

NBFC Full Group Mtg **DRAFT** Minutes

Meeting Date: October 23, 2019
Location: La Grande Ranger Station

In Attendance:

Steering Committee Members: Paul Anderes, Mike Billman, Nils Christoffersen, Pam Hardy, Kerry Kemp

Forest Service: Mark Bingman, James Brammer, Brianna Carollo, Kendall Cikanek, Bill Gamble, Brian Goff, Steve Hawkins, Noel Livingston, Chuck Oliver,

Staff: Jeff Costello (facilitator)

Action Items:

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Key Decisions:

- All present committed to supporting the Forest Service in obtaining CFLRP funds, and collaboratively implementing the program to the best of our ability for the duration of the program.

Open Questions:

- There is monitoring happening in three places (Umatilla NF, East Face Project, & Lower Joseph Project). It would be helpful to have common protocols, especially if we receive the CFLRP funding
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Meeting Notes

Preliminaries:

- Agenda Overview
 - Debrief last month
 - CFLRP: Moving to Tier 2
 - TASS proposals
- Approval of August Minutes?
Approved – all in favor.
- Next meeting: 1st week of December
 - 4th: Addressing the draft Operating Principles (this will potentially be pushed back to early 2020)
 - 5th: Andrew Merschel will be coming to visit us
- Monitoring – it is happening in three different places:
 - Lower Jo
 - Kahler
 - East FaceIt would be helpful to have common protocols.
- State Grant Proposals (FFRP) are currently being accepted for
 - Collaborative Governance – things like facilitation

- Technical Assistance & Science Support (TASS)
TASS is not for collaboratives directly, but for those who support their work

- Sheep Creek ID Team meeting occurred yesterday.
It was open to the public. Jeff, Rob & Brian attended.

Thoughts:

- great attention to detail
- Could hear that the Collaborative P&N thoughts were being considered
- Jeff strongly encourages members to sit in on the next one

Debrief of Last Month's Field Tour

- Institutional knowledge is very helpful.
Having Steve Hawkins in the role for so long is a huge benefit.
- Great anecdotal stories.
Q: What are the larger data about fuels Tx effectiveness?
A: There are great data. Kerry has sent emails on that before
(Mark Finco has great summaries).

There is a fuels treatment effectiveness monitoring database
It's in Firenet.gov (not clear on public accessibility of that database)
The Coronet Windy fire & Rail fire are in there.
This is very important to showing Congress that funds for prevention are being well used.

- Even where trees died in treated areas, the intensity of the fire was reduced.
That changed the way the ground cover came back.
- Congrats to the WWNF for having had fire on the ground so many times.
Actual repeated entries are impressive,
especially when some Forests have a hard time getting acres burned the first time.

CFLRP

- Jeff handed out the Tier I proposal.
We have advanced to Tier II
- Rex Storm has said that he'll support this.
- Rob Klavins expressed early support because he's confident that we can work well with Brian & Bill.
- Concern expressed that we are too small a group.
- RO reviewed our proposal & provided our local FS staff thoughts about what it would take to be competitive nationally.
- FS needs strong support from the collaborative
 - in writing the proposal
 - in presenting the proposal in January
- There is support now, and it will continue if there is a sense that there continues to be ongoing participation moving forward.

