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2 **Washington Community Forestry Council Meeting**
3 **June 8th, 2020**
4 **Conference Call- Zoom**
5

6 **Members Attending:** Dave Bayard, Juli Hartwig, Kirsten Lints, Ben Thompson, Semra Riddle, Kathleen
7 Wolf, Lisa Ciecko, Paula Dinius

8 **Members Absent:** Angel Spell, Cindy Deffe, Kathy Sheehan, David Miller, Gary Stamper, John
9 Bornsworth

10 **Guests:** Daria Gosztyla, Jeremy Porter, Garth Davis, Andy Tate, Julie Sackett

11 **Meeting Convened:** 9:00 a.m.

12 **Welcome:** Roll was taken. Chair and Semra welcomed members and guests. Last minute's meetings
13 were approved.

14 **Minutes Approved:** Motion to approve minutes from April 17th, 2020. Kathy Wolf moved and Dave
15 Bayard seconded motion.

16 **UCF Program Updates, Ben Thompson and Daria Gosztyla:** Ben is continues to become more
17 acquainted with projects, grant cycles, budgets. Recently UCF staff also spent time buttoning up position
18 description for Ben's former position, however, it will not be posted at this time due to agency caution
19 until there is a clearer picture on future financial stability due to Covid-19.

20
21 Ben reported \$130,000 additional funding from USFS for Urban Forest Pest Readiness Project was
22 aquired. Department of Agriculture will receive some of this funding for aggregation of a single database
23 that includes tree data from cities across the state of Washington. This data will be used to run pest risk
24 analysis and monitoring.

25
26 Ben continues conversations on Salmon Strategy. Target watershed for the current pilot project is
27 Snohomish watershed, which includes communities such as Monroe, Everett, North Bend, and others.
28 Commissioner wants to adopt a green infrastructure plan for the strategy. UCF contribution to this
29 project will be the outcome of previous Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) funding that orients around a
30 3-county canopy analysis. Once canopy data is finalized, program can hone in on a specific project area
31 or potential location for increasing canopy. Ben also noted that next round of LSR is approaching, DNR
32 will apply but no project has been fully identified and ironed out yet. Projects will likely focus on job-
33 building opportunities. Ben asked council to provide any input on ideas.

34
35 Julie Sackett, DNR Forest Health Division Manager has announced her retirement. Julie will retire at the
36 end of June. Julie provided some insights on the position.

37
38 Daria has been helping with administration of ongoing community assistance and equity grants. UCF
39 program had a busy month, 5 of the Small Urban & Community Forestry grants closed out on April 30th

1 and their final reports were due at the end of May. Daria worked with each grantee to ensure that they
2 submitted their final reports and that their deliverables were met even amid changes to some timelines
3 that occurred due to COVID.
4

5 Daria also scheduled grant close-out calls with each of those grantees to learn more about their overall
6 experience with the UCF grant program which will be used to help frame the upcoming grant cycle in
7 September. Daria also took the time to check in to see how forestry operations have been affected due
8 to COVID-19, which so far has had varying reflections from canceled arbor day events to city's not
9 rehiring forest tech positions to completely dropping seasonal staff that water and prune young trees—
10 the effects have been all over the board.
11

12 Daria mentioned intention to also schedule similar calls with equity grant program past applicants and
13 awarded grantees and will be looking to involve the Council's Equity subcommittee in crafting questions
14 for those calls and engagement in the near future.
15

16 Daria continues work on the Urban Forest Pest Preparedness Project and has held two virtual seminars
17 that walked participants through the Pest Readiness Self-Assessment tool. Follow-up Office Hours, to
18 help participants work through the playbook and to have continued conversation on pest readiness are
19 scheduled. The next seminar will be August 12th.
20

21 Julie and Ben touched on ECA updates. Julie explained that the main question that is being asked is: "is
22 this next session the right time to put this legislation forward?" DNR has not made any decisions yet,
23 they have just held some conversations with a few legislators. Julie expressed that people are really
24 committed to this act.
25

26 Kathy Wolf asked question on when budget cuts may be expected to come. Julie answered letting the
27 council know that the governor put forth a hiring freeze but that DNR is currently on a hiring "frost"
28 meaning each new position is getting a very hard look over. Julie explained that things aren't great, so
29 DNR has to identify what the critical components of each program are, what their requirements state,
30 and how programs can be managed to continue the current commitments. Julie explained that the
31 executive team has been running extensive analysis on this.
32

