

# WRRRA Fall Business Meeting and Elections

## October 21, 2021

### Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm by Kevin O. Kevin said it's not optimum to meet this way, but with the restrictions on gathering in indoor spaces, it was decided we could not effectively hold this event in person. So the decision was made to have the meeting online.

#### **Meeting Overview, Zoom Protocols, and Agenda**

Kevin asked everyone to keep themselves on mute, and take themselves off mute, when they want to ask a question.

Kevin went over the agenda, and the subjects we'll be covering.

#### **Elections**

Rena gave an overview of the elections, 6 positions are open. Rena will ask for nominations from the floor and if there are none, we'll vote by acclamation for the entire slate of candidates.

Rena asked if there are any nominations from the floor, and asked whether any tract members would like their tract alone to vote for their tract rep. Hearing no new nominations, and no one asking for a tract specific vote. The vote by acclamation was unanimous.

- Secretary (Nominee – Chris Masterson)
- Treasurer (Nominee – Eric Carlsen)
- Goat Creek Rep (Nominee – David Dittmar)
- Dalles Rep (Co-Nominees – David & Molly Ebel)
- Silver Creek Rep (Nominee – Dennette Wood)
- Silver Springs Rep (Nominee – Ken Ring)

At the time of the Election, there were 33 members present on the call. This constitutes a quorum under Washington law (requiring at least 10% of members to be present), and therefore the election results are official.

Rena invited folks to become involved with the WRRRA, and consider joining the board down the road.

Outgoing board members Martin Rand, Jennae and Patrick Brannon, and Kevin Bannon, were recognized and thanked for their service.

#### **Cabin Break-Ins**

There were a number of break-ins in our cabins, mostly in Silver Springs, a few in Goat Creek. A number of items taken, and cabins damaged. As a result folks started going to their cabins, watching for suspicious people, and we've been in contact with law enforcement and Forest Service authorities regarding the break ins. Kevin understands there were about 12 cabins broken into. Perhaps more attempts. Generators, stereos, tools, etc. were taken. The break-ins are still an active investigation, so we can't share a lot of details. It quickly became apparent that the perpetrators of at least some of the break-ins were people living in an encampment on the White River, across the highway from the Silver Springs tract, behind the Crystal Mountain sign. There were a lot of people down there, with a number of cars. It's on Forest Service land

so Pierce County law enforcement went to the camp with the Forest Service law enforcement, and Mt Rainier law enforcement too. A number of stolen items were quickly identified. There was also drug activity going on down there. They did make one arrest on an outstanding warrant, and the rest of the folks dispersed. The campsite is a mess and abandoned. The former residents have moved on, we don't know where to. It'll be a hazmat job to clean up the site. No timeline to do so. The good news is a number of stolen items were recovered.

They set up an opportunity for impacted cabin owners to view property that was recovered at the encampment. And some of the stolen items did make its way back to their rightful owners. Ken Ring added that for the time being the campsite is being monitored by law enforcement. Carl Peecher has also walked the site of the encampment, and didn't see anyone else, but concurs it was a mess.

The colder weather and the rain will discourage camping, but as spring approaches (also shoulder season when there's fewer folks up there), there's every chance this will happen again. We don't encourage people to approach anyone who's suspicious, but take pictures, note license plate numbers, etc.

Kevin noted we have had crime sprees in the past, so this is not a new occurrence, but perhaps more cabins were impacted. So we need to find ways to help reduce our risk. Carl Peecher suggested we create stickers for our cars, so folks would know whether people belong there or not.

The board will discuss this and other ideas to mitigate crime in the area.

### **Crime Prevention Webinar**

Pierce County Sheriff and other law enforcement reps (including the Forest Service) attended a webinar that was organized/scheduled by Curtis Thompson. A number of crime prevention tips and ideas were discussed, from reinforced doors and windows, to game cameras, and more. Curtis would like to create small organized groups of cabin owners for a sort of neighborhood watch, and to share ideas. He has a link to the video for those who are interested. Those who are interested should reach out to him: [curtis@cthompson.me](mailto:curtis@cthompson.me).