- This is not just about timber.
It's also about fuels and ecological resilience.
We have an advantage in that we're working across boundaries (Umatilla & WW National Forests)
- This is highly competitive.
The number of projects selected are going to be few.
- It's going to be a slow process.
The Secretary has to approve the RAC, and that is taking some time.
- If we get this, the CFLRP areas are going to be the 1st priority for the next 10 years, on both national forests.
- City & County Commissioners are ready to write letters of support.
They might not all like the word "collaborative"
- Industry support?
Woodgrain is very supportive.
WR is in touch with many of the service work contractors.
Grayback has been supportive in the past.
We should talk to Boise Cascade.
- A lot of the service work hasn't been getting done because commercial retained receipts don't cover it. Environmental organizations might be more likely to support it, if it was clear that the funds would go to that, rather than just more commercial harvest.
- Q: Are the environmental groups supportive of the overall vision?
A: We've come to agreements on particular projects.
- We are talking about setting up our forest to receive wildfire in historically characteristic ways
- Q: Can the FS actually ask for mostly service work to be done?
EG: Noxious weeds, aspen enhancement, retreating acres that are not getting done.
A: Additional pace & scale should be understood to include service work.
It's a full suite of actions.
- There are a lot of marginal areas, where needed restoration won't pay for itself.
This will put us over the top in many of those places.
There is a commercial component that will help offset those costs.
- This may be a way to improve our local small businesses who are working on small diameter utilization. If we could spend a couple hundred dollars more per acre, that would make a big difference for them.
- Two highlighted areas are the La Grande & Baker City watersheds.
Which are federal, but are definitely collaborative.
If the FS spent money on this, it may incentivize adjacent private land owners to invest in restoration.
- At \$200/acre, are we making a realistic promise?
We are treating only the easy acres right now.
The difficult acres could be in the \$600/acre zone
- According to the PODs analysis, we're green – we're not a big fire risk.
Q: I thought that didn't include climate modeling.
Models show that we're going to be very susceptible, in the future.
A: It's the values at risk issue – we don't have the population.

- We have very long boundaries with private land.
Big “Transference of Risk” issues.
- There has been some attention to economic equity,
trying to direct more investment to economically needy areas.
That would help the Blue Mtns.

Presentation on Proposed Tier II projects

- Three categories of treatments will be proposed
 - Signed NEPA
 - Proposed projects NEPA initiated, not signed
 - NEPA not started
 primarily includes Resiliency Project areas where data were collected, but project left incomplete
- There are ~ 200,000 acres of “proposed treatments” signed.
(NOTE: that’s more than “footprint acres” because some acres need multiple Tx’s.)
This is about 3 years, maybe more, of work.
That’s about 86,000 acres ~ 40% of the landscape.
~ 9000 acres have been completed with the current funding.
That’s only 4% of the total landscape.
With current funding it’s 11 years before we get 40% of the landscape.
With CFLRP we could get that done in about 5.4 years.
- Up to 10% of the CFLRP funds can be spent on monitoring.
If we were awarded \$4 million annually, that would be \$400,000 annually for monitoring.
- Acres to treat currently doesn’t include Rx Fire.
Cmt: Rx fire needs to be included.
- Suggestion: Note the activity on adjacent lands – there’s lots of it these days.
NRCS & private landowners are working, and our efforts will help move them along.
- On the Malheur they got about 70% of their proposals done
which turned into about 30% of the landscape.
Distinction: Malheur didn’t have shelf stock that was collaboratively agreed upon, when they started.
We’re ahead on that.
- Part of our application needs to be:
what will you do if you don’t keep getting funding?
- Concern expressed: Will this really be additive? Or will you lose other funding if you get this?
- There would likely be support from OSU for the monitoring.
EOU would like to be more involved in the work.
- Q: If you get this funding, what will happen to other things like watershed work?
A: RO indicated that “If you get CFLRP, it will become your program of work”
But there is wide understanding that riparian is important too.
- We’ve heard a lot from OR Wild about wanting more landscape restoration that is not just veg mgmt.
& fuels. CFLRP is primarily for veg & fuels. We shouldn’t lose sight of the other.
- Q: So ... is the collaborative on board?
Discussion ensued.
A: All members present, including 100% of the Operating/Steering Committee

voted to support the FS in applying for the CFLRP;
and to the extent possible, given our funding, for the next ten years.

- Next Steps: FS will see Tier II application with highlights about where our responses could be most helpful. This will be a major topic at our next Steering Committee mtg.
- Timeline:
As soon as possible.
The RO would like to review this.

Moist Mixed Conifer:

How is the FS currently planning in MMC & Why is that the right way to do it?