33 Kathy is optimistic about political support for conservation programming. Kathy provided additional
34 insights on urban forestry—stating that we have some work to do in relaying the connections of urban
35 forestry and human health.
36

37 **2020 UCF Equity Analysis:** Daria provided introduction on the updated equity analysis, and Ben provided
38 additional context. Daria explained that the equity analysis update included the Health Departments'
39 Washington Environmental Health Disparities data, which takes into consideration a total of 19 health-
40 risk indicators. Overall, the GIS analysis was derived from a weighted examination of environmental
41 health disparity data from the Washington State Department of Health, tree canopy data from the
42 United States' Geological Survey's National Land Cover Dataset, Tree City USA data, and income and
43 demographic data from the U.S. Census. Areas of high "opportunity" indicate communities and regions
44 of the state with high environmental health disparities where increased urban forestry efforts may have
45 a relatively high impact whereas lower values indicate communities or regions with fewer
46 environmental health disparities where urban forestry efforts, while still beneficial, may have a
47 relatively lower impact.

48 Kathy recommended a change in title to the map to better emphasize the health component. A possible
49 name change of "Wellness and Equity: Urban Forestry Opportunities" was identified. Semra provided

1 additional input to make logo larger and north arrow smaller, and relayed need to emphasize impact.
2 David highlighted the need to keep consistency between 2017 study by using similar equity terminology.
3 Semra discussed considerations of how the map would change if canopy cover was more heavily
4 weighted.

5 **Forest Action Plan update:** Andrew Spaeth provided update for the Forest Action Plan, explaining how
6 this was a requirement from 2008 legislature. Andrew is in process of completing the 10-year revision.
7 Andrew walked through the sections of the plan that relate to urban forestry. David presented the
8 question of how prepared DNR is to accept that the primary goal (Goal #1 as written in the FAP) of
9 Urban & Community Forestry’s program in the FAP is to advance the equitable delivery of urban forestry
10 program services. David’s questions were: “How do we see that manifesting?” “What does that
11 commitment mean and is it felt throughout the agency?” Ben responded, agreeing that this is the first
12 time the plan has an equitable component which is a shift from previous plans. Ben stressed that UCF is
13 committed to providing a state-wide program but socially, is continuously adding emphasis on public
14 health disparities and equitable delivery of program services.

15 Kathy provided some insight and considered the question: what are the best practices of urban forestry
16 that achieve health? Kathy highlighted that the council could start to draft up a version of these best
17 practices for the sake of improving health and that there would be a receptive audience to this type of
18 work. Ben asked the philosophical question of where the UCF program responsibility lays: “are we
19 responsible that DNR is affecting people at the local level or does our responsibility stop at the local
20 government that serves the local people?” At the very minimum, Ben stated that we should be actively
21 promoting the goals surrounding equity in the FAP to our constituency as one of our main tasks, then
22 ask how we can make it better and improve upon the goals and objectives.

23 Ben and Daria explained that they trimmed back the urban and community forestry section of the FAP
24 and consolidated the plan into four core functions based on actions that Linden had drafted up. Ben
25 reflected that he believes this will be the most functional plan for urban forestry efforts since 2009.

26 **Voluntary Check-in with WCFC Members:**

27 **Kathy**—Assembled general public media about importance of trees and sent to council in email.

28 **Semra**—Recognized that city budgets have become challenged due to COVID and lowering sales
29 tax from revenue. It will be challenging for cities to match needs. Encourages consideration of
30 reduction for matching funds in our grant program. Expressly state this in call for grant
31 application introductions. Ben mentioned that he started this conversation with USFS.

32 **Lisa**— Forested Cities Project received additional funding, continuing work in 10 cities that
33 started the program. Partners in Community Forestry Conference session will focus on this
34 topic.

35 **Kirsten**— Worries regarding inventory are ongoing throughout the summer. Many plantings
36 were cancelled in spring. Many inquiries about fruit trees and wanting to maintain and plant
37 more edible species.

38 **Juli**— State is trying to be proactive with budget. Juli is operating on essential functions of DOT
39 program.

40

41 **Adjourn 11AM**, Lisa moved and Kathy second the motion to adjourn council meeting.

- 1 **Next Meeting: September 15th, 2020, 9:00-3:30, Olympia. (currently scheduled as in in-person**
- 2 **meeting).**