

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Olympic Forest Collaborative Begins 2019 by Building on Successes - Seeks Input at Upcoming Public Meetings in Forks, Aberdeen and Port Angeles

Partnership initiated by Representative Kilmer between Timber & Conservation interests has helped increase timber harvest and aquatic restoration projects on Olympic National Forest through consensus-based approach.

PORT ANGELES, WA –Representative Derek Kilmer (D-WA) & The Olympic Forest Collaborative head in to 2019 with an impressive string of successful projects increasing timber harvest and aquatic restoration on Olympic National Forest. A series of public meetings in 2019 are planned to obtain community input on future projects.

“Growing up in Port Angeles, I know that actively managing our federal forests is essential to supporting quality jobs in the timber industry, protecting our environment, and growing our outdoor economy,” said U.S. Representative Derek Kilmer (D-WA06) who represents the Olympic Peninsula. “That’s why we embarked on this project to bring together regional leaders to develop innovative approaches to restoring our forests and promoting increased harvest levels. The recent successes achieved by the Olympic Forest Collaborative show that we don’t have to choose between protecting our environment and creating a more vibrant economy.”

Over the last three years, the Olympic Forest Collaborative has worked across the Olympic Peninsula assisting the U. S. Forest Service with preparing commercial thinning timber sales to help the Olympic National Forest meet and recently exceed their timber targets, fund habitat and aquatic restoration objectives, and host public meetings around the peninsula.

In addition to assisting the Forest on projects, the Olympic Forest Collaborative has successfully developed and prepared two different pilot Habitat Restoration Thinning Stewardship projects which were sold by the Olympic National Forest. These two projects (H to Z and Big Stewardship) provide a unique opportunity to design a restoration thinning sale that provides timber volume while restoring habitat and provide receipts that stay on the Olympic National Forest to be used for aquatic restoration projects. This funded the replacement of a large failing culvert on Vance Creek in the Skokomish Watershed and is one example of the type of aquatic restoration projects paid for by stewardship receipts.

“The Olympic Peninsula Collaborative is working toward the implementation of progressive management techniques and prescriptions on the Olympic National Forest,” said Matt Comisky, Washington Manager of the American Forest Resource Council. “This work should result in supporting a long-term sustainable future for the logging and milling infrastructure as well as the rural communities located on the Peninsula, while helping the Forest reach its ecological goals.”

“We appreciate the leadership of Representative Kilmer in bringing all parties to the table to focus on areas where we agree rather than disagree,” said Olympic Forest Coalition Board Member and Collaborative member Jill Silver. “This collaborative process has created a pathway for forest management that will improve habitat conditions in the forests and streams on the Olympic Peninsula for a range of species. Currently, there are thousands of acres of dense and structurally simple forest on the

Olympic National Forest that provide poor habitat. Increasing the amount of carefully designed, habitat restoration thinning treatments in these types of forests will over time improve diversity and accelerate the development of more complex, older forest conditions.”

Over the past year, the Olympic Collaborative has worked closely with the University of Washington’s Olympic Natural Resources Center (ONRC) based in Forks, WA to improve their public outreach on the Olympic Peninsula. Through funding from the State Legislature, championed by State Representatives Mike Chapman (D-24) and Steve Tharinger (D-24), the ONRC is facilitating 3 public meetings in the Spring of 2019 and are helping the Collaborative improve their web site as an outreach tool. The ONRC has also contributed significantly to the Collaborative’s efforts to design and implement a monitoring and evaluation protocol for Collaborative projects on the Olympic National Forest.

The Collaborative is currently working on two new Stewardship projects for 2019. Queets Corner will treat approximately 50 acres within the Queets River watershed in Jefferson County. The Humptulips project will thin approximately 70 acres of second-growth stands within the Humptulips River watershed in Grays Harbor County. The Collaborative will work with local watershed restoration groups to identify and pursue priority aquatic restoration projects as part of the Stewardship contracts.

“The Olympic Collaborative is poised to add greater capacity to the Olympic National Forest’s restoration thinning efforts,” said Dave Marshall, Aberdeen & Centralia Timber Manager for Sierra Pacific Industries. “The partners are working to identify more projects with the Forest Service moving forward.”

