

LOWER JOSEPH WATERSHED FIELD TRIP

September 26, 2012

Meeting Notes

Agenda Used for the trip:

10:00 - Meet at Cloverleaf Hall – Welcome, Introductions

10:30 – 11:30 Leave parking lot - travel

11:30 – 12:15 **First Stop** – Lower Joseph Creek Watershed Overview - FS road 4600

12:15 - 12:45 Travel

12:45 – 1:00 - Arrive at Coyote Campground use facilities.

1:00 – 1:10 Travel

1:10 – 1:55 **Second Stop** – CD Unit - Cool Dry Forest Site – FS road 4650 030 and 4650 032 junction

1:55 – 2:10 Travel

2:10 – 2:40 **Third Stop** – WD Unit - Warm Dry Forest Site – FS road 4600-445

2:40 – 4:00 travel back to Enterprise

In attendance: Bill Gamble, Mark Porter, Dana Nave, John Williams, Rod Childers, Lindsay Warness, Tom Montoya, Ken Gebhardt, Cynthia Warnock, Mike Hayward, Jenny Reinhardt, Pat Matthews, Larry McCalden, Rex Storm, Stan Boatman

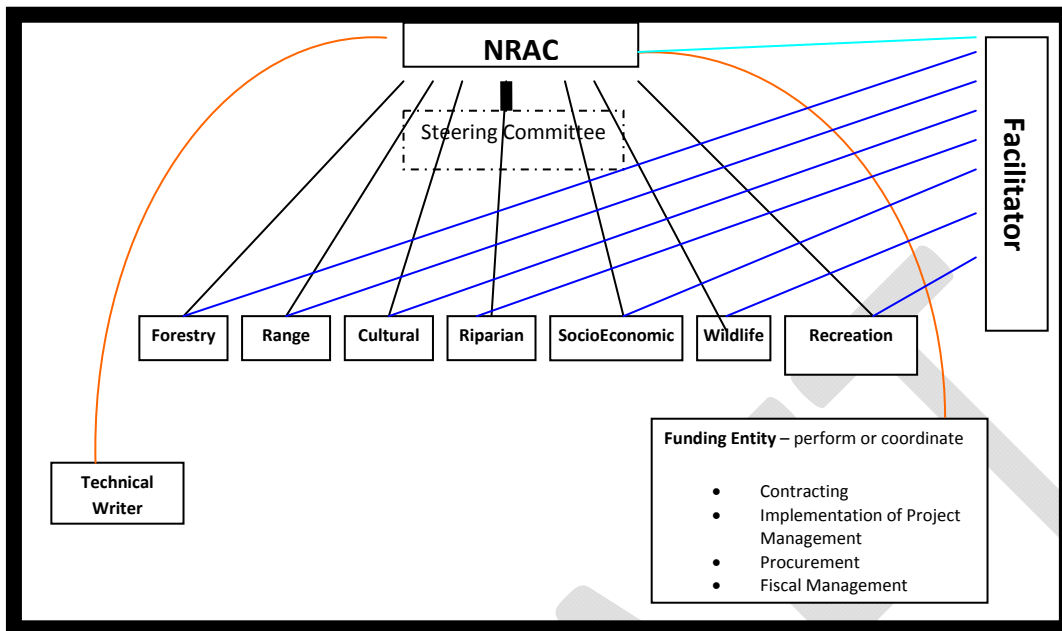
First stop - View Point off the 4600 road.

John gave an brief overview of the history of Wallowa County Community Planning Process and went directly into Lower Joseph Creek Watershed Assessment process. .

Lower Joseph Creek Watershed Overview:

1. Community Planning Process
 - a) Watershed Scale Assessments
 - a. Multiple Resource groups – Wildlife, cultural, Forestry/Fire&Fuels, Riparian, Range, Transportation (Roads)/Recreation
 - b. Gather Existing Data/Identify Gaps – Described approach for data collection. Most data was gathered from the field and current.
 - b) Three Major Steps
 - a. Assessment – Gather data, analyze data, determine current conditions compared to (HRV) historic range of variability, conditions and trends, changes occurring on the ground.
 - b. Integration - currently underway with a meeting Oct 9th with all Resource groups to review issues and recommendations and identify areas that provide benefits for multiple resources and areas that need further discussion and those recommendations that may have adverse impacts to other resources.
 - c. Implement of Restoration - identify projects for implementation and opportunities.

