

Wasco County Forest Collaborative Group
ODFW Screen Shop
December 1, 2016

Attendees

Bill Noonan, Coordinator

Tammy Tripp, Minutes

Committee Members

Dave Jacobs

Dan Van Vactor

Ryan Bessette

Pat Davis

Harvey Long

Brenna Bell

Rich Thurman

John Nelson

Collaborative Members

Kristen Dodd, ODF

Kameron Sam, USFS

Rick Larson, RMEF

Tyson Bertone-Riggs

Andrew Spaeth, Sustainable Northwest

1:00 Opening Remarks and Introductions

Bill called the meeting to order. He noted there would be a slight revision to the agenda. The National Forest Foundation Grant necessary to extend support beyond May 2017 needed to be completed. He would like to see funding to include a Coordinator – to hire someone to do Coordinator and administrative tasks which would be separate from Facilitator duties. He would like the group to review and flesh out the grant application. Ryan added that the grant would require a letter of support from the Fir Supervisor, Kameron said yes, that would be no problem. Dan asked how much funding does the grant represent. Bill said around \$23,000 to \$24,000. Andrew said the process would help to firm up the groups goals.

It was decided that the first hour would be Collaborative business than the last hour would be spent on discussing the grant. Rich Thurman would start the meeting off with presentation on Prescribed Burning

Presentation: Rx310 Terrestrial Fauna and Prescribed Burning

Rich Thurman presented a power point discussing the fire effects on terrestrial fauna. What needs to be taken into consideration before a prescribed burn is even applied. After the presentation Bill called for comments. Discussion ensued. Brenna and Rick discussed the failure of the National Fire Plan that disallows fires to burn in national forests that could help naturally with woody debris management. The ability to make the choice whether to put a fire out or to let it burn is not available. Kameron said he feels that federal fire policy is changing to allow for modified suppression but the National Fire Policy hasn't caught up yet. Perhaps a more managed approach to fire rather than a let it burn policy. Discussion continued along these lines then the group broke to focus on completing the grant application.

2017 Community Capacity and Land Stewardship – Oregon/Washington Grant, sponsored by the National Forest Foundation

Bill noted that the Grant will be applied for through the Wy'East RC&D, which is a 501c3 entity and the Wasco Co. SWCD would be the Fiscal Sponsor.

Bill had the group clarify their Goals and Activities.

Suggestions included:

Interested in engaging with the forest service, address constraints: educational/knowledge and management needs; funding outside experts to increase educational capacity in order to better address policy constraints; engage the Forest Service to assist in changing and updating the Forest Plan; the need to have access to expertise in order to develop problematic recommendations to help inform Forest Policy changes and management. Since this group is so new the need for education is greater than established groups.

Financial Constraints:

The need to have a Facilitator to work out agreements, hold meetings, and the Coordinator to organize, network, do outreach and organize educational opportunities.

Summary of group discussion:

Bill led the discussion to Goals and Activities.

“What do you see as our organizational, local, and financial constraints?”

Tyson – could frame the response as: *The collaborative is interested in engaging with the forest service through the Forest Planning revision process.*

Brenna - To build educational capacity in order to better engage in that process.

Tyson – The funding can go to bring in outside experts for shared learning opportunities to explore policy bottlenecks.

Brenna - In order to increase our educational capacity.

Tyson – One way to think about is looking thru the RFP. It has some specific language and kinds of activities that could be funded, but giving that the funding is coming to the collaborative it's not we'll necessarily shape and direct policy, we are looking for expertise and added capacity to develop say, programmatic level recommendations that will help us go beyond the project scale.

Tyson – Programmatic recommendations and we can talk about how we have done project to project recommendations approach but are interested in exploring bigger scale and broader topics. Programmatic recommendations that help inform Forest Plan changes or helping inform Forest Plan management.

