

NBFC **DRAFT** notes

Meeting Date: Dec 3, 2020

Location: Online

Approved: January 28, 2021

In Attendance:

NBFC Members and Guests: Paul Anderes (Union County Commissioner), Mike Billman (ODF), Nils Christoffersen (WR), Lyra Dalton (WR), Brian Dill (U. of Illinois), Steve Edwards (BRC), Pam Hardy (WELC), Kerry Kemp (TNC), Rob Klavins (OW), John Marshall, Todd Nash (Wallowa County Commissioner), Laura Navarrete (USFWS), Katy Nesbitt (Wallowa County NRAC), Susan Roberts (Wallowa County Commissioner), Darlene Rochna, Caitlin Rushlow (Wallowa County NRAC), Lindsay Warness (Woodgrain)

Forest Service: Jim Brammer, Bill Gamble, Richie Gardner, Lucas Glick, Brian Goff, Bob Hassmiller, Amber Ingoglia, Tom Montoya, Nathan Poage

Staff: Jeff Costello (Facilitator)

Important Topics Discussed:

- Presentation on 2020 East Face Project Student Summer Monitoring Program
- Discuss and Approve Steering Committee's Recommended Additions to Operating Principles

Items for Further Discussion:

- Press Release about accomplishments on the Forest
- Carbon Sequestration & new science

Key Decisions:

- Adopted New Operating Principles
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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:

- Agenda Review
 - Presentation on 2020 East Face Project Student Summer Monitoring Program
 - Updates from the USFS (Umatilla & Wallowa-Whitman NFs)
 - Discuss and Approve Steering Committee's Recommended Additions to Operating Principles
- Additions to the Meeting Agenda?
No additions suggested.
Agenda approved as written.
- Approval of last month's Minutes?
Approved, no changes.
- Upcoming Meeting Dates:
 - Jan. 27-28, 2021
 - Feb. 24-25, 2021
 - Mar. 24-25, 2021
 - Apr. 28-29, 2021
 - May 26-27, 2021
 - Jun. 23-24, 2021 field tour likely
 - Jul. 28-29, 2021 field tour likely
 - Aug. 25-26, 2021 field tour likely
 - Sep. 22-23, 2021 field tour likely
 - Oct. 27-28, 2021 field tour likely
 - Dec. 1-2, 2021
- Should we switch meeting times?
General agreement that 8-12 is good when we're meeting on Zoom.
It's a bit harder when it's in person, and there's travel involved – keep 10-3 for those.

Updates & Announcements

BIC Update

- Website has all the meeting notes & other updates.
<https://www.pdx.edu/policy-consensus-center/blue-mountains-intergovernmental-council>
- Last Meeting the group discussed "plan components"
& what guidance should be in a Forest Plan, and which decisions belong at the project level
- Most SCs are working on desired conditions.
 - the habitat/access committee has had the hardest time finding consensus
 - Socioeconomic: The "REV center" is doing a community profile.
Looking at socio-economic resiliency and how that might change with various forest policies
 - Forest Health – making progress on desired conditions
 - Livestock/Fisheries – making progress on desired conditions.

- Access/Habitat/Set-Asides (Wilderness, IRAs etc.)
Discussing road classification.
Elk security: Should we be considering other species that need large spaces?
- Q: Originally, we heard that the BIC would be reaching out to “the broader public” especially conservation groups. When/how might that happen?
Concern that not all interests are represented
- A: Ask the conveners.
The public has been invited to listen in & has done so.

Recent Monitoring Efforts on the East Face Project

NOTE: This portion of the meeting was recorded. Available at:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1fqdG9vCbLEs3mCJizxRiXlnLEabFJQD0>

- Presentation by Steve Edwards (Baker Resources Coalition), Kerry Kemp, Lucas Glick
Starting in 2018 the Baker Resources Coalition has been organizing high school students to collect monitoring data on the East Face Project. Students are paid. Total project cost ~\$2400. Paid by the FS.
This year’s students: Sam, Sarah & Silas
- Training in data collection by Kerry & Lucas
Steve Edwards did a lot of the coordination with the schools & other logistics
- “The Coalition” formed in 2018
Mission: promoting Baker City resources as a basis for economic development
To support to community consensus about natural resource mgmt.
- The East Face purpose & need called for monitoring.
This internship was developed to get that done.
- Key Monitoring Questions:
 - What type of forests do we have
 - What is the mgmt doing to it?

