

## **CLALLAM COUNTY TLAC UPDATE—THE END**

*Bob Sextro*

After 10 months of meeting and hearing much data and detail from DNR about timber and timber harvests of Clallam's timber trust lands, the 20 appointed members of the Trust Lands Advisory Committee (TLAC) got down to actually deciding about the main reason it was formed. They finally asked should the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) seek reconveyance of the trust lands back from DNR for management by the county. The TLAC meetings in November and December took roll-call votes on the question of reconveyance and several other questions formulated out of thin air by the TLAC executive committee—all timber industry people. The two biggest omissions of needed detail and information during these 10 months were: 1) representatives of Grays Harbor county never attended a TLAC meeting to present their experience of managing their own timber lands (the only county in the State to do so) and 2) the actual details and steps needed to reconvey the trust lands from DNR to Clallam county were not presented and discussed.

Although reconveyance was voted down in an earlier TLAC meeting with an ad hoc motion and vote, in November it was officially placed on the agenda and reconsidered as the first question of the meeting. However, before the vote a public comment period ensued and 62 commenters (either verbally or in writing) asked for a NO vote on the question of reconveyance and only 2 commenters asked for a YES vote (so much for the fabrication from some members of the charter review commission and some members of the 2015 BOCC that reconveyance was being requested by citizens of Clallam county). The official vote tally on November 18 on the reconveyance question of was 3-YES and 9-NO (Sierra Club was a NO vote).

What also failed was the recommendation to form a Clallam timber advisory committee (patterned after TLAC, (ugh) to advise and assist the BOCC with DNR interactions. The vote in the December meeting was 5-Yes and 10-No.

The only item of concern that got approved narrowly (6-Yes, 5-No, 1-Abstention) was the recommendation to the BOCC that they seek to hire a staffer or consultant with forestry and integrated resource management experience as a liaison between Clallam county and DNR on timber management and harvests. The BOCC will likely use the argument that this liaison will pay for their salary/costs through increased timber sales and revenue to the county, but there was never any evidence presented during the TLAC meetings that this is the case. Skagit County has such a forestry liaison person, however, they were never asked by TLAC for details regarding the positive fiscal contribution to their county from this liaison's interaction with DNR.

The TLAC will provide the BOCC with a written report that consists of the listing of each question considered, the official vote tally and the minority opinions of those members that voted in the minority for a given question. Sierra Club voted in the minority on 4 questions and we will submit 4 minority opinions for those votes (these will be posted on our NOG website as soon as available). TLAC will conclude its existence at the end of 2016. However, as noted above, we need to remain vigilant when the BOCC takes up recommendations considered by TLAC whether they passed the roll-call vote or not.

After the meeting, two members of TLAC said that they thought all the NO vote comments had an effect on the committee members. **Never doubt that public comments exert some influence. Thank you to all the NOG members who made comments.**