### **National Forest Homeowner's Conference**

The NFH conference is taking place online 10/22 and 10/23. The agenda includes Fire Prevention, Facts vs. Fiction on Special Use Permits, Restoring the past of our historic cabins, and an "Ask the Experts and Forest Service Leadership Panel". Kevin O. encourages folks to register for the conference. <https://www.nationalforesthowners.org/page/2021Virtual>

### **Financial Report**

Kevin talked about the current health of our organization. We have total assets of \$145k; when Kevin began as Treasurer, we probably had a balance of \$5k. Kevin Bannon said that if our organization is hit with another challenge (as we were when we worked to get the permit prices set at reasonable rates, with reasonable increases), the cost of fighting those fights is significant, and so it's important we have a healthy Cabin Defense fund. Our membership numbers have never been as high. Our membership numbers in the NFH are also healthy.

We had a decline in revenue but it did not hurt the bottom line. When we don't have activities, we don't generate revenue, but we also don't generate expenses.

Kevin thanked the membership for their ongoing support and gave kudos to the board for their fiscally conservative decisions.

### **Recognition Program**

After the death of Ken Leader (almost 3 years ago), who was a diehard advocate, leader, and supporter of WRRRA and the cabin program, there were many options considered. It was decided by the Board that the Distinguished Service Award would be very fitting as a tribute to Ken.

Kevin O. charged the newly established Recognition Committee (Rena Irwin – Chair) to describe and develop this special award. Rena stressed that the development of the Ken Leader Distinguished Service award was truly a committee effort. She said that the committee met for two years, via zoom. Committee members were: Tim Curran, Kevin Bannon, Albert Pollmar, Kevin Orth and Rena Irwin.

The award, description, nomination form, and process has been completed. Any WRRRA member can nominate another WRRRA members for the distinguished service award. The nominees should have demonstrated exemplary service to WRRRA and the Forest Service cabin program. If nominations are received in a given year, an adhoc a committee including non-board members is formed by Recognition Chair to review and make recommendations to the Board.

We have a lot of folks who volunteer to serve the organization, but there are those select, unique few who contribute in extraordinary ways and stand out. The award is intended to be a tribute. It is a Board award. It is not an annual award, rather given on occasion. It is not an award that is based on popularity or "clique" membership, etc. Nominees do not have to have served on the board. A special plaque will be awarded to a winner.

The overview of the Ken Leader Distinguished Service Award was presented, describing his exemplary service, as well as a description of the award and nomination form and selection process.

Full details will be described in the winter newsletter, as well as on the website.

### **Crystal Mountain Updates**

Perry Turner provided updates. Lots of preparation work is being completed, for infrastructure changes. Construction is slated to begin in early April of '22. The building that houses rental/retail/ticket kiosk/chapel, etc. will all come down and the new construction will begin. It's anticipated it will take 15 months to complete. Some departments have been moved around. Rentals are now up and in the temporary tent link building. Kids Club will be back and Kids Club and Ski School will take over the basement. The Chapel will have services in half of the chapel, and then the other half will be administrative offices. Perry says we should go to the Crystal Mountain website for FAQs.

Parking will be charged for, starting this season. Parking is included if you are a season pass holder, or if you are have 4 or more people in your vehicle. There will be a designated carpool

lot, and a designated shuttle, and there'll be someone who is staffing that lot, to ensure you have 4 people in the car.

### **Snowplow Plan**

Perry Turner will again be managing this program for SS, SC, GC and DC. Invoices will be sent out electronically this next weekend. The same snowplowers have been secured for the coming season. We're still looking for a better solution for Deep Creek, but in the meantime, we have someone committed to plow Deep Creek, it's just not the perfect solution. The invoice will also include road maintenance fees.

There will be an article in the upcoming newsletter about how snowplowing works. We all owe Perry a debt of gratitude for his commitment to do this work and for taking it on for another year.

### **Q & A**

Mark Wellington asked whether the current chapel building will be saved. It will not, but there will be a designated space in the new construction for a chapel.

A question was asked whether the break-ins have ended. Kevin O. said that he hasn't heard of any more break-ins, but also with the change in weather, it's not likely there'll be many, if any, break-ins during the winter. Kevin O. said that a cabin in the Naches area was broken into very recently. Forrest said that having a game camera would be a good idea. Kevin O. said that the criminals have gotten smarter and started to park away from the cabin itself, so a game camera doesn't always help.

Carl Peecher asked whether WRRRA had a key for the new gate above the Goat Creek cabins (old Mine to Market Road), that PSE installed. Martin said that gates like that are universally accessible by fire fighters or PSE staff, law enforcement folks, etc. and it's unlikely they would be willing to give a key to WRRRA. This does reduce emergency exits via road (uphill to Crystal Mountain), and is additional reason why the culvert and connecting road over Goat Creek should be installed.