlighted the ongoing project to bring together the fields of urban forestry and
2 stormwater management and focused on the project to compare different tools that evaluate the
3 benefits of trees for stormwater protection. The project has over 22 partners and collaboration amongst
4 various stakeholders was a key component. The study evaluated 2 models for stormwater benefits in 4
5 pilot communities at 4 spatial scales. The outcomes of the study included individual tree canopy
6 assessments for pilot communities, a technical report, and handbook. A tree and stormwater toolkit is in
7 development. Some of the key findings included: 1. Canopy loss leads to increased runoff volume (even
8 if tree canopy is replaced with another cover type). 2. Development that retains trees (over trees that
9 are replaced) results in greater amount of runoff reduction. 3. Areas with higher existing tree canopy
10 help mitigate the magnitude of increasing runoff volume when tree canopy is reduced. The higher tree
11 canopy coverage helps buffer the effects of tree canopy removal, and there is a higher magnitude of
12 runoff in areas with lower canopy coverage when trees are removed. 4. The i-Tree Hydro tool yielded
13 lower runoff volume outputs compared with WWHM. The tools may have different applications or be
14 used in conjunction.

15 Some of the key recommendations from the stormwater models were that i-Tree is preferred at the
16 landscape scale and WWHM is better at the site scale. WWHM was designed for environmental planning
17 for individual parcels or neighborhoods. Brandy emphasized the importance of applying models at the
18 right scale and developed recommendations for future research including: evaluating stormwater
19 credits.

20 The handbook includes a summary of the technical reports, case studies, and additional resources and
21 tools. The Tree and Stormwater Toolkit is still in development and will be available online at
22 [www.trees-and-stormwater.org]

23 Juli commended the emphasis on tree preservation and shared that it was the same primary goal to
24 retain trees for DOT as well. Kathleen shared a report from The Nature Conservancy, Cascading Benefits
25 [<https://www.washingtonnature.org/cascading-benefits-report>]. Semra commented on how the
26 handbook can be translated into policy – and suggested taking the toolkit to the next level for
27 communities to incorporate recommendations into policy measures. Brandy commented that there is
28 still a hope for additional funding to do more engagement with communities.

29 Brandy provided additional links and her contact information. The reports and handbook can be found
30 here: [<https://betterground.org/treesandstormwater>]

31 Brandy Reed - Whatcom Conservation District; b.reed@whatcomcd.org; (360) 935-1703

32 **Break for council (lunch)**

33 **Nominations for 2021 Council Leadership positions**

34 Semra asked for nominations for chair. Lisa nominated Semra Riddle for Chair. David Miller nominated
35 John Bornsworth as Vice Chair. Semra nominated John Bornsworth as Chair. Ben nominated Margaret
36 for Vice Chair. David Miller nominated Ian Gray as Vice Chair. Ben nominated Ian Gray as Chair. David
37 Miller nominated Semra for Vice Chair.

38 Nominations for Chair: Semra Riddle, John Bornsworth, Ian Gray

1 Nominations for Vice Chair: John Bornsworth, Margaret Brost, Ian Gray, Semra Riddle

2 **Council Check-In**

3 Conversation on grants continued. Semra asked for further consideration of the grant match for
4 communities, and if 50% match is a barrier for smaller communities. Kathleen mentioned the idea of
5 “planning grants” – which she explained as the preparatory work that is done in conjunction with the
6 funding organization that provides assistance to develop a full proposal. This could help mitigate the
7 burden of the fiscal component of the grant application. Ben mentioned that the UCF program could
8 offer focused technical assistance – which would allow staff to work directly with communities through
9 various projects over time rather than one-offs. Kathleen mentioned having some level of staff support
10 for grants; and communities are weighing the return on the investment. David mentioned including a
11 question on the application if applicants could use additional funding, to open additional funds in the
12 event that not all the funds were awarded within the year timeline. Lisa asked if there had to be a
13 competitive process based on DNR purchasing requirements, and if there were ways to identify partner
14 organizations and cities based on current relationships. Ben responded that DNR can spend up to
15 \$30,000 without a bid process or competitive review. Lisa also commented that the total amount of
16 funding to be awarded could still increase. Terra mentioned some creative pathways to change the grant
17 funding processes, such as developing a rigorous ranking and prioritization process for identifying
18 projects to reduce bias and allow funding without competitive process. Suggested bringing in other DNR
19 staff to the council to explore different tools and opportunities that could help strategically place
20 funding on known needs. Semra commented in support of that idea, and mentioned the TNC canopy
21 project in conjunction with the tree equity score. Ben mentioned that HSB1216 already is asking DNR to
22 develop a prioritization process.

