

Wasco County Forest Collaborative Group

ODFW Screen Shop

March 2, 2017

Attendees

Bill Noonan, Coordinator

Tammy Tripp, Minutes

Steering Committee Members

Kristen Dodd, ODF

Jeremy Thompson, ODFW

John Nelson, At-Large D21

Ryan Bessette, WCSWCD

Pat Davis, Watershed Resources

Rich Thurman, At Large

Dan Van Vactor, Badger Irr Dist.

Collaborative Members

Rick Larson, RMEF

Tyson Bertone-Riggs, ODF

Chris Rossel, USFS

Whitney Olsker, USFS

Casey Gatz, USFS Barlow

Dave Jacobs

Michael Krochtz, BARK

John Paul Anderson, High Cascade, Inc.

John Dodd, USFS

Andrew Spaeth, Sustainable Northwest

Guests

Frank Cochran, NRCS

Janeen Tervo, Hood River District Ranger, USFS

Mark Terhune, USFS

Patty Walcott, Biologist, USFS

1:00 PM – Opening Remarks and Introductions

Bill called the meeting to order. Introductions were made all around.

Andrew handed out copies of a Letter of Support template drafted by Sustainable Northwest and the Nature Conservancy to support the Federal Forest Restoration Program, and also voiced support to use lottery dollars to help fund collaboratives. Tyson said the funds would be used for direct implementation as well as the collaboratives themselves. Bill asked Steering Committee members to review the letter and make comments if they have any. Bill will forward the letter on behalf of the group.

Rocky Burn

Casey presented an update on Rocky burn. He stated there hasn't been much movement to date. He should have more of an update in April or May. Bill asked what kind of input Casey was seeking. He said none at this point. Andrew asked what he plans on for the next meeting. Casey said they would be incorporating input and present the results to the group.

Crystal Clear Restoration Project (CCR)

Casey went over the scoping letter sent out by the Mt Hood National Forest seeking comments on the CCR Project. He said it is in the mail and is also located on their website. They included considerations based on conversations that had been received on Rocky Burn. They also consulted the Wasco County and the Confederated Tribes Community Wildfire Protection Plans, the Strategic Fuel

Treatment Plan from 2012, the White River Late Successional Reserve Plan and, the White River Watershed Assessment in developing the project. Discussion ensued between the group and Whitney concerning wildlife habitat management and treatment. Jeremy asked why they didn't just introduce fire into the stand. Whitney explained because of the moist growing conditions fire isn't a typical disturbance and burning wouldn't be successful like in more arid parts of the forest.

Dan asked if there is a priority between CCR and Rocky Burn for NEPA. Casey said they would be happening somewhat concurrently. However, the CCR is a higher priority. Dan said he felt the fire risk from Rocky Burn is more immediate than CCR. He didn't understand why CCR is a higher priority. Janeen explained that there is a fixed capacity as far as staff to accomplish goals as well as the question of funding. There isn't enough internal funding to work on Rocky Burn. Because of the CCR timber sale an unexpected opportunity came up through the Timber Pipeline Fund which provided a way to borrow funds from the Regional Office to pay for the planning. The reserve generated by the timber sale will be paid back at 130%. That 30% interest will then be put into a recreational fund to improve recreational trails. This will enable them to treat the entire 24,000 acre landscape. Whitney pointed out that the timber sales were important in order to replenish the Retained Receipt pot for other forest restoration work.

Casey added that the CCR is not a formal project that will be collaborated on. He said he was asked by the collaborative for the presentation and felt this was an opportunity to introduce the collaborative to other projects they are working on.

Dan said that since NEPA won't be completed on Rocky until Jan 2018 and the grant request is due in October will they have to wait another year? Bill explained to Dan that the RB got stalled in the collaborative and while that was going on, the Forest Service had to continue with other projects and that is when the CCR opportunity became available. Janeen was asked if the NEPA for RB could be signed earlier, she said she doesn't think it is a realistic request. However, they could speak to Kameron about it. John said that they needed to keep in mind that even if NEPA was signed, there is still a lot of groundwork needing to be done. Cost estimates, consulting with partners, etc. It would be a far better proposal if it was a year or so out. John asked about involvement of the tribes with CCR. Janeen replied that they had briefed the Tribes but are not involved at this time. The tribes are pursuing their own fuels treatment plans across the boundary and while it is not a joint project they are communicating and coordinating with each other.

Connecting the Dots

Bill asked the group to nail down what areas they would like to see as part of a field trip as well as where they would like to apply for Retained Receipts.

Jeremy got the session started by explaining that ODF, ODFW, NRCS, and the District met to see how their projects tie in with the project area around Rocky Burn. What landowners are doing around the boundaries with NRCS, what projects ODFW is involved with in the White River Wildlife Area. Without NEPA, they won't be able to apply for the Two Chiefs grant for Rocky Burn. However, the group took a look at other projects they have going on. One area is in the Upper Dufur Valley. NRCS

has been working with landowners on forest management projects. There are also three areas in close grouping with signed NEPAs waiting for funding. Ninety percent of the needed thinning has been completed. This is an opportunity to get some work on the ground and build the groups experience and capacity. Being able to show some successes can help show funders the group means business.

Dan asked if ODFW didn't have some work that needed to be done in the Wildlife Area? Jeremy said that they needed to find projects that crossed boundaries and brought multiple partners to the table and possibly use the GNA to get things done. Dan said he feels that it would be more helpful to the Wamic community as there is significant fire danger. Rich Thurman pointed out that the area in Upper Dufur is a community as well and they've had NEPA for at least 13 years on those projects and they are still waiting for funding. Jeremy stated again that it would be far more beneficial that the game area be treated at the same time RB was. It would open up better funding opportunities and more would be accomplished. He emphasized that the project area in Upper Dufur Valley would provide the group a shovel ready opportunity to stick their toe in and build some capacity. The three areas in question with completed NEPA are Sportsman's Paradise, Billy Bob, and Heslen Canyon. He asked the group what does the group want to focus on for 2017? The Forest Service said they would look into funding, ODF and NRCS said they would look at landowners in the area who might be interested in treatments on their land as well.

Bill asked what needs to be done to move forward. Is this what the subcommittee wants to focus on? Jeremy said the GNA is new and there are questions that need to be explored. Bill suggested that the committee could look at the areas Jeremy identified and the area that Dan identified near Wamic, then develop proposals for Retained Receipts. Michael said that it would make sense to put the funding towards Upper Dufur if those people have been waiting 13 years for movement on the project.

Members of the "Lose the Training Wheels" sub-committee are: Kristin Dodd, Casey Gatz, John Dodd, Whitney Olsker, Jeremy Thompson, Chase Brown, Frank Cochran, Ryan Bessette, Mel Gard, Chet Behling, and Tyson-Bertone Riggs. The group will come back to the April meeting with some proposals for the group.

Bill asked the group if they would like to do a trial monitoring project on the CCR as an experiment. Andrew said he could ask Trent to come back and establish pre-treatment control plots in Rocky in order to prepare for when Rocky goes through the process. Rich said that they should wait until the specialists get done with their analysis because they will establish what areas need to be monitored.

Bill began closing the meeting. He reiterated that the group is interested in building capacity, the "Lose the Training Wheels" subcommittee will be bring back some proposals to the group, hopefully have some information on the FFR and OWEB grants, start thinking about a committee for developing school outreach, and define the job description for the coordinator.

Adjourned 3:40 PM
Tammy Tripp