Since plots are surveyed before and after we can ask:

- did we end up with the structure that we thought we wanted?
- what are the impacts associated with each Tx: Commercial, Non-Commercial, and Rx fire

This sets a foundation for observing a stand over time.

We can ask questions such as:

- What trees lived/died?
- How have fuel loads changed?
- Are trees growing as predicted by FVS?

- Tremendous opportunity for the students who were in the program
Improved community understanding of the local forest ecology
- Gratitude to the FS for going to extraordinary lengths
to get the logistics done to allow this to happen.
- East Face Project details:
Location: almost the whole east side of the of the Elkhorn Mtns; 2 districts on the Wallowa-Whitman
Main focus: veg mgmt
- Forest is generally split into three types of vegetation
 - dry
 - MMC

- cold

Most of the public concern is around the moist & cold forests.
So that's where the majority of the monitoring happened.

- There is not as much consensus around how far into the MMC frequent fire occurred.
Cold & moist forests may have had a much longer fire return interval.
- Goals & Objectives of the East Face Project:
 - resiliency to fire, insects & disease
 - move toward HRV
 - defensible fuel profiles (prevent fire spread between private/public land)
 - reduce risk to developments (mostly houses)
 - increase fire-fighter safety in the case of a fire
 - economic opportunities
 - road system improvements
- Methods – “Modified common stand exam”
Focused primarily on tree structure
Sought data that would
 - be useful
 - be easy for students to learn to gather
- Plot centers are random
 - Used a variable radius plot to determine stand density
 - diameter
 - alive/dead
 - species
 - Height of the dominant & co-dominant trees in the stand
 - Four photo points 32 feet from plot center, toward center
 - seedlings at a smaller plot size
 - quantified fuels >1000 hour in a 1/10th acre plot
Used Rocky Mtn Research Station protocol

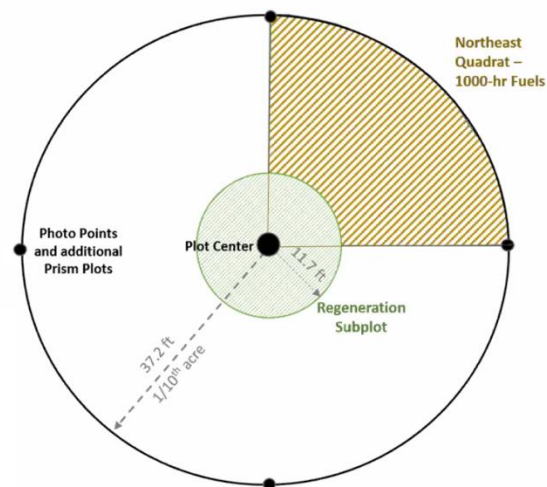


Figure 1. Plot design for vegetation monitoring plots. Plots are 1/10th of an acre with a nested 1/100th acre subplot for measuring seedlings. Fuels/downed woody debris are measured in the NE quadrat of the 1/10th acre plot.

- Used a similar plot design on Kahler & Thomas Creek
- To navigate to the random spots students had to use GPS
To achieve the quality, they had to work as a team
Estimated 30 monitoring plots.
The first took hours. By then end it took 30 minutes to record the data.
- Data recorded by hand,
- then transferred to Excel,
- then to a format compatible with FVS
FVS can then accurately predict how the stand will grow
and how susceptible it will be to fire, insects & disease based on SDI
- Key Results:
(see attached slide show)
 - Canopy Bulk Density was used to measure the susceptibility of the stand to crown fire
Goal: less than .05 kg/m³
 - % Canopy Cover
important for wildlife mgmt (marten)
 - Carbon Storage – also comes from FVS
This is likely to be important in coming years
- We'd like to build this into the future of the collaborative.
This would be a great long term project.
This project has shown that this is a viable tool. It works.
This gets the message out into the community
It probably is a good recruitment tool for future foresters.
There is now funding from CFLRP
- FWS also provided wildlife cameras that were set up at some sites.
Didn't get a lot of images.
But it's something we can improve upon.
- Q: Carbon Storage: There is a recent new paper by David Mildrexler about carbon storage. Do you know if he is using similar metrics to what you're using? What are the measurements on the Y-axis?
A: Haven't read the Mildrexler paper yet. This is a fairly complex subject. It would be better to have a whole conversation about carbon storage at some other time.

Concern expressed that Mildrexler didn't account for successional dynamics in a fire-adapted ecosystem. There is a group of local scientists working on a response to the Mildrexler paper.

Other potentially relevant papers about carbon storage:

- Austin, K.G., Baker, J.S., Sohngen, B.L. *et al.* The economic costs of planting, preserving, and managing the world's forests to mitigate climate change. *Nat Commun* **11**, 5946 (2020).
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-19578-z>
for a lay-persons description see:
<https://abcnews.go.com/US/forest-management-reduce-carbon-dioxide-emissions-billions-tons/story?id=74466695>
- Tepley, A. J., Hood, S. M., Keyes, C. R., and Sala, A.. 2020. Forest restoration treatments in a ponderosa pine forest enhance physiological activity and growth under climatic stress. *Ecological Applications* 30(8):e02188. [10.1002/eap.2188](https://doi.org/10.1002/eap.2188)
- Q: to Lucas: there was no disturbance accounted for in the FVS predictions. Is that realistic?
A: That's right – both that disturbance isn't accounted for, and that no disturbance is unrealistic.

These runs are pretty elementary.

What we can look at is

- how long a stand will likely remain in the “management zone”; and
- how the risk of disturbance changes over time.

- Suggestion: add drone photography for context
Straight down photos & some obliques could be very helpful.

Cmt: Joel Harder might be developing apps for drone data for forest mgmt.
5-6 years ago he got funding from Regional Solutions to buy gear for this
that might still be available.

My Blue Mtns Woodlands Partnership is working on some drone data
to determine pre-post stand structure etc.

Cove High School has a robust drone program

New company in Pendleton that’s doing drones

We may be able to partner with them to do a training program.

- The Fremont-Winema has been doing a youth program for years that is similar to this.
Might connect with them about lessons learned.
- Overall: Lots of expressions of appreciation for the value given to the students
and the value of their work for the forests.

Forest Service Updates

Umatilla SO – Reported by Brian Goff

- Continuing to work under Covid.
Keeping the full workforce employed
Implemented a full program of work for 2020.
Expect the same for 2021.
Got protocols in place that are making it safe.
- Last year’s fire season was off the charts nationally, even though it was tame in our region
We had local personnel at a lot of those fires.
That’s been weighing on people.
- Early 2020 there was flood damage to a lot of roads
We’ve been doing a lot of maintenance.
- There’s been a national investment in facilities
We had a lot of “shovel ready” projects, and we’ve been funded for several of them.
- Landscape Prioritization Process with Alan Ager
Been working with them to “tell our story” ... it’s going well.
Richie Gardner has been involved.
- **Additions by Richie Gardner – Climate Change Coordinator for the Umatilla**
Expecting an emphasis on carbon storage with the new administration
Glad to have the Blue Mtn vulnerability assessment done.
- White Bark Pine was proposed for listing as threatened under the ESA
This could affect management

- Aspen restoration – We committed to a lot of it in the CFLRP. But, we can't afford to just put fences around every stand. Looking for better ways to accomplish the goals.

Pomeroy District – District Ranger Susan Piper

- no updates

Hepner – District Ranger Brandon Houck

- Ellis – in process
Very successful field trip in October. A lot of the collaborative attended. See yesterday's notes for additional details.