23 Kathleen returned the conversation to the purpose of the grant and the opportunity to incorporate
24 science, particularly with the growing movement of community scientists, and mentioned a project in
25 Tacoma similar to project Greenheart in Louisville. Ben mentioned that projects could include and
26 research component, and community science projects could be listed as eligible for the grant.

27 **Council Recruitment:** Ben spoke about the applications for open council positions that aren’t tied to
28 specific organizations. He talked about the need for additional applicants and encouraged the council to
29 help advertise the positions.

30 Ben talked about recruitment for new positions for DNR UCF program including an Inventory Specialist,
31 Inventory Technician, Evergreen Communities Coordinator. Ben lobbied for additional positions to
32 include a GIS Coordinator and Contract Specialist. The UCF team will also be adding a Grants
33 Coordinator and 2 additional Urban Forestry Technicians. Terra encouraged the council to join the
34 interview panels.

35 Ben mentioned that the WCFC website was updated. Ben also provided an update on green stormwater
36 infrastructure and workforce development program and invited the council members to join the
37 conversations. He also announced the SFI certification program for urban forests and invited the council
38 to provide comment during the open period [<https://www.forests.org/leading-standards-and-urban-forestry-partners-collaborate-to-develop-a-new-sfi-urban-and-community-forest-sustainability-standard>].
39
40

1 **Council Check-ins:** Council was given an opportunity to provide updates.

2 Kathleen mentioned a new report from American Forests – a toolkit that included climate adaptation
3 and public health. It was featured in a Whitehouse briefing. Climate adaptation actions for urban forests
4 and human health [<https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/62807>].

5 Lisa mentioned her participation in the Forests for Cities Coalition. They rolled out some tools including
6 a resource library, and advocacy work that is happening nationally – positioning natural areas as a
7 central component of urban forestry.

8 FiC website: <https://naturalareasnyc.org/national>
9 Carbon Webinar: <https://youtu.be/SnE4Q7dpVs8>
10 Resource Tool: <https://fic.naturalareasnyc.org/>

11 David Miller mentioned planting 60 trees in Ellensburg. They planted native tree species that would be
12 low maintenance and resilient to climate stressors. The planting site was within an area of high health
13 disparity.

14 **Adjourn: 1:48 PM**

15 **Next Meeting:** February 1, 2022 at 10:30-2:00pm (virtual meeting).

16 **Zoom meeting chat:**

17 13:34:53 From Kathleen Wolf to Everyone:
18 Familiarity with other work - and planting the UCF seed across the agency!

19 13:36:09 From Kathleen Wolf to Everyone:
20 Lots of great talent interested in UCF now! Probably getting great applications.

21 13:36:51 From Ben Thompson to Everyone:
22 <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/about/boards-and-councils/washington-community-forestry-council>

23 13:43:35 From Kathleen Wolf to Everyone:
24 Climate adaptation actions for urban forests and human health
25 <https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/62807>

26 13:44:16 From Lisa Ciecko to Everyone:
27 FiC website: <https://naturalareasnyc.org/national>
28 Carbon Webinar: <https://youtu.be/SnE4Q7dpVs8>
29 Resource Tool: <https://fic.naturalareasnyc.org/>

30 13:47:36 From eegraham to Everyone:
31 Thanks for letting me listen in, if you need anything from me feel free to send an email:
32 Elizabeth.e.graham@usda.gov