Discussion stepped back to the group's geographic area:

Brenna –When we are talking about geographic area for the next year what are we talking about? Just the Rocky Burn or are we talking Rocky Burn and surrounding areas? I think we have little more capacity than just to focus on that one area.

Dave – Are you talking about the question: “What is our organizational geographic area? I thought it was Wasco County.

Rich – It's the Barlow Ranger District.

Ryan – That has already been established with the first grant and with our collaborative as a whole.

Bill – That can be part of the narrative. We are a collaborative that started with an initial focused project area, the Rocky Burn. But our mandate is the entire Wasco County and therefore our next thing is to figure out where we go next.

Bill – Getting back to the question: “**What do you see as our organizational, local, and financial constraints?**”

Brenna – I would like us to articulate what our project is and then if we know what our project is we will know our needs. What is our barrier to getting to the project.

Tyson – The squishy but popular term is *Zones of Agreement*, instead of making a project level recommendation we are seeking to develop a zone of agreement on whatever.”

Brenna – “That’s our project? To find zones of agreement?”

Tyson – It’s to craft – yes.

Brenna – Our project itself is collaboration?

Tyson – Yes, with a concrete outcome. Find our end state on collaboration on topic X – like fire, monitoring, thinning, dry forest landscape, etc.

Bill – Going back to your capacity, if you want to do large scale landscape restoration, what kind of capacity do you see yourselves needing that we could actually spend some funding on?

Brenna – We need a facilitator to work on agreements.

Bill – And a coordinator.

Tyson – So we have organization and staff support, facilitator, coordinator, Technical assistance, networking, peer evaluation, travel related to collaborative group activities, development of an action plan, project proposals, community outreach and communication.

Brenna – Focus on the Forest Plan revision or informing the Forest Plan revision.

Bill – Are there any particular kinds of projects?

Andrew – What I heard earlier was one: Continued engagement with the Rocky Burn. There is obviously more work for the collaborative to do through the alternative development process.

Brenna – And part of that education could be some kind of follow-up, like a field tour.

Tyson – That would be good to mention.

Andrew – Then the other thing I think I heard was tied to doing some kind of a landscape assessment or workshop on landscape assessments and then using that to figure out what our next project might be.

Tyson – Those two things combined with like a programmatic approach are three pretty meaty things for 2017 to focus on. Group agreed.

Bill – So far, it’s going to be staff skills and facilitation, project management will be the coordinator, and it sounds like the main one it to build capacity to be able to do large scale restoration at a landscape level.

Brenna – Which includes seeing what the barriers to that might be and helping to inform the Forest Service during its Forest Plan revision to alleviate those barriers. So in doing the planning you can see what the policy barriers are.

Discussion continued with ways to conduct educational outreach to area schools and school age children to offset the Smokey Bear message.

Dan – voiced concerns about losing sight of their initial concerns: The Rocky Burn. He added they could spend funding getting educated and spend money hearing from people about what they think about this or that.” But he thinks their job as a forest collaborative is to address the Rocky Burn and make recommendations to the Forest Service.”

Bill – stated: Which we have. We cannot recommend a project within the Rocky Burn. What kind of capacities do we need to develop in order to continue to make recommendations or help shape policy and so forth. So again, it’s not that we aren’t going to not be talking about Rocky Burn.

Discussion continued about ways the group could contribute, what they could bring to the table with the grant: the opportunity to gain enough knowledge to be able to propose sound alternatives, ways they could contribute as a partner to the Forest Service to update the Forest Plan, education for the group, providing external education to others, how to come together from their differing viewpoints in such a way as to be able to fully get behind alternative approaches.

Summary

Bill felt the group had made clear their intent for the grant and stated he and Tyson would be getting together with Ryan on Friday to get the grant completed. He would send it out to everyone and would like the comments by Monday as he would be out of town on Tuesday for the rest of the week.

Bill mentioned that Clay has left the Steering Committee and a replacement is needed.

Adjourned 3:18

Tammy Tripp