

Kathy Young, BCHW Public Lands Chair - email: public_lands@bchw.org

Committee members: Pete Erben—Peninsula area, Bob Iddins—Northwest , Jim Anderson and Gary Collins—Southwest, Danny Chappel—Southeast, Bill Ford-Methow, Ed Letcher-Central. Our Northeast Region position is currently vacant. It had been filled by Ken Elliot, who recently passed away. I so valued Ken’s work with BCHW. Ken’s input to the PLC committee will be sorely missed.

Public Lands Committee Meeting calls are scheduled monthly, on the 3rd Thursday. BCHW members with Public Lands issues and concerns that they would like to see discussed or recognized can email or contact the PLC committee using the above address or contact a committee member directly.

Volunteer Agreement for Washington Forests US Forest Service: The most recent deadline that I have from the FS for the sign off of this agreement is January 17. I have notice from the FS that the document is complete, but must go through the Forest Service’s Official Correspondence process. The FS delayed routing the package over the holidays because of the number of FS personnel that were out of the office.

When it is signed the VA will be posted on the BCHW webpage. Information on how we expect to use this overarching Volunteer Agreement will be shared with members and chapters at Leadership Training on January 23.

US Forest Service Pacific NW Region 6 BCHW was invited to participate in a Recreation Partners Forum initiated by FS Region 6. Jason Ridlon, BCHW President and Kathy Young PLC Committee called in to the introductory meeting which included remarks from the Regional Forester, Glen Casamassa. The Partnership Forum is aimed at ongoing discussion to strengthen partnerships across Region 6. Topics in the initial call also included the Forest Service budget modernization effort, FS efforts to strengthen diversity and inclusion and “nuts and bolts” of the Great American Outdoors Act. There are several new people in the Regional Office that will be engaging with volunteer organizations including Heather Zissler, Assistant Director for Community Engagement, and Sarah Kassel, Regional Volunteer and Services Program Manager. This introductory call invited 18 organizations to the table. Future calls will be scheduled and are being facilitated by a small group of the partners on the call.

Tracy Tophooven, has accepted a permanent position in Washington D.C., she will be the Assistant Director for Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources. Tracy introduced Karen Schroyer as her replacement in Pacific NW Region 6. Karen will take Tracy’s place as the Regional Director for Recreation Land and Minerals for the Pacific NW Region. Karen was once the Deputy Forest Supervisor at the Mt Hood National Forest, and held positions in Colorado, Utah and Washington D.C. in her 25+years with the Forest Service.

Teanaway Community Forest: Tena Short and Kathy Young have been providing input to the TCF Trail subcommittee that is starting the work to create the designated trail system in the Teanaway Community Forest. The work is currently focusing only on the southwest area of the TCF. There will be

opportunities for members to comment and to provide information after the initial plan is drafted. Improvements to Teanaway Camp have been completed and work on the planned expansion of the horse camp facility at Indian camp has been permitted and construction is slated to begin in the spring.

<https://www.dnr.wa.gov/managed-lands/forest-and-trust-lands/teanaway/teanaway-community-forest-advisory-committee>

Umatilla NF: Danny Chappel and members in southeast Washington have been involved in planning sessions for the upcoming trail season, discussions with District Ranger Susan Piper and her staff for work to be identified and projects in the Pomeroy Ranger District. The next meeting is upcoming.

Olympic National Forest: Kelly Lawrence is the new Forest Supervisor for the Olympic NF. Kelly comes from the Okanogan Wenatchee National Forest and is known to our members that work in the OKAWEN. We welcome Kelly and look forward to building a strong and lasting relationship with her and continuing the work in partnership with The Olympic NF. Kelly is currently working on developing her strategic plan, getting to know her staff and working with the volunteer partner organizations in collaboration with the Olympic and each other.

NON-Equestrian use of horse camps is becoming an increasingly bigger concern for stock users. This is occurring in Washington State and nationally. This issue will be a primary focus of Back Country Horsemen of America for 2021. BCHW provided BCHA with a list of horse camps that we know are being used by non-stock campers. This will be an ongoing item for BCHW, members are asked to help by providing information to the BCHW PLC Committee any time that you observe non-stock users occupying horse camps; providing the name of the horse camp, the name of the forest that it is in, dates and numbers for non-stock users that you observe. We want to capture all the information that we can.

BCHW Chapters should also be having conversations with their agency contacts regarding the use of horse camps by non-stock users. We need to generate ideas and solutions, and we need the agencies to understand the necessity for these camps to remain available and accessible to stock users.

#RecreateResponsibly This remarkable year led to an incredible influx of new users to public lands. In April BCHW was invited to join 12 other organizations to discuss an idea, talking about how to provide guidance to neophyte outdoorsmen; people who were heading outside because malls, restaurants, movie theaters; everything else was closed. It was also a discussion forum for recreation organizations to provide guidance for people to safely find a way to get back out in organized groups to work on trails. That little idea grew into the #RecreateResponsibly coalition which in turn has become a movement that now includes dozens of members in Washington and that has spread across the nation. See more at www.recreatorresponsibly.org

Understanding that this increasing number of users brings both opportunities and challenges that are not going to go away #RecreateResponsibly worked to create messages and guides for the general public that are consistent and can be used across all public lands. One of my goals for BCHW within the #RR coalition will be to turn more attention to how we teach and promote better stewardship of our public lands.

THE GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOORS ACT was signed in August. GAOA was initially put forward as a bill to fund deferred maintenance, and was primarily aimed at National Parks. Lobbying and input from recreation user groups and other organizations helped to add the Forest Service to this landmark funding bill. Our BCHW members were asked to contact our Senators and Congressmen asking them to co-sponsor and support this important legislation.

The next steps have been for the agencies to identify and prioritize projects, and to begin the work of coordinating with BCHW and other groups to get the work done in the 5 year time frame. For the Forest Service specifically The Act provides \$285 million per year for 5 years to address priority deferred maintenance on Forest Service properties. It is imperative that BCHW members keep it top of mind, and communicate with their FS Districts about deferred maintenance projects that will benefit stock. Projects for submissions in 2023, 2024, and 2025 should also be identified as soon as possible. This opportunity to clear deferred maintenance may never be repeated.

Kathy Young, representing BCHW and equestrian users, has been engaged with the East Cascades Recreation Partnership, a recreation collaborative that is working to craft and implement a sustainable recreation strategy for Kittitas County. It would be optimum for a BCHW member that is a resident of Kittitas County to step in to fill the spot for equestrian representation on this partnership. Any member that is interested in this ongoing effort please contact Kathy Young. It is important for BCHW to be involved in this effort. <http://eastcascadesrecpartnership.org/>

The Checkerboard Partnership - This is a group of individuals, organizations and government entities that is coming together to start a conversation about the future of 27,000 acres of privately owned forest in the Central Cascades. <https://www.checkerboardpartnership.com/> This collaboration is in the process of trying to establish a new Community Forest If you are interested in learning more about this effort please check the website.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Young, BCHW PLC Chairman