

**Whatcom County  
Council Climate Action and Natural Resources Committee**

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105  
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038  
(360) 778-5010**



**Committee Minutes - Final**

**Tuesday, March 5, 2024  
10:20 AM  
Hybrid Meeting**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 10:35 A.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON,  
SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT [www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil),  
OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

**COUNCILMEMBERS**

Todd Donovan  
Kaylee Galloway  
Mark Stremler

**CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

## **Call To Order**

Committee Chair Kaylee Galloway called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

## **Roll Call**

**Present:** 3 - Todd Donovan, Kaylee Galloway, and Mark Strempler

Also Present: Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Ben Elenbaas, and Jon Scanlon

## **Announcements**

## **Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council**

1. [AB2024-161](#) Request approval for the County Executive to act as the authorized representative for the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Community Forest Program Grant #22-1301

Chris Elder, Public Works Department, read from a presentation (on file) on the Stewart Mountain Community Forest and the phases of acquisition. The item before them today authorizes the County Executive to serve as the signatory for the \$3 million Recreation and Conservation Office grant. He stated Whatcom County was also awarded a \$5.517 million streamflow restoration grant for which they are in process of finalizing a grant agreement, and they have a target Phase Two acquisition date of June of 2025. He then highlighted adjacent land ownership of the community forest area.

He answered whether there is Department of Natural Resources (DNR) land inside of the acquisition area and stated there is. He answered whether the two grants will be sufficient for the whole Phase Two acquisition and stated it does not get us to the full amount but gets us to around 3,000 (of the total 5,500) acres in ownership. He answered who has been managing the land in Phase One since it was acquired, and whether all of the proposed Stewart Mountain Community Forest land is privately owned by Timber Conservation Resources (previously "Forestry") LLC, and he stated it is, with the exception of the Phase One area and all the DNR-owned portion in green (on the presentation map). He answered what he sees for the management of all of this land should this move forward, and stated they have not proposed long-term ownership but have hired local consultants for Phase One to help do a forest and road inventory, help develop the forest management plan, and ultimately contract with local foresters. He answered how he sees the intention to manage the property as a working forest working with the goals that he mentioned in his presentation. He stated

there has been a realization in the past decade or more that just putting a forest in preservation status does not, in and of itself, improve the ecosystem or improve watershed health. If we have the ability to actively manage the forests, we have the ability to hopefully enhance watershed health and ecosystem variables.

Donovan stated there has been discussion on the Council about having some coordinated management between the reconveyance lands, these lands, and other forests.

**Donovan moved that the request for the Executive to act as representative for the Recreation and Conservation Office grant be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Galloway, and Strempler

**Nay:** 0

### **Items Added by Revision**

There were no agenda items added by revision.

### **Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:34 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

**Kaylee Galloway-via email 3/8/2024**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

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Kaylee Galloway, Committee Chair

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Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE