

**Wallowa Whitman Forest Collaborative**  
**March 26, 2014**  
**La Grande Ranger District Conference Room**  
**10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**In attendance:** Bill Gamble, Mark Davidson, Mike Hayward, Nick Myatt, Gary Miller, Mark Jacques, Joe Hessel, Chris Heffernan, Jodi Kramer, Larry McCalden, Veronica Warnock, Vince Naughton, Rex Storm, Bruce Dunn, Cynthia Warnock, Lindsay Warness, Steve Derry, Raymond Osipovich, John Laurence, Toni Molina, Don George, Paul Oester, Dick Fleming, Kathleen Cathey.

**On the phone:** Susan Jane Brown, John George

**Recorder:** Lori Baird

**East Face Project**

A draft of the Purpose and Need statement was introduced, and a description of the property was offered. This project encompasses land from Ladd Canyon to Anthony Lakes. Some additional acres were added around Grande Ronde Lake and into the headwaters of the Beaver Creek Watershed. In total, about 46,000 acres. Discussion of disturbance history, historic range of variability in the area, and representation of forest types in the area.

There are four main areas of need in this project:

1. *There is a need to maintain and enhance the overall representation and resiliency of threatened whitebark pine stands in the planning area.* This area has a robust fire history, which has had a major impact on the landscape, and will continue to play a role in the future. Of important value is the existence of four wildland urban interface areas – there is a unique opportunity to provide local and landscape connectivity.
2. There is a need to enhance the diversity and quality of habitat conditions across the planning area to assist with reducing impacts to agricultural lands and improve overall diversity and distribution of wildlife habitat.
3. There is a need to maintain and enhance connective corridors to provide for resilient and sustainable local and landscape level connectivity.
4. There is a need to support local communities and economies by providing a diversity of resource management activities, recreational opportunities and commodity outputs from public lands. East Face can play a key role in local and regional socio-economics by providing a variety of goods and services: forestry activities and outputs to support timber infrastructure and employment; forage and water to support ranching and agriculture economy; and local recreational activities.

Working together in a collaborative fashion presents a tremendous opportunity to build and strengthen relationships, embark in mutual learning and capitalize on the collective input and knowledge of the group.

The plan is to stick to the regular NEPA process for this project. The intention is to get scoping done this fall after a complete field season, and solicit comments over the winter, develop alternatives, go through the objection process, and look for a decision in 2016.

### **Cohesive Wildfire Strategy as it pertains to East Face**

3 Goals of Cohesive Wildfire Strategy: Improve Wildland Fire Response; Create Fire-Adapted Communities; Restore Resilient Landscapes. All of these are addressed in the East Face project. The cohesive wildfire forest management strategy is a holistic, comprehensive, and proactive approach to dealing with wildfire issues.

Funding is available for private landowners adjacent to East Face to manage their forest lands and to restore resilient landscapes. To date, 19 of the potentially 45 landowners have completed their applications and are set up to do some sort of wildfire management work this year. The goal is to create fire adapted communities and resilient landscapes throughout the area through public and landowner outreach. Appropriate prescriptions on private lands are determined by ODFW foresters, and reviewed by the FS team. Prescriptions may vary based on landowner objectives – the slant is toward healthy forests, reduced wildfire threat, and reduced insect/disease threat. The goal is to try to complement the treatment on adjacent public lands.

### **Field Trip to East Face**

Field trip is dependent on snow melt and access – will shoot for July 2014. Planning will coordinate with the Lower Jo project and work around their schedule. Collaborative members requested that the field trip be held on a date other than the regularly scheduled WWFC meeting – field trip on Tuesday, meeting on Wednesday? Can provide immediate feedback on the project.

The operations committee will discuss the schedule. As important as “when” is figuring out what are the most important things to see – a variety of landscapes, highest needs, potentially controversial areas, logging systems. The operations committee will bring proposals back to the group for schedules. During field trip: look at some of the private land management that has already happened.