The diagram below was reviewed as the structure for the watershed assessment process and resource groups with Natural Resource Advisory Council (NRAC).



Watershed Conditions by Resource Group:

1. **Roads & Recreation - Rod Childers** — Brief review of roads and recreation. Most roads are involved in Access and Travel Management roads that County and FS are in agreement on were not of significant concern, however, roads that were controversial need further review. Roads are important for management implementation on projects. Primary recreation is hunting, wood gathering, site seeing, 4600 loop road used for day drives, two developed camp sites – Coyote Campground and Dougherty Campground. One outfitter guide within the Lower Joseph Creek Watershed.
2. **Range, Weeds, Botany - Mark Porter** — Rangeland are a large part of Lower Joseph Creek Watershed. Allotments are throughout the area. Several types of noxious weeds in the watershed. Some weeds are in containment status to prevent spreading and some are in control states to stop the current spread. Spalding Silene is one rare plant located within the watershed.
3. **Hydrology, Fisheries, Riparian, & Wildlife - Dana/Ken** — Watershed has several drainage bottom roads that are no longer on map but still exist and some roads have become a conduit for water movement down road bed creating silt and channeling. There are numerous springs that need troughs and possible fencing. Riparian vegetation is limited in some areas and are in need of planting and enclosures for restoration. Broady Creek has culvert work recommended under the Baldwin EA because of culvert size and condition.
4. **Cultural - Jenny** — Estimated Native Americans have been in area for 8,000 to 10,000 years based on dating results. Nez Perce had villages and camps. 98% of villages located below 2500 foot elevation. Chief Joseph's winter village was near the mouth of Joseph Creek along the Grand Ronde River. Camps

were located between 2500 and 6500 feet for the area. Within the LJCW, elevation ranges from 3250 at the confluence of Crow and Chesnimnus Creeks to 5200 feet near the northern boundary of the study area. Nez Perce Joseph Band had an estimated 2,500 head of horses. Over 143 archeological sites identified and evaluated within or immediately adjacent to the NF segment of the watershed.

Staples of Nez Perce: Fish: Salmon (highest portion of fish diet), steelhead, whitefish, trout, etc.

Plants: 25-40% of diet: estimated 34 plant species consumed by Nez Perce

Game: Hoofed: Elk, deer, Mountain sheep, etc., pawed furry animals & flying animals.

Fire uses: hunting, crop management, growth and yield for forage, root crops, berries, seed, traveling.



Photos are of Joseph Canyon only. North portion of watershed is highly timbered.

Stop two: Cool Dry site - 1:10 – 1:55 Possible unit for ground based equipment - Jenny

Area is a potential site for ground based equipment. Site is falling apart – literally; site has little to no ground vegetation due to shading and floor debris. It is mixed conifer stand - some larger trees for residual and possible seed trees. Stand appears to be in climax stage without disturbance for decades. Fuel loadings and stand conditions are indicative of Condition Class 3 description. Old skid trails/road beds throughout area.





At stop two the forestry, fire and fuels data was discussed. Current data was obtained through survey and stand exams of all forested acres within the watershed by a contractor. Both silviculture and fuels provided input on data needs. Most stand structures are not consistent with Historic Range of Variability (used due to FS direction and Screens). Structures most inconsistent are the lack of post-disturbance stages and Single Storied Large Tree (SSLT)- Single storied large tree type stands and the high abundance of MSLTU – Multi-storied Large tree Uncommon (meaning there is a lack of distinctive large trees component within these stands).

Single Storied Large Tree within the warm/dry (PP/DF types) are lacking by 40% as compared to historic. These include: Douglas-fir/snowberry (PSME/SYAL) plant association most commonly represents the G7 biophysical environment and the grand fir/spiraea (ABGR/SPBE).

Single Storied Large Tree is lacking by 25% in the Warm/moist (DF ninebark) as compared to historic. Current Single Storied Large Tree is non-existent in both warm/dry and warm/moist.

