

## N. Blues Forest Collaborative Minutes

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*Meeting Date: July 22, 2020*

*Location: online*

*Approved: August 26, 2020*

### In Attendance:

NBFC Members and Guests: Paul Anderes (Union County Commissioner), Mike Billman (ODF), Kathleen Cathey (Senator Wyden's Office), Nils Christoffersen (WR), Pam Hardy (WELC), Kerry Kemp (TNC), Vince Naughton, Katy Nesbitt (Wallowa County NRAC), Jon Paustian (ODFW), Susan Roberts (Wallowa County Commissioner), Darlene Rochna, Mark Webb (BMFP)

Forest Service: Bill Gamble, Richie Gardner, Brian Goff, Bob Hassmiller, Amber Ingoglia (Mahoney), Christal Johnson, Tom Montoya, Nathan Poage, Jamie Ratliff, Eric Watrud, Amarina Wuenschel

Staff: Jeff Costello (Facilitator)

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### Minutes Key

- Meeting minutes do not represent collaborative agreements, unless they specifically say so. They are meant to record three basic things only: 1) the issue discussed, 2) the major points or questions raised in the conversation, and 3) the resolution, if there was one. Unless specifically stated, resolutions are only the resolutions of the people present at the meeting.
- Common Abbreviations:
  - Q: Question
  - A: Answer
  - Cmt: Comment
  - Tx: Treatment
  - Rx Fire: Prescribed Fire
- Highlighted Items are typically those that require follow-up. (Usually suggestions for future agendas)

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## Meeting Notes

### Preliminaries:

- Lower Jo field tour tomorrow.  
This is an AFRC field trip, and AFRC has invited the collaborative to join them.  
Because of Covid, Field Trip numbers are limited to those who have already registered.  
We will be reviewing the Lower Jo agreements this afternoon in preparation.
- **Agenda Review**  
Additions? none proposed
- Upcoming Meetings:  
08/26-27, 09/23-24, 10/21-22, 12/2-3
- SNW workshops
  - County budgets
  - Policy updates

[Link](#) to More Info & Registration

- Announcements
  - ODF sold the 2<sup>nd</sup> GNA sale yesterday on the Umatilla called Four Corners – got several bidders
  - TNC and Baker Technical Institute (BTI) had a crew of high school students out to establish 15 monitoring plots on the East Face projects this week.
- **Minutes Approval**  
 Small change re: FIA plot location data  
 – they are not technically secret, but neither are they public information
- The logging equipment on the top of Fox Hill is not for MERA  
 MERA is a piece of property purchased by the County for multiple uses including:
  - mtn biking (which has increased with Covid), horseback riding
  - grazing, fuels reduction etc.
 It's on the face of Mt. Emily, so it's in the La Grande viewshed/WUI  
 County would like to make it a model for federal lands  
 We should have a more thorough presentation on this.  
<https://www.meetmera.org/>

## Forest Service Updates

- Whitman District – Bob Hassmiller
  - Patrick DEA expected August 10.  
 Dry Pine vegetation/fuels restoration project with wildlife habitat improvements.
  - Powder Valley – mining DEIS is expected in a couple of weeks, mid-August. This has 22 mining Plans of Operation that would be authorized in the Powder Valley area.
  - Pine Valley Range NEPA for the Allotment Management Plan will be late fall. Waiting on fisheries report after we get hydrology & soils reports completed.
  - Data collection for the Baker City Watershed is the focus for the ID team that is present.
  - Still impacted by staff shortages on the District
    - fish biologist coming soon
    - range position coming soon
    - wildlife biologist position has just been listed
    - silviculture detail did not happen (Covid & housing issues)
  - Little Dean – planned to have a field trip last Friday with GHCC, but there was a Covid close encounter. Planning on rescheduling for a day during the weeks of August 10-17. Will likely also include Oregon Wild. The Riparian Vegetation Restoration (RVR) has half of the planned treatments tied up in a sold timber sale, the boundaries have been laid out and the trees associated with the silviculture prescription have been marked. We established water temperature probes and plan to do Multiple Indicator Monitoring (MIM).
- La Grande District – Bill Gamble
  - Field Season is in full swing.  
 Full parking lot and empty office....
  - Aquatics contracts are going well Lower Fly finished and Lower Limber Jim on track for completion by end of month with small stream large wood placement starting in August. All work being completed by local contractor from Starkey, Oregon with FS oversight and administration.

