

MINUTES Feb 20, 5:30-7:00 pm - Citizens' Climate Lobby
Community Congregational Church, Pullman or via Zoom

Attendees: Simon Smith, Shannon Scott, Paul Spencer, Alex Hammond, Andrika Kuhle, Scott Kuhle, Kate Whiting, John Trombold, Francy Bose, Bill Voxman, Steve Flint, Kent Keller, Bill Engels, Casey Dettlaff, Marilyn Von Seggern, Mac Cantrell, Nella Letizia, Kathy Prout, Margaret Davis, Mason Burns, Leonard Garrison, Linnea Erickson, Sheila Weber, Bailey Harpster, Ally Slahtasky, Judy Meuth

Values Statement: We are committed to working towards fair, effective, and enduring policies to address climate change, and to a process that is inclusive, non-partisan, and respectful of diverse points of view.

Introductions

Announcements

- Permitting Reform 2.0 – March 12, 7:00 pm on this [Zoom link](#). Mark Rohde and Skip Short, Snohomish CCL – Explanation on the roadblocks to building more renewables.
- Earth Day/Week
 - April 22, 2025, Ruby Park, Pullman – Pizza boxes to biochar
 - CCL presentation at Bishop Place, Pullman
 - Good Food Co-op Stream Cleanup – Sat, April 26, 10:00-12:00, City Playfields at 820 SE South St. <https://www.pullmangoodfoodcoop.com/events>

Communication Skills Exercise – Fix Our Forests Act (see end of agenda). This exercise prompted a general discussion on the pros and cons of FOFA. The bill already passed the House, is going to the Senate and will probably be changed there or in reconciliation. National CCL sees overall benefit, despite misgivings, and so supports the bill. Many orgs aligned with CCL are opposed. State of California in support. Pros: the Act would speed up review process if an action has minimal environmental impact, and thinning forests is a must. There's not a better bill in the pipeline and the situation is at a crisis point and cannot wait for better bill. Cons: Categorical exclusion needs to remain at 3,000 acres, instead of going up to 10,000-acre exclusions; the "fuels" definition is too broad; the Act works around the existing NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process; shuts down re-opening the review process even if something questionable is discovered. Will any federal laws be respected by current administration? USFS is part of USDA, which is under duress. USFS has reduced capacity due to job cuts.

Conclusion: Our Palouse CCL does not take an official position on this bill. Individuals can post comments on the bill site or contact senators.

Proposed Harvest Hills Wind Farm in Whitman County

Question: Should Palouse CCL take a position? We found out today that local CCL groups are not permitted to take positions on local matters like this unless national CCL first takes that position. As this is not a national legislation item, this probably would not merit approval. Locally, the Palouse CCL does not have a consensus on this wind farm proposal.

Discussion: The project is not inherently wrong. Endorsement of it may make local enemies.

HH environmental analysis seems good, but their statement that only 39/40 acres of farm land is impacted per turbine is most likely wrong by a factor of 2. Most of the farmers rent their land, and the negotiations are being done with owners, not the farmers on the ground. Exact tower positions, infrastructure, distribution lines not being revealed to actual farmers. Engineers are not flexible with changing placements to preserve productive farmland. Farmers believe they are being played off each other, and HH monetary offers change despite last best offer language. Integrity of HH company in question as result. Compacted soil under concrete pads cannot be reclaimed as easily as HH states. Concern that HH could change ownership or go out of business before contract is up. Transmission lines rule placement decisions without any alterations possible, according to HH practice. Inherent value of wind power not in dispute for CCL. The development should be done in the public interest, not determined by private profit. Newer designs are more efficient, 200 wattage output significant. BUT, transmission lines have to be much larger. In Kansas (different company?) there is compensation for property values lowered by change in vista.

Support NOAA - Take a few minutes to send your message in defense of NOAA at <https://tinyurl.com/CCLforNOAA>

Defend the Inflation Reduction Act (social media, LTE) – Mac. IRA defense (see WAPO article <https://wapo.st/410LboW>) for estimation of money for projects in your specific area. Post on social media and tag your Congresspeople.