High abundance of Multi-storied with Large Trees Uncommon (MSLTU) exists in all stand types. The historic percent compared to current percent of the watershed are as follows:

within warm/dry – historic 15% of stands; currently 58% of stands,
warm/moist – historic 20% of stands; currently 63% of stands,
cool/dry (DF/GF) – historic 30% of stands; currently 51% of stands.

The La Grande area is seeing much of the same conditions within their stands as well.

Wildlife:

It's important to consider distribution across the landscape for diversity of stands.

Big game is a large part of the watershed but many other species benefit from a diverse landscape.

One of issues for wildlife in Lower Joseph Creek Watershed is forage quality and quantity. Stands are decadent and in need of treatment to promote ground vegetation.

Fire and Fuels – description was given of methodology in determining “priority” treatment areas.

Hazards – crown density, fuel loadings, stand layers

Fire occurrence starts in terms of start density areas on the landscape.

203 fires over 30 year period – 1970 – 2008. 177 lightning, 26 human (20 were campfires) (19 human caused after Oct 1st)

9 Large fires over 4,000 acres.

Three primary areas of start densities – Map was distributed for viewing

- 1) on the east side of the watershed off Forest Service road 4600 at the head of Cottonwood Creek,
- 2) at the head of West Fork Broady Creek in the vicinity of Coyote Campground,
- 3) north and east of Sled Springs between Highway 3 and the Joseph Canyon Rim

Percent of timbered area data:

1 Structural layer – 7 %

2 Structural Layers – 17%

3 – Structural Layers – 29%

4 – 6 Structural Layers – 47%

Percent timber stands by Crown Density

Crown Density Ranges	Percent of timbered stands
0-9	2%
10 – 30	7%
30 – 39	9%
40 – 60	27%
60 – 80	38%
80 – 100	16%

Down Woody Debris percent of timbered stands:

Heavy	69%
Moderate	2 %
Grass/Brush/Timber	11%
Light	17%

Overlay of fuels and vegetation priority areas were approximately 7,000 acres of mutual area.

Range group also proposed stand treatments for forage these areas overlapped vegetation proposed areas in neighborhood of 85% of the acres.

2:10 – 2:40 Third Stop - Potential Skyline Unit. - Jenny Warm Dry – PP, DF – 35 % + slope – line opportunities. This area was originally proposed as Unit 25 in Baldwin but was dropped from implementation. The stand has a great deal of PP with Douglas-fir in understory.



Stop was presented with information that over half of watershed is over 35% slope creating challenges for treatment. Remainder of time was through group discussion:

1. Cost of removing small diameter material will create deficit sales unless some large diameter material is included in sales to provide economic feasibility. Identify opportunities for large diameter material including 21 inch + material where appropriate from a forest management objective. Forest plan allows for it but only by amendment of the plan.
2. Need to be proactive on infrastructure to avoid Malheur scenario in our area, and potential loss of remaining mill infrastructure in NE Oregon. Location of Lower Joseph Creek project and mills will increase haul costs.

Lower Joseph Creek Watershed needs to approach treatment units more aggressively than BVine and Muddy sled projects. Treatments need to use best available science and improve resilience of forest stands. Past treatments were often too modest and facilitated neither promotion of late old structure, nor address stand and canopy density issues sufficiently to reduce fire risk ratings sufficiently. Recently obtained field data (timbered stands, rangeland, roads, etc.) is providing for better decision making.

Allow for improved treatment opportunities through stewardship and/or pilot projects.

Full collaborative members were very interested in Lower Joseph Creek Watershed with possible future resource overviews presented to Forest Collaborative group.

Having Forest Collaborative support is important to the Wallowa County's desire to move these proposals forward through NEPA and into contracting.

These were not part of the field trip but are areas within the watershed provided on the agenda to the group:

Lone Dog small group openings: Harvested approximately 10 years ago and planted with some natural seedlings coming in as well.



Discussion Points Forestry Group used: What would be best for management of area overall? Is this an option? Can we go bigger or smaller with openings? What about adjacent untreated areas?

TABLE MOUNTAIN AREA

Site: Dry ridge top ponderosa pine stands. Some of the PP is heavily encroached upon by Douglas-fir and grand fir.