N. Fork John Day (aka Ukiah RD) – District Ranger Paula Gunther

- Davis – Forest health & insect issues
Hopefully going to be a GNA

Walla Walla RD – District Ranger Aaron Gagnon

- High Buck – in process
- Upper Touchet – no updates
- Elbow – forest health project
Hoping to implement via GNA

Wallowa Whitman SO

La Grande RD - District Ranger Bill Gamble

- Five Points WUI Project: Two successful collaborative field tours this fall. Gratitude for everyone's attendance and productive dialogue. Will be sending out a scoping package for the project in January (delayed scoping to avoid holiday season) with revisions to proposal based on the collaborative conversations.
- East Face - Timber sale operations have ceased for the winter on Top Face because of early snow. The 6th and final timber sale – Badger – is ready for advertisement. Some good progress made on pile burning units along the 73 road/Anthony Lakes highway this fall by the Whitman folks
- The prolonged pandemic is impacting our productivity, especially our working parents who are juggling day care, in-home school and their regular day jobs. Timelines for Sheep Creek have slipped due to these impacts, but we continue to move forward as much as possible with plans for draft EA out in mid-January 2021 and decision signed early summer 2021. This will not affect implementation in 2021.
- Excited to report another amazing year of aquatic restoration accomplishments in 2020 in Upper Grande Ronde Basin. A few highlights:
 - 4000+ pieces of LWD placed in over 650 structures along 13 miles of stream
 - 50,000+ seedlings planted along 7.5 miles of riparian area
 - Completed the Bird Track Springs (BTS) River Restoration project (being highlighted/recognized by NOAA in Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund report to Congress as the focal project for Oregon), and began construction on the next large river restoration project – Longley Meadows. Like BTS, Longley is the result of a tremendous partnership between BOR, BPA, GRMW, CTUIR, FS and ODFW with CTUIR taking the lead in implementation with local contractor from Union, Oregon.

- Not including the large, multi-million dollar BTS and Longley projects, 2020's aquatic work infused \$830,000 of partner and FS funds into the local restoration economy during 2020
- Working hard to set ourselves up for another productive year of aquatic restoration in 2021
- Q: Have you rec'd timber target for 2021?
A: No expecting about the same as last year
- Cmt: These are great accomplishments!
Suggestion: It would be good to get some of these metrics out to the local papers, especially as it relates to the CFLRP & economic contributions to the local community.
It would also be great to list a few goals, where the organization is going & what the added benefit would be
Conversation to be continued at Monday Steering Committee
- Personnel updates:
 - WWNF has hired a new customer services staff at the forest headquarters in Baker. Sharon Brooker joins the WWNF from Washington DC where she worked for the Department of Education. Sharon will oversee the forest planning, public affairs, heritage and budget/administration departments on the forest.
 - LGRD has two employees currently on promotional details – Sarah Brandy is serving a detail as the Mount Baker Snoqualmie NF fish program manager and Lucas Glick is serving a detail as a district silviculturist on the Gifford Pinchot. We are looking at a detail behind Sarah
 - Wallowa Mountains Office (WMO) also has some key players on details (Clint Foster) and many vacancies in their timber/silviculture department. Having a hard time filling technical forestry/timber positions.
 - Currently evaluating applications for the wildlife position vacated by Laura Navarrete. Hope to schedule interviews next week and make a selection by mid-December.

***Whitman RD - District Ranger Kendall Cikanek
presented by Bob Hassmiller***

- Baker City Watershed: Getting data input and existing conditions developed. Scoping should be shared with public in January/February. This is the main focus of the office these days.
- Prepping Patrick Vegetation EA and Powder Valley Mining EIS for draft releases. Should be out soon.
- Silviculture and Fuels are prepping and administering thinning contracts in the Little Dean, Tencent and East Face Project areas.
- Silviculture will be administering a large tree planting contract this spring and monitoring reforestation success.
- Silviculture is in the early stages of Planning above Halfway.
- Timber is completing unit layout in Tencent and doing initial recon in Patrick.
- Logging has resumed in the Little Dean Project Area.
- Trevor Lewis was promoted to Assistant Fire Management Officer (AFMO).
- Still have a few core vacancies.
 - Joe Sciarino is in a silviculture detail; trying to fill a Term District Fisheries Position.
 - Range recently hired an additional Range Conservationist to support the administration of grazing allotments.
 - Wildlife recently hired the vice-Ratliff position.

