

Wasco County Forest Collaborative Group
ODFW Screen Shop
November 3, 2016

Attendees

Bill Noonan, Coordinator
Tammy Tripp, Minutes

Committee Members

Dave Jacobs	Ron Schneider	Ryan Bessette
Pat Davis	Jeremy Thompson	Harvey Long
Rich Thurman	John Nelson	

Collaborative Members

Casey Gatz, USFS	Kameron Sam, USFS	Chris Rossel
Whitney Olsker, USFS	Clair Pitner, USFS	
Rick Larson, RMEF	Andrew Spaeth, Sustainable Northwest	

Guest:

Lisa Naas Cook, South Gifford Pinchot Collaborative

1:00 Opening Remarks and Introductions

Bill called the meeting to order. He introduced Lisa Naas Cook, his counterpart with the South Gifford Pinchot Collaborative. She has extensive experience with national resource issues between public and agencies. While most of her experience has been with the public comment side of things she is looking forward to learning and working more with the collaborative process.

Bill asked about the status of the Fire Workshop. Rich said things are on schedule, the venue is set and logistics completed. Ryan and Bill are working on signups and lunch. It was decided to meet at the Barlow Ranger Station for those who wanted to carpool. Ryan reported there were currently 8 signups.

Bill went on to discuss some ideas for capacity building and training. He was interested in trying out some facilitating techniques developed by Bruce Patton, author of "Getting to Yes and Difficult Conversations." The group was interested so he said will add conflict negotiations to the December agenda.

He said he met with Emily to discuss ways the group could collaborate with the Hood River Stewardship Group on workshops such as landscape based restoration. Andrew said that Paul Hesberg is known as a guru on landscape recovery, perhaps a spring workshop with him could be planned. Discussion turned to the upcoming round of OWEB Forest Collaborative capacity support grants.

Project Ranking

Kameron began the discussion, stating that they are opening the door to whatever the group prioritized here. They have a large Retained Receipt pot and they intend to increase the amount available to \$1 million and half of that for the whole forest. Their intent is to get more work on the ground completed and leverage whatever they can get – providing everything is consistent with goals and qualifies. They could conceivably fund every project on the list.

Dave asked if the whole ranking process is a moot point. Kameron said not really, the input on project priority in which projects will be implemented is an important part of the process.

Andrew asked if Retained Receipts could be used for monitoring. Kameron pointed out that monitoring is not mentioned as a fundable practice so a different source of funding should probably be sought for doing that.

Pat asked about projects in the pipeline that are not on the list, could they potentially be more beneficial, he isn't too excited about some of the projects. Kameron said that is why prioritization is important. They could potentially have up to \$6 million over the next 5 years to get those projects completed, once that is done, they'd dial things back a bit. Pat asked about the ratio between west and east side funding, is there a rule of thumb? Kameron said it would depend on the projects.

Andrew pointed out there was a backlog on thinning and wood removal on the west side. Whitney acknowledged that it was an issue on the eastside as well. They can only handle around 2,000 acres a year and it has to be planned strategically to get the most benefit. NEPAs are required for prescribed burns as well.

Bill handed out the list of projects that