

**COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
KITITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
COMMISSIONERS AUDITORIUM
SPECIAL MEETING**

FRIDAY

1:30 P.M.

JUNE 3, 2011

Board members present: Vice-Chairman Alan Crankovich and Commissioner O'Brien. Chairman Paul Jewell was absent.

Others: Catherine Dunn, Deputy Clerk of the Board, Judy Hallisey, Cle Elum District Ranger; Debbie Kelly, USFS Public Affairs Lead; Margaret Hartzell, USFS Planner.

SPECIAL MEETING USFS LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE COMMISSIONERS

At 1:30 P.m. **Vice-Chairman Crankovich** opened a Special Meeting to hear a presentation from the US Forest Service on the proposed Land and Resource Management Plans updates.

Judy Hallisey, District Ranger, said the USFS is revising the Forest Plan for the combined Wenatchee, Okanogan and Colville National Forests. She explained the Forest Plans contained the plans and actions for the forests. She said a copy will be delivered to the Commissioners before publication.

Margaret Hartzell, USFS Planner, said the Forest Management Plan functions similarly to a County Comprehensive Plan with recreation, wilderness, logging and other functions in designated areas. She said when projects are planned, the Land Management Plan has guidelines which limit what can be done. She said the 1990 plan is being updated.

Ms. Hallisey said overriding Federal acts have changed what can be done in the Land Management Plan and the updated Plan will give direction on managing areas prone to burning as well as direction with the spotted owl habitat.

Commissioner O'Brien asked about the diseases in the trees and drying out the forests. **Ms. Hallisey** replied the spruce bud worm is in its seventh year here and should be reaching its peak and dying off, but it's not. She said thinning and prescribed burns are scheduled to work on the bark beetle, which comes in after the spruce bud worm defoliates the trees and will kill the trees weakened by the worm. She said there were 12 active forest sales this year to try to accomplish the thinning in the Teanaway, Liberty, Stampede Pass and Taneum areas.

Commissioner O'Brien asked about sawmills and biomass. **Ms. Hallisey** said she has been working with the Tapash Collaborative and Central Washington University to bring in infrastructure to mill the logs available and process the biomass for CWU's steam plant. She said they have had difficulty with the sales because of the distance to the sawmills and cost to transport. She said the USFS cannot offer single source sales because of Federal rules.

Commissioner Crankovich asked if that was a departure from previous plans. **Margaret Hartzell** said it was from the 1994 plan, but in recent years they have been market driven. **Debbie Kelly** added that there has been a change in the timber companies as well. **Judy Hallisey** said the Forest Service is not looking for a profit but at forest restoration. She said that biomass has to be subsidized because of the haulage.

Margaret Hartzell asked if the Board had heard anything about updating of the plan. She said they will have a 60 day comment period with workshops for the public to explain the changes.

Commissioner O'Brien said he believed the trees and forests needed to be actively managed to keep the forests viable.

Commissioner Crankovich said the County had adopted the Wildland Urban Interface portion of the Fire Code including defensible space, fire proof building materials which is not a great deal of additional effort for a positive return.

Debbie Kelly asked if the County had a community wildlife protection plan. **Commissioner Crankovich** said the County has had one in place for a number of years.

Commissioner Crankovich said since the Cle Elum Range District is specifically targeted for recreation, it is important to manage the forest to avoid catastrophic fires.

Judy Hallisey asked if the Board heard from people that recreational access was a problem. **Commissioner Crankovich** said most complaints concern private timberlands. A discussion of Off Road Vehicle code revisions followed.

There was a discussion of the Department of Ecology plans to increase wilderness areas. **Judy Hallisey** said the Forest Service had made it clear to the Department of Ecology and the Bureau of Reclamation that they didn't have authority over the Wilderness Areas, which are set by Congress. She said the original program for the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area had Teanaway included but it was negotiated out. **Margaret Hartzell** said as part of another program Congress instituted 15,000 acres of Wilderness study area to consider adding to ALPS.

Ms. Hallisey said they are studying the same amount on the west side of the Cascade Mountains.

Judy Hallisey said they would come back towards the end of June with copies of the plan, a timeline and maps on CD's.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

**KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**


Catherine Dunn


Alan Crankovich, Vice-Chairman