Wallowa District – District Ranger Kris Stein

- Reported by Tom Montoya, Wallowa-Whitman Supervisor
- Kris Stein is retiring at the end of December.
She will be replaced with Mark Bingman, current deputy district ranger (detail)
Notice for a permanent replacement will go out in January.
Replacement expected in March.
- Morgan Nesbitt
got slowed down with Kris's departure.
Did some field trips this summer
Mark Bingman will be working to pick that up.
- Great work with volunteers & partnerships to improve recreational facilities
Hosted about 13 different organizations, 200+ volunteers ~\$460,000 worth of contribution
- Fuels 101% of the target accomplished
18,570 acres - a lot of that is mechanical rather than rx fire
- GNA relationships are going well
timber sales & road closures for wildlife habitat
- 326,000 acres of "targeted investment"
- It was a quiet fire year.
Normally ~20-25,000 acres
This year: 130 acres
A lot of the personnel was out of town (westside of Oregon)
- Three town halls related to the BIC work
That was shut down due to Covid, but looking forward to picking it back up.
- Recreation Collaborative around Hells Canyon
Idaho Park & Rec gave them a huge grant for
 - paving the parking lot
 - getting the water system back up and running
- Worked with Baker County on a bridge that crosses East Eagle Creek.
FS granted the County a federal roads & trails easement to put in the bridge
- Q: Forest Plan Revision: Do you have a timeline?
A: We're being patient with this, and allowing the BIC process to work.
- Q: Will the Forest Plan be under the 2012 Rule?
A: It's not been determined yet.
Depends at least partly on how much change happens to desired conditions.
Would like to be able to re-use as much as possible from the previous efforts.

CFLRP – both forests

- An internal FS core committee has been established:
Brian Goff, Bill Gamble, Steve Hawkins, Amber Ingoglia, Andrew Stinchfield, Jim Brammer
Amber will be the coordinator.
It's going to take some time to get the communications down – maybe up to a year
We're working hard on that now.
We've been communicating with the other CFLRPs about distributing funds.

- Amber will be working with Lindsay Buchanan (WO CFLRP Coordinator) to put together a presentation about how CFLRP works nationally, and what kind of data reporting & match is required.
- The CFLRP Core committee defended the \$4 million request for FY2021 funds with WO/RO staff. They were concerned on our ability to deliver and questioned if we were planning on using CFLRP funds for salary. We reiterated our confidence in our ability to deliver in 2021 based on significant shelf-stock, advanced lay out/preparation work by forest employees and access to IDIQ contracts, and assured them there are no plans for use of CFLRP to fund FS permanent salary in 2021. May be a need for increased COR or other contracting skills as we look ahead to future years of CFLRP.
- CFLRP Monitoring – Jim Brammer
 There's been some background work with the ecologists
 Mostly to get the forest understanding their/others responsibilities & resources

 There's going to be a diverse set of folks with a lot of differing ideas ... could be chaos
 Looked at what kinds of questions have been helpful elsewhere
 - How do we communicate?
 - How do we keep long-term continuity?

Operating Principles

- Last version was approved at the June meeting.
 There were some additional concerns expressed at that time, and since.
 This is the result of those conversations.
- Discussed:
 - Slightly updated Mission & Vision
 - Additional Voting Membership Requirements
 New voting members must attend 3 of last 6 meetings; and
 Sign on to ZOAs (or explain reasons they disagree to the full collaborative)
 - New Accountability expectations
- Unanimously approved.
- Will have one signature per page to make logistics easier during Covid

Nomination of Lindsay Warness to the Voting Membership Status

- All in favor.
 She is now a voting member.
- She has also been nominated to the Steering Committee, but she needs three additional meetings as a voting member before she can become a Steering Committee member.

Adjourn: 2:36