

N Blues Forest Collaborative Minutes

Meeting Date: January 28, 2021

Location: online

Approved: March 24, 2021

In Attendance:

NBFC Members and Guests:

Brian Dill (U. of Illinois)
Jim Doherty (Morrow County Commissioner)
Pam Hardy (WELC)
Donna Heffernan (Private Citizen)
Kerry Kemp (TNC)
Jessica Keys (Senator Merkley's Office)
Rob Klavins (OW)
Laura Navarrete (USFWS)
Katy Nesbitt (Wallowa County NRAC)
Susan Roberts (Wallowa County Commissioner)
Darlene Rochna (Private Citizen)
Randal Son (Private Citizen)
Lindsay Warness (Woodgrain)

Bill Gamble
Richie Gardner
Paula Guenther
Lucas Glick
Brian Goff
Bob Hassmiller
Steve Hawkins
Brandon Houck
Amber Ingoglia
Christy Johnson
Noel Livingston
Tom Montoya
Emily Platt
Nathan Poage
Jamie Ratliff
Eric Watrud
Mary Young

Forest Service:

Anthony Botello
Jim Brammer
Brianna Carollo
Peter Fargo

Facilitator:
Jeff Costello

Key Topics Discussed:

- Progress on ZOAs
 - There is a "Frankenstein" version that includes all the project agreements
 - Should we refine more, or approve this, then amend? Approve now, amend later.
- Significance of the new amendment to the Eastside Screens to our local projects
 - Sheep will not be affected much – not so many large trees out there.
 - Ellis: they are analyzing an amendment with the new rule: no results yet.

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
Approved, no changes.
- Approval of last month's Minutes
There's a link in the last month's minutes to a recording of Steve Edward's monitoring project. It's been very inspiring. Recommended that people watch it.
Approved, no changes proposed.
- Upcoming Meeting Dates:
 - 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

Timing:

While we're meeting virtually, we'll be meeting all morning: 8:30-12:30

The 10-3 schedule was to accommodate travel.

When we can meet in person, we'll likely change that back.

- Yesterday was a CFLRP Round Table meeting during our regularly scheduled time.
That will likely happen next month also, but not indefinitely.

Updates & Announcements

- BIC Updates
There are four subcommittees:
 - Socioeconomic ready to start interviews
 - Hydrology & Forest Health
Both will be ready to present desired conditions in February
 - Access was not able to come to consensus
They will be bringing their results to the full group

- There's been some interest from other regions in replicating this process.
- The SNW Collaboratives workshop
They're planning on monthly workshops over the course of the summer.
There will likely be some in person field tours
May still be a chance to host a field tour
 - maybe something around one of our big projects?
 - maybe around the research that Kerry & Laura are doing?
- Operating Principles are complete
Please sign, scan and send a copy in to Jeff.
The Operating Principles can be found on the NBFC website under Resources or at this link:
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56f1cfc160b5e9fe82c0a602/t/60144881c2dad73eb5e66986/1611942019766/2021+NBFC+Ops+Principles+%28Final%29.pdf>

Forest Service Updates

CFLRP

- Really appreciate the round table meeting yesterday and look forward to moving ahead with our partners to create CFLRP the all hands/lands synergy we envisioned with our proposal. For those that did not attend, the forests have identified funding allocations and project areas for FY2021 funding. These include a variety of projects across the 2 forests that align well with the overriding goals of the CFLRP and shared stewardship opportunities.

Umatilla SO

- Biggest news is the CFLRP ramp up.
FS is happy to be able to finish up work that's been on the docket for a while.
- There is a new Deputy Forest Supervisor: Heidi McRoberts
She is coming from the Nez Perce Clearwater.
Strong background in fisheries.
Worked for the Nez Perce fisheries tribe for a long time.
Official press release: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/umatilla/news-events/?cid=FSEPRD877761>

Pomeroy District

- District Ranger Susan Piper

- No updates

Heppner

- District Ranger Brandon Houck reported:

- Slim snowfall this year: at 30% and 60% of snow water equivalent for the two snotel recording sites on the district.
- Ellis – ID Team is working through the analysis.
DEIS expected in spring
- Personnel
- new south zone wildlife biologist – Jason Kelton on board

- new south zone archeologist – Michelle Hannum on board 2/16
- new Heppner Fire Management Officer to be announced soon
- West Bologna Stewardship Project:
part of the Kahler – several hundred acres of juniper removal
SNW and RMEF have been helping
- HK Fire footprint: tree-planting is getting started
- Several § 7 consultations for range are ongoing
- Just wrapped up winter pile burning.

N. Fork John Day (aka Ukiah RD)

– District Ranger Paula Gunther

- Davis – no updates
- Personnel: fisheries biologist & hydrologist are both needed
- Four Corners GNA sale is just getting started (in the winter!)
taking advantage of low snow

Walla Walla RD

– District Ranger Aaron Gagnon

no report

- High Buck – no updates
- Upper Touchet – no updates
- Elbow – forest health project

Umatilla Landscape Restoration Prioritization Model – Richie Gardner

- Using Alan Ager’s scenario planning work
Meeting weekly
Working with Kerry Kemp
- There are a lot of tradeoffs that require conversation
Not all the values can be maximized at once.
- WUI, canopy fire, density ...

Wallowa Whitman SO

- Tom Montoya, Forest Supervisor

There have been lots of personnel changes: retirements & new people:

- Kris Stein, District Ranger on Wallowa Ranger District, retired. Expecting replacement in the spring.
- David Hammer – detailed into Kris Stein’s position until permanent is found
- Karen Gamble left
- Nathan Goodrich: North end FMO went to the RO
- Amanda Johnson is the new Acting Public Affairs Specialist

- Nick Zeta: “Lead Forester” will detail in for 4 months
- Sharon Brooker is the new Customer Services Staff officer

Great American Outdoors Act:

Got funding to work with partners in Hells Canyon Recreational Area

La Grande RD

- District Ranger Bill Gamble

- Sheep Creek:
Analysis is ongoing. A few unexpected issues have arisen:
 - Sensitive Needle Grass, a species previously unknown in this area, will need some mitigation
 - Some landslide prone areas will need special Tx
 - White bark pine is now a threatened species, and will need close attention.
 Timing: DEA expected late spring, early summer
- Five Points WUI Project:
Scoping package should be out next week!
This will include a story map on the web that looks great.
- East Face –
- **Aquatic Restoration Projects:**
Aquatic restoration work in the Upper Grande Ronde has ceased for the winter, but 2021 will be another ambitious year of work including hopeful completion of the Longley Meadows River Restoration project, initiation of the second phase of restoration in the Fly Creek drainage and continued LWD additions and planting in numerous headwater tributaries. We are also working with the restoration assistance team from the Region on planning a stage zero restoration approach to headwater reaches of the Grande Ronde River.
- Personnel
 - advertisement is out for the Wallowa Mountains Office District Ranger position (vice Kris Stein),
 - Jason Lyman is the acting FMO since Nathan took the WWNF Deputy Fire Staff position in operations.
 - Nic Zita from LGRD has recently detailed in to the presale forester position at WMO and will be focused on helping advance Lower Joe timber sales.

Whitman RD

- District Ranger Kendall Cikanek (often presented by Bob Hassmiller)

- Baker City Watershed: Getting data input and existing conditions developed. Scoping should be shared with public in March. This is the main focus of the office these days.

Scoping issues raised so far:
 - Whitebark pine
 - RHCA Tx's
- Patrick Vegetation EA
in analysis phase

- Powder Valley Mining EIS
Waiting on guidance for release based on political transition
- Personnel:
 - advertising for a fish biologist and silviculture position
 - Sara Ruitzel recently started as the new wildlife biologist

Wallowa District

– District Ranger, Mark Bingman (interim)

- Morgan Nesbitt: still working
- Lostine activities on the ground happening this winter.

ZOAs Update

- What do we want to do?
 - Finish basics now, or do a really fabulous set.
- General Agreement: Get something approved now, but expect to amend.
- Special habitats (aspen, riparian etc.) would be helpful.
- Monitoring – Paula – explore joint frameworks.
- Other Perspectives: Should we address them?
 - be inclusive – yes: seek to understand
(even if we don't ultimately incorporate those into the ZOAs)
 - try to understand, but shouldn't tie our hands to having to respond
- Not gaining efficiency if we don't incorporate all the voices.
- It's probably not possible to reflect everyone's agreement.
- Who wants to be on the short list to update these?
 - Laura N.
 - Kerry Kemp
 - Lindsay Warness

21" Rule Update

Emily Platt, Team Lead for the Eastside Screens update joined the group to discuss the recent decision.

- Q: Can you explain the difference between the "82 and 2012 rule when it comes to guidelines?
A: Can't explain the old rule exactly, but it's going to take a lot of work to go around the guideline. It's really just an increase of diameter limit to 30" for one species.
- Where it applies on the landscape has been clarified.
- Q: Can you talk a little more about the adaptive mgmt?
There's one required question, but it's not clear how that's going to be measured
How's it going to be funded & capacity maintained?
A: Yes: one question: continued maintenance & growth of large trees
RO has committed to making sure this happens.

Didn't want to limit the protocols, because new techniques come out.
Just wanted to be clear what results needed to be determined.

Didn't want to set a trigger in loss of old trees because there's been so much loss, it's not clear if the change in mgmt would make a difference.

- How might existing projects change with new Rule?
- Sheep Creek
 - There's not a lot of big trees out there.
 - There's very little reason to take large trees
 - Goal remains to create more large tree conditions
 - On Sheep, there is probably not a need to take any
 - Q: Even if there were a few grand fir at 28", they probably wouldn't be taken because there aren't very many, and you still need to carry out the purpose of the guideline: to retain and enhance LOS.
- Concern that we're not even going to look at taking trees >21".
Need to look at the new rule in the context of the new rule.
- Still awaiting new direction from the new administration on how to carry this out.
- Q: Does the new direction change the standards of what you would consider LOS to begin with?
LOS was historically just defined as x number of trees over 21".
A: Outside of LOS is to prioritize retention of old trees, using Van Pelt
- Implications for the Ellis Project
We had already incorporated an alternative that considers the new rule.
We're still working on the analysis.
- There's a file with Std. v Guidelines in the chat.
- Q: Should the collaborative come to ZOAs about the 21" Rule?
Or should that be left to the FS to determine as needed?
... no clear decision ...

[Adjourn: 12:30](#)