- Active thinning and fuels work taking place across the district/forest and LGRD alone has about 5000 acres of shelf stock laid out and waiting for the CFLRP or other funding.
- East Face has two sales under active operations (Butte and Top Face), 2 other sales sold with no activity yet (Dutch and BnB), and 2 additional sale contract packages being put together for sale in FY2021 (Ladd, Badger).
- Wild Eagle sale being marked now as part of Two Eagle EA.
- Forest Service Sparta sale sold to R and G Investments and small blowdown sale (TG Blowdown) recently sold to Runnels Logging
- Fire folks are out and about supporting fire suppression efforts across the west. IHC crews have been in AZ, UT, AK, WA and OR, and the WWNF Type 2 crew is in N. California right now.
- High School interns from Baker are doing well establishing pre-treatment monitoring plots in the Butte TS of the East Face project. **Hoping for student report out to NBFC at some point in the future.**
- Five Points project – HFRA CE in La Grande’s back yard looking to enhance wildfire resilience through treating key ridge between valley and Mt Emily/Five Points roadless areas. Project will also help connect treatments from past Mt Emily and Trail/Hilgard projects creating improved defensible area for managing future wildfires. Collaborative field meeting with interested stakeholders August 6. Agenda and details forthcoming and will be disseminated by Jeff to NBFC members.
- Acting Deputy District Ranger coming soon - Dustin Holowell was recently the District Wildlife Biologist on the Malheur. The Forest is excited to have Dustin as part of the team this summer.
- Umatilla – Brian Goff
  - No major staffing changes this month
  - Filling vacancies
  - Covid adjustments are getting more routine.
- Heppner District – Brandon
  - Ellis – we’re hoping for a field trip there this year.
  - Trying for the collaborative dates

## Mark Webb

- Mark Webb, Executive Director of Blue Mtns Forest Partners  
BMFP is the collaborative on the Malheur NF, and was a CFLRP awardee in 2012.  
Mark was also a Grant County Judge when the CFLRP was awarded, and was very involved in the process.  
He is here to speak to us about the BMFP ZOAs & lessons learned after 8 years of CFLRP.

## *Zones of Agreement*

- History – before collaboration, enviros had shut down timber mgmt.  
Industry was desperate to do something different.  
There was an agreement that active mgmt was important.  
That’s what enabled the very basic beginning.
- Early project agreements were careful not to be precedent setting.  
There was a lot of distrust among parties.  
Field trips were critical to building trust.

- Trust was essential to building issues-based ZOAs.  
We started with dry pine.  
Required careful adherence to both best available science & local knowledge.
- Key to moving forward: accommodating our values to the landscape.  
“The landscape became a partner”
- We started to see science showing that we needed to take larger trees to protect old trees.  
Having James do his PhD research on the MNF helped a lot.
- Current goal is to integrate all the ZOAs and articulate a vision for the entire landscape.
- Now focused on adaptive management.  
Lots of monitoring ... both
  - field trips (qualitative); and
  - quantitative plots & data
- Q: How do you prioritize which ZOAs to take on next?  
A: It’s what the enviro community would accept.  
Example: When Canyon Creek fire was burning, we set up a research project with Vickie Saab to find out about woodpecker habitat & salvage.
  - it’s what’s possible, where there’s a hope.
 It’s a social process. “You have to go slow to go fast”
- ZOAs are also intended to help the FS do a good job.  
We are also asking the FS to clearly cite to the science that we’re developing.
- Q: If you could go back in time and do anything differently, what would it be?  
A: We should have started partying together sooner.  
It’s important to visit with people informally.  
People you may not agree with may turn out to be fine people over a beer.
- Q: How important was it to have the scientific community supporting you?  
A: It was essential. It enabled enviros to trust & take risk.  
It kept industry on board.  
Would be nice to have OSU or the research stations more closely involved.  
Most people are willing to follow the science.  
“If you don’t have it, I think it’s a wasted effort.”  
Cmt: it allowed the enviros to believe  
Cmt: it allowed the County to say that this was more than just giving into pressure.  
Fortunately for the county, the science didn’t say that just passive mgmt was what was needed.
- Cmt: It’s hard to draw the OSU researchers over to eastern Oregon. But people liked the way we were changing the paradigm of land mgmt from stand to landscape level. It’s going to be hard to involve the work that Kerry & Laura are doing in the newest EAs.