### **Meeting Facilitation**

There is a need to identify a new meeting facilitator. Emily Jane Davis will facilitate our next meeting on April 23. It is important for Wallowa Resources to have a voice within the collaborative and have a “neutral” person handle the facilitation. The group will have an opportunity to see Emily Jane in action and can make a recommendation after the April meeting. She travels from Corvallis, facilitates the meetings of the Umatilla Collaborative, and our meetings are back-to-back. It was also suggested that the collaborative request facilitator referrals from EOU as well.

## **Lower Joseph Creek Project**

There are three significant issues that alternatives are being developed around:

1. road network
2. forest management strategies - particularly whether to harvest trees larger than 21”
3. what types of management do we need to do relative to inventoried roadless areas, and old growth.

Workshop scheduled for April 9<sup>th</sup> to talk about effects analysis.

Potential treatments include: (1) separation: re-introduction of grassland and elimination of encroachment –re-establish the historic edge. (2) single tree selection – ICO (individuals/clumps/openings) – variable density thinning within all age classes present. (3) Group selection (ICO variable density thinning within all groups selected). Species specific removal from non-historic trees and promoting traditional landscape trees. (4) Variable density thinning in all areas with fairly continuous infection of mistletoe. - emphasis on mistletoe affected trees. (5) Pre-commercial thinning in areas that have had some historical treatment – seedlings, saplings, poles - treatment of cut material would vary – biomass, firewood utilization, etc.

Effects would be defined by the intensity and how the post-treatment landscape compares to the pre-treatment landscape – whether we move current conditions towards our treatment objectives as defined by HRV and other agreed reference points and goals.

Old growth areas have been separated out – different prescriptions applied to these areas. Same concept, but lower intensity treatment in those areas – with the intention of promoting large and old trees, reducing understory competition and wildfire risk.

Treatments will discriminate against mistletoe – reduce infection, but don’t wipe it out. Focus on non-host species (focus on regenerating species that is not infected). “Donut approach” – if there is a large group of trees infected, create an “island” so that mistletoe infestation cannot “jump” or spread beyond that clump – isolate it.

Volume estimates have not yet been evaluated - working on roads analysis and determining logging systems to support desired treatment units.

Proposed wilderness areas: treatment within these areas is defined by the current forest plan.

Field trip: discuss logging systems, treatments in old growth management areas (anything nearby that has recently been treated that we can see?), savannahs, examples of areas that are addressed in the three alternative issues. Scheduled for June 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision**

What is a forest plan? It is a broad, strategic review of where we think the forest needs to go. It looks at the landscape and focuses on restoring the resiliency of the landscape.

There are three goals for a forest plan: social, economic, and ecological. A plan doesn't go into a lot of detail about law or policy – we have to comply with the law. There are, however, standards and guidelines within the forest plan.

A Forest Plan does not make site-specific decisions. Implementation of any project must go through a site-specific process (NEPA process). The forest plan doesn't make those decisions – it only sets broad guidelines, direction, objectives.

The goal is to keep the draft plan as flexible as possible. The current plan has been amended 50 times. It would be good to have more flexibility in the new plan. The plan defines a broad overall direction and establishes management areas (wilderness areas, riparian zones, administrative sites).

There are six alternatives in the draft plan. Some are more active, some are more hands off, one is a “no touch” alternative. Others vary in the amount of treatment, wilderness areas, management, rate at which we manage, etc. The Forest Service's preferred alternative is “Alternative E”.

On the Wallow Whitman, the revised forest plan and alternatives do not open or close any roads or trails. It defines desired conditions, but does not identity specific strategies. It is a much broader, over-arching view, not detailed or site-specific. The Forest Service has to comply with all laws, regulations, and policies. The Forest Service takes seriously its relationships and agreements with the Tribes (cultural/heritage), consider social well-being (how people use the forest and may use it in the future), and local community economic well-being.

Generally, there is a need to increase the pace and scale of restoration on the forest.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.