2019 Public Meetings

The Olympic Natural Resources Center will facilitate 3 public meetings in 2019 where the Olympic Collaborative and the Olympic National Forest will highlight their accomplishments, discuss upcoming plans and ask for ideas and feedback from attendees on new projects and ways to increase their representation and involvement:

- March 26, 2019 (Olympic Natural Resources Center, 1455 S. Forks Avenue, Forks WA 98331)
- April 15, 2019 (Rotary Log Pavilion, 1401 Sargent Boulevard, Aberdeen, WA 98520)
- May 28, 2019 (Peninsula College, Lecture Hall J47, 1502 E. Lauridsen Boulevard, Port Angeles, WA 98362)

Each meeting will run from 6:30 to 8:00 PM

Background

In 2015, Kilmer joined regional leaders from the U. S. Forest Service, local governments, the local timber industry, and environmental advocacy groups to officially [launch](#) the Olympic Peninsula Forest Collaborative. The Collaborative is focused on increasing habitat restoration thinning and aquatic restoration projects on the Olympic National Forest consistent with the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan in order to increase economic opportunities on the Olympic Peninsula.

The Olympic Forest Collaborative is modeled on similar partnerships in Washington State and around the West focused on other national forests. It is the first of its kind on the Peninsula solely dedicated to promoting environmentally sound forests while increasing sustainable timber harvests within the bounds of the Northwest Forest Plan.

In August of 2018 the Olympic National Forest and Rep Kilmer hosted a field tour of their completed H-Z project with North Olympic Peninsula stakeholders that was covered by local radio (<https://www.myclallamcounty.com/2018/08/15/olympic-forest-collaborative-bringing-harvesters-and-conservationists-together/>)

The Collaborative's website posts monthly updates about the group's progress and offers ways for the public to sign-up for additional e-mail updates.

<https://olympicforestcollaborative.org/>

The Olympic Forest Collaborative includes a Board of Directors representing conservation and timber stakeholders as well as a non-voting Advisory Council.

Olympic Forest Collaborative Accomplishments:

- Through added capacity helped the Olympic National Forest beat its FY 2017 annual timber target. The target was exceeded by roughly 21% (29 MMBF versus 23.9 MMBF)
- Supported restoration benefits for upland wildlife habitats associated with restoration thinning projects for hundreds of acres on the Olympic National Forest
- Helped generate hundreds of thousands of dollars of stewardship revenue to be used for aquatic restoration projects on the Olympic National Forest
- Funded, through the Big Stewardship project, the replacement of a large failing culvert on Vance Creek in the Skokomish Watershed to address aquatic impacts on the watershed
- Hosted more than 10 public meetings and field tours to engage local stakeholders on restoration and stewardship projects on the Olympic National Forest
- Added capacity to the Forest Service for three other timber sales since 2016 including the Donkey Creek sale (7.3 MMBF) in the West Fork Humptulips watershed, the WWB sale (3.4 MMB) in the South Fork Skokomish watershed and the GFF sale in the Sitkum watershed
- Since 2016, the Olympic Forest Collaborative has attracted independent funding exceeding \$250,000 from Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Legislature, The Harder Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts and other sources supporting their ability to add capacity to forest restoration and aquatic stewardship projects on the Olympic Peninsula.

Olympic Forest Collaborative Board of Directors

- Jon Owen, Organizer, The Pew Charitable Trusts (Co-Chair)
- Matt Comisky, Washington Program Manager, American Forest Resource Council (Co-Chair)
- Thomas O'Keefe, PhD., Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director, American Whitewater
- Dave Marshall, Timber Manager (Aberdeen & Centralia), Sierra Pacific Industries
- Toby Thaler, Board Member, Olympic Forest Coalition
- Paul Bialkowsky, Timber Manager, Olympic Peninsula Operations, Interfor
- Jill Silver, Executive Director, 10,000 Years Institute
- Knox Marshall, Vice President of the Resources Division, Murphy Company
- Tom Uniack, Executive Director, Washington Wild

Olympic Forest Collaborative Non-Voting Advisory Council Members

- U.S. Representative Derek Kilmer
- Reta Laford, Olympic National Forest Supervisor
- Bob Metzger, Retired Olympic National Forest Fisheries Biologist
- Patricia A. Jones, PhD, Executive Director, Olympic Forest Coalition

- Katherine Hollis, The Mountaineers
- Connie Gallant, Chair, Wild Olympics Campaign
- Bernard Bormann, Director, Olympic Natural Resources Center