### **CFLRP**

- Submitted first in 2010, and were denied.  
Awarded on the 2<sup>nd</sup> round in 2012.  
Initial award for 640,000 acres & 2.4 million per year  
2015: submitted an application to expand our boundary & get more money.  
Now ~870,000 acres & \$4million annually.
- Expectations were not entirely met.  
Contractors tooled up expecting more implementation.

Expected larger projects. Moved from 7,000-acre projects to 15,000-acre projects and only treated 15-20% of the project area. Wanted to do 50-60%

- That didn't happen.
  - Management designations limited some of it.  
Early on, we didn't think we needed to worry about implementation.  
But, what we described in the ROD wasn't happening on the ground.
  - Partially because there was not enough money.
  - Also, certain shops were not at the collaborative table, and didn't know what we were doing.  
We would want a riparian area treated for ecological values  
Timber shop saw it as unprofitable, and would drop it.  
FS staff is not as on board as they were at the beginning.
- We've got half to ¾'s of the project area with signed NEPA.  
We've moved along, but it's been hard to get adaptive mgmt involved.  
We've moved too fast. Most of what will be implemented will be done without the benefit of the new understandings. EG: still seeing PCT contractors being told to leave trees at a 20x20 spacing, regardless of species.
- When the Collaborative & FS was willing to take risks, the RO wasn't willing to sign on.  
Need to reach out to the RO as a part of the collaborative conversation.  
Develop those relationships.
- Be clear about what % of the CFLRP funds go to increasing staff
- Do implementation monitoring.  
What's actually happening?
- The working budget on the Malheur has dropped \$6 million since 2017.  
So the extra \$4 million is replacement.
- Monitoring – use the entire 10% for monitoring.  
you need someone very rigorous, and well-funded to get the quantitative data.
- If we could do it over  
Four years to start.  
Stop for two years to incorporate adaptive mgmt information  
Then start up with new ideas.
- Q: The Tx footprints weren't as extensive as you wanted them to be.  
There just aren't enough funds to do all the restoration.  
Did you have a strategic way to prioritize?  
A: We focused on the larger projects.  
We were surprised when parts of the collaborative agreements got dropped.  
The PCT is not happening according to the NEPA agreements.  
That was a surprise. Some is due to old NEPA, but not all of it.
- Cmt: there was an internal sense of prioritization.  
There was a sense that if it was in a signed NEPA they could do it when the opportunity (money) came along. But there was so much going on that parts of it got lost. It gets hashed out in the ID Team meetings. Bill has been letting collaborative members sit in on those – that's a very good start to improving the communication. As much as possible, we should try to have the right people in the room.
- We could talk about prioritization of the shelf stock.  
We should do that before the money gets here.

- Cmt: We should prioritize the PCT here in the N. Blues
- Q: How useful was it to have a map of the out-year projects?  
On the Malheur it was on every other wall.  
A: It's been very helpful.  
Cmt: "It's the map I look at it more than any other map on the Malheur"  
Strong support for such maps on the Umatilla & WW.
- The Stewardship Contract – that's how it all happened.  
The value of the timber is covering the cost of restoration.  
But it's not been enough.
- Recommendation:  
Work closely with the County elected officials.  
Get the WUI treated first to get the buy-in from locals.
- Cmt: Dinky collaborative in N. Cal did a solid prioritization process that helped.  
Q: We had better buy-in for Rx Fire than for mechanical Tx. Did you?  
A: We had buy-in for both.
- How far money goes & expectations ... this is important to be clear from the beginning.  
Look back at the Malheur ... where would they be if they didn't have the CFLRP?
- Collaborative should be involved in
  - prioritization
  - implementation
  - (not just the) planning