Information on contact process at congressional offices

Offices sort emails by category; emails are not read as soon as calls are heard. Alter some of the language in a mass email text to get more attention. Because things are sometimes moving quickly in committees, act promptly on notices to contact Congress. Try calling local offices when messages are full at DC offices. 5 Calls <https://5calls.org/> is one tool that allows calls to get tracked more quickly. It suggests general issues for contacting MOCs.

“Climate Bootcamp” project — Simon. This workshop will provide action training for those with climate anxiety, especially youth and seniors, maybe sororities and fraternities. Moscow HS environmental club sponsor is enthusiastic, Pullman HS not clear. Hands-on training in actions like talking about climate and solutions, writing postcards, emails, and Letters to Editor, and calling members of Congress will be provided. We need a better name for the workshops: “Building Agency”, “Hiking Bootcamp”, “Practicing Democracy”? Anyone interested in helping to plan the workshops is welcome at an upcoming planning meeting: Feb 27, 9 am, Neills Coffee in Pullman.

Lobby meetings this month – Leonard, Autumn, Kent, Bill

Reports: Sen. Crapo’s office visit went well, CCL was listened to on NOAA, IRA, FOIA, permitting reform, lost jobs in Idaho. Staff took notes, indicated things are happening too fast right now. Kent, Autumn, and Bill E will meet with Rep. Baumgartner’s office next week.

Ongoing Palouse CCL Initiatives and Actions

- **Lobbying Congress** - Ian S.(Senator Risch), Mac (Senator Crapo, ID), Judy (Rep. Michael Baumgartner, WA)
- **National CCL Initiatives: local team leaders:**
 - **Carbon Pricing:** Carbon Border Adjustments— Margaret Davis (lead)
 - **Building Electrification and Efficiency**—Mary DuPree and Mac Cantrell (leads)
 - **Healthy Forests**—Leonard Garrison (lead)
 - **Permitting Reform**
- **Pullman City** – Marilyn Von Seggern
- **Moscow City** – Mary DuPree
 - Saving Green Columns
- **Tabling** – Simon Smith
- **Agriculture and rural issues**—Judy Meuth, Bill Voxman, Kathy Dawes
- **Publications** – Judy Meuth; Website – Joe Pallen; Facebook—Margaret Davis
- **Social Media** – Gisell Zuniga
- **Presentations** – Judy Meuth – Bishop Place Earth Day/Week talk

Continuing Individual Actions

- Watch the monthly national call on the 3rd Saturday of the month on CCL Community
- Log actions on CCL’s Action Tracker: <https://community.citizensclimate.org/actions/home>
- Send photos and info about CCL and our activities to Margaret Davis and Gisell Zuniga

Next meeting Mar 20, 5:30-7, 1912 Center Fiske Room, Moscow

Communication Skills Exercise

Friend: Hey, I saw something about the Fix Our Forests Act on BlueSky today. What’s that all about?

CCL Volunteer: It’s a bill to address worsening wildfires through better forest management.

Friend: Okay, so what does the forest management part mean exactly?

CCL Volunteer: Well, past practices like aggressively suppressing natural fires, not clearing dead trees, and early timber harvesting have made forests more prone to intense wildfires. The Fix Our Forests Act, or FOFA, aims to fix that.

Friend: So, how does it do that?

CCL Volunteer: It primarily achieves this by speeding up the review process for essential practices while upholding environmental standards, and reducing the risk of frivolous lawsuits while ensuring communities have early and regular opportunities for input.

Friend: That sounds good. Is there opposition?

CCL Volunteer: Some argue it undermines environmental laws, yet it does not alter the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires federal agencies to evaluate the environmental impacts of their proposed actions before making decisions, but does expand categorical exclusions in NEPA to 10,000 acres - a change requested by California and the U.S. Forest Service to better respond to wildfire risk.

Friend: Whoa, what's a categorical exclusion?

CCL Volunteer: Yeah, sorry about jumping ahead there. Under NEPA, a categorical exclusion refers to a category of actions that federal agencies have determined do not normally require an in-depth environmental review because they are not expected to have significant environmental impacts.

Friend: Interesting. So, is this bill likely to become law?

CCL Volunteer: It passed the House on a bipartisan vote with 215 Republican and 64 Democrat votes. It's now in the Senate. Many groups support it, including the National Congress of American Indians, the Western Fire Chiefs Association, and American Forests.

Friend: Okay, that's helpful. Thanks for explaining!