- Sheep Creek is a large % MMC
East Face had a lot of MMC, as well.
- It's about HRV & landscape resiliency, just like in dry forest.
- On the Wallowa-Whitman NF, there are three types where we think there's social license to treat:
 - Dry forest with moist patches,
where there would have been similar historic fire regimes
 - Fire breaks where Tx is focused on setting up PODs – so the landscape can receive fire
 - Previously managed stands...EG: lodgepole thickets, with 48" larch stumps.
These are on an unnatural trajectory.
- MMC did historically have fire ... not sure exactly what HRV really is.
Kerry's work will help us answer that.

Brian Goff offered a powerpoint.

- Look at the landscape, not just the stand.
The Umatilla is long & narrow – there are lots of neighbors
22% Wilderness – 304,000 acres
20% Roadless areas – there's usually a good reason – it's hard to get to.
19% Non-forest lands
634,344 Moist forest – 56%
8% Cold – 96,000 acres (mostly on the N Fork John Day RD)
- 47% of the entire forest is both
 - forested
 - available for active mgmt
- We are overstocked across a lot of the Forest.
This poses a big risk of insect infestation.
- The area affected by wildfire is larger than the area treated each year.
- Annual Target
~ 8200 acres/year – about 1.5% of available acres each year
It would take 67 years to treat all the available acres.
The focus is "Strategic Treatment"

- Q: if you only used Bill's areas of social license, how much would you have left?
A: hard to say. On the WWNF, it's about 30-40% of any given project area.
- There is a prevailing sense that "We're in for a million-acre fire, one of these days"
Especially given climate change.
- Q: What is "Strategic Tx?"
A: Working with Alan Agar re: fire transference in relationship to values at risk.
Considers prevailing winds, aspect, slope, climate
Treating to protect values can go out to 2 miles, to prevent embers.
It's wider than just a set distance around roads.

It also looks at habitat for wildlife.

PODs will help us define what is strategic.
- Values we're trying to protect are typically private land.
- Q: What else are you trying to build in?
A: Resiliency is first, especially insect & disease
Wildlife, fish etc.
- Q: 67 year Tx return interval ... is that realistic?
A: no.
- Cmt: "MMC" describes too many different ecological conditions.
- Cmt: If fire & private property are the only values we're being strategic about, it won't get buy in.
If we look to be strategic about fish & wildlife habitat that would be more palatable.
- Treating in the footprint of past fires might be acceptable – in many cases, those were as impactful as clear-cuts.
- Can be strategic to "scatter fire refugia across landscapes"
Places all over where there are likely to be surviving large trees as seed source.
- Strategic fuel breaks have an effective lifespan.
Is there a way to set things up so that we don't have to keep coming back?
- Fire is increasing in both
 - scale, size
 - intensity, more high severity
- Social license varies from district to district.

Kerry's TASS Proposals

- See handout.
- Proposal #4: post tx monitoring
NAIP is every 2 years.
Q: What are you really looking at?
Are these issues that the collaborative has struggled with?
A: ICO: are the results getting the appropriate variability?
Fuels – what's the difference between different kinds of treatments
& how they affect fire behavior?

A: What kinds of data can change the conversation is very important.
It's not always clear what those are.

- Proposals 1,2,3
Were very significant to finding consensus on the Malheur.
These are all continuations of work that Kerry has started.
There were big questions: have these forests even missed a fire cycle?
Is there a restoration need?
There was/is a set of scientists who believe that high severity fire is a good thing.
And Merschel & Johnston were finding higher fire return intervals in local systems.
But how far does that reach into the NE?
- Proposal #1
Calibrate stand-level data to Paul Hessburg's photos to see what we can learn.
Laura's data are all within areas that Paul has interpreted photos.
Emily Heyerdahl has similar data, Paul has photos, but they aren't interpreted.
This grant would allow interpretation.
- Proposal #3
We have a lot of different data sets about fire histories in the area.
This would be a beginning of a synthesis to ask how these disturbance processes change.
How does context influence these patterns?

How do we see where there's an actual restoration need?
- Kerry would prioritize a hybrid of 2-3.
Get Paul's local photos interpreted & calibrated to our local data sets.
There seemed to be general agreement about that.
- Kerry & Bill will go out tomorrow to prepare for the students on Friday.

Adjourn 3:16pm