- Lunch -

### The Lower Joseph Creek Project

- We will be going to see this project tomorrow.  
Today's meeting is about what kinds of agreements the collaborative came to on that project, and what kinds of sticking points they couldn't find agreement on.
- Lindsay Warness is with us.  
She was on the collaborative then as the Forest Policy analyst for Boise Cascade.  
Now with Woodgrain, who bought the Boise mill.  
She does DEQ & OSHA relationships now.  
She was also a member of BMFP.  
She was on the FACA Committee for the 2012 Planning Rule  
Worked on Lower Jo, East Face, Kahler, Thomas Creek, and Glass.
- Lindsay: started this in 2012.  
Wallowa County NRAC had just completed their analysis of the area.  
There were some opportunities for cross-walking our system with theirs.  
2013(ish) collaborative decided to take on the project.  
That was about the same time the Eastside Resilience Team started.  
Lower Jo became their first project.
  - Nils, Brian Kelly & Lindsay were the SC.  
SC proposed collaborative agreements around
    - stream work
    - IRAs & potential Wilderness

- general forest mgmt
- roads

This was presented to the full group in 2014.

- Everyone generally agreed about the proposed agreements, but some tension around IRAs. That word was “limit” - some people wanted work in IRAs, some did not.
- There were some proposals in the proposed action that we knew would not work socially, despite the fact that science supported them.
- FS did not take exactly the Collaborative agreement. Collaborative pushed back. NOAA Fisheries consultation took a year, and was some of the reason FS deviated. But the final decision did move in the direction of the collaborative. A site-specific amendment for trees >21” was considered, but ultimately not implemented, despite collaborative agreement on it. There was harvest within roadless areas.
- Other Undeveloped Lands (OULs) Oregon Wild has mapped some of these lands OR Wild would have liked to see them unharvested Other collaborative members wanted to harvest there very much.
- RHCAs There was agreement on harvest in Category Four streams but not in IRAs & other places. There was some tradeoff between this and management in dry old growth MA-15s.
- Lessons Learned FS is the ultimate decision maker. They don’t always agree with the collaborative.
- There is a “General Agreements” document from 2016-17 that synthesizes agreements across projects. “Umatilla General Objectives”.
- There are good agreements on Thomas Creek as well.
- Q: Is there anything you would do differently?  
A: yes ... it depends on the project.  
Now I would worry more about what objectives you’re trying to meet first, and then build the consensus on how to accomplish that.  
Q: And advice to the FS?  
A: there were some things that we had hard won negotiations on And the FS wanted to do something else because they had science supporting it.  
Recommendation: Go with where there is social agreement.  
It’s not worth the angst & mistrust that was generated.
- Q: How long did this take?  
A: Brian & Lindsay had a long history of a working relationship. Lindsay & Nils had a long history of relationship. There was a long history of trust built up. And it was ~ 9 months of meeting monthly. The Thomas Creek & Glass Creek went a lot faster. (but they were at least partly restoration of old clear cuts.)

### *Debrief:*

- Reviewing the past agreements would be a good place to start setting the stage for the next rounds of agreements.
- Should we ask Brian Kelly to make a similar sort of presentation?  
We could certainly reach out.
- How should we move forward on ZOAs  
especially in light of the fact that we're missing GHCC & OR Wild
  - Look at other collaboratives. BMFP is likely a good model
  - We should be forward looking & strategic.  
CFLRP is likely ... we should look at that as a guiding document to strategize our ZOAs.  
and to prioritize what to improve our conversation on.
  - BMFP seems to have sort of "contracted out" their ZOAs in some cases.  
Deschutes collaborative was a little more iterative.
  - Don't need to be quite as literature intensive.  
Important to capture the social agreements.
  - It would be helpful to have more industry representation.
  - Monitoring – we should be solid at it.  
The ZOAs & monitoring should go hand in hand
  - There are likely to be standardized monitoring questions across all CFLRPs,  
but that shouldn't use up 100% of the monitoring dollars.
  - Suggestion: Include adaptive mgmt/monitoring questions in the ZOAs.  
For example, agree in the ZOAs what kinds of outcomes will cause you to adjust ZOAs in one way or another. State specifically how you will know if you've had the effect you're hoping to have.
  - Start with really living the Operating Principles.
  - Would like to see Lindsay & other county commissioners back at the table.
  - Consider the scale of influence you want to have – speak to that specifically.  
Certain stands or the whole landscape.  
Issue based ZOAs will give you more influence.
  - Caution of going "too big, too fast" for social resilience.  
If we go too fast, we may not get back the folks who left.  
Honor the work that's been done before, and build from there.
  - It would be helpful to the FS if the collaborative had the widest range of folks
    - industry
    - Tribes
    - GHCC & OR Wild

Adjourn: 2:50