

From:
To:
Subject: Online Form Submittal: Advisory Group Application
Date: Monday, July 29, 2024 3:11:25 PM

Advisory Group Application

Step 1

Application for Appointment to Whatcom County Advisory Groups

Public Statement

THIS IS A PUBLIC DOCUMENT: As a candidate for a public advisory group, the information provided will be available to the County Council, County Executive, and the public. All advisory group members are expected to be fair, impartial, and respectful of the public, County staff, and each other. Failure to abide by these expectations may result in revocation of appointment and removal from the appointive position.

Title	Mr.
First Name	Thomas
Last Name	Smith
Today's Date	7/29/2024
Street Address	[REDACTED]
City	[REDACTED]
Zip	[REDACTED]
Do you live in Whatcom County?	Yes
Do you have a different mailing address?	YES
Mailing Address	[REDACTED]
Primary Telephone	[REDACTED]
Secondary Telephone	Field not completed.
Email Address	[REDACTED]

Step 2

1. Name of Advisory Group	Forest Resilience Task Force
Forest Resilience Task Force	Representative from trust land beneficiary
2. Do you meet the residency, employment, and/or affiliation requirements of the position for which you're applying?	Yes
3. Which Council district do you live in?	District 3
4. Have you ever been a member of this Advisory Group	No
5. Do you or your spouse have a financial interest in or are you an employee or officer of any business or agency that does business with Whatcom County?	No
6. Have you declared candidacy (as defined by RCW 42.17A.055) for a paid elected office in any jurisdiction within the county?	No
You may attach a resume or detailed summary of experience, qualifications, & interest in response to the following questions	Attached
7. Please describe your occupation (or former occupation if retired), qualifications,	See attached PDF

professional and/or
community activities,
and education

8. Please describe why you're interested in serving on this Advisory Group. See Attached PDF

References (please include daytime telephone number):
Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt 360 596 2512
Ted Schad 360 592 5795

Appointment Requirements I understand and agree

Signature of applicant: Thomas Smith

Place Signed / Submitted 

(Section Break)

Thomas Smith

Education: B.S. Forest Resource Management, U of WA, 1982

Employment: Department of Natural Resources 1987-2020 Retired

Qualifications: Fire Commissioner, Whatcom Fire District 16

Member; Wildfire Advisory Committee to the Commissioner of Public Lands (WFAC)

Relevant Experience:

DNR Forest Management-

Land management planning: Lopez and San Juan Island – Conducted forest inventories, developed options for road construction and timber sales while providing protection for old growth trees wetlands, streams and historic sites.

Forester, State Lands: Timber sales planning and field layout: North and Middle Forks Nooksack drainage areas, Sumas, & Red Mtn. Timber sale area location, Road layout & preliminary design, stream and wetland protection boundaries, property line and corner locations. Included contract compliance administration.

Other: Identified area of 1000 yr-old Alaska Cedar trees on ridge above Canyon Lake, with that information ultimately contributing to the formation of Canyon Lake Community Forest

Forest Practices Forester: Coverage area; Western Whatcom County, including Lake Whatcom Watershed. Reviewed, approved or denied or modified Forest practice applications to ensure compliance with rules. Conducted site visits during landowner activity to ensure compliance and respond to concerns, took enforcement actions as needed.

Served on Lake Whatcom Watershed Forum 1994-2000: reviewed and discussed all forest practice applications in the Watershed with members representing City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, Lummi Cultural Resources, landowners, applicants and foresters.

Served on Watershed Analysis Review Teams studying areas in the North and South Forks of Nooksack River, Stewart Mtn, and Lookout Mountain. Participated in synthesis and development of forest practice prescriptions to meet watershed analysis recommendations.

Led and/or participated on interdisciplinary (ID) teams to create workable solutions for Forest Practice issues. Involved review by State and County specialists including Fish & Wildlife, Dept Ecology, County Geologists, Tribal liaisons, landowners and other involved parties.

Served on DNR cadre introducing the new Forest Practices Rules rollout in 2000.

Fire Management: Primary coverage area; Whatcom County, and Skagit County east of Hwy 9, with incident response coverage in Island, San Juan and Snohomish Counties and elsewhere in the state.

Duties included Fire Training, Fire prevention, Personnel Supervision, and Fire Suppression response, all with elements of interagency cooperation.

Served on statewide DNR cadre introducing and leading 2-day Firewise Workshop groups across Washington in 2001 & 2002. Participants included County planners, landowners, Fire chiefs, insurance agents, and developers.

Cooperated with Skagit and Whatcom Conservation District staff in presenting Firewise information to communities and supplying crews to perform fuel reduction work around at-risk homes

Provided basic and intermediate fire training and daily supervision to 5-7 local DNR engine crews. Served on statewide DNR cadre for continuing education training, and Western and Central Washington Interagency Firefighter Academies 2015-2019, National Guard fire training at JBLM and Yakima Firing Center.

Worked in various capacities in fire suppression, investigation, and command in many forest types including eastern Washington mixed conifer and Columbia Basin shrub steppe communities, Blue Mountain forest and Columbia River Gorge areas, upper elevation forests near Mount Rainier, central and southern Oregon, and Black Spruce & Birch forests in Alaska.

My interest in serving on the Forest Resiliency Task Force:

As a Fire Commissioner for Whatcom Fire District #16, I represent the District which is forestland trust beneficiary and one of the positions on the task force.

During my 33-year career with the DNR and 35 years of living in Whatcom, I have worked and recreated in most of the non-federal forest lands around this area. Much of that time was spent following old abandoned roads, trails and railroad grades, and wandering through forests that have regenerated naturally after fires or after 125 years of evolving forest management and timber extraction.

My BS in Forest Resource Management was more than timber management and extraction; the courses I found most interesting were about forest insects & diseases, and fire & forest ecology. One of my professors advised us to go beyond just taking notes and learning in the classroom. He told us to find some forested land and spend time getting to know it; not to take what we were being taught for granted, but to see if what we were being taught was actually true.

With that with that mindset, I've seen some of both naturally regenerated and planted forests grow into fire-vulnerable areas. I've seen carefully thinned forests be destroyed by winds, clearcuts grow back to a different predominant species. I've worked on wildfires in many forest types with differing fire regimes where forest management activities have exacerbated or mitigated fire behavior. I've also seen the human element in land use and policies that affects the landscape, community safety and forest vulnerability.

I am interested in serving on this Task Force because the topic of Forest Resiliency is complex and subjective, and my education and experiences in the field with Forest Management , Fire, and Forest Ecology are something I can bring to the table to share.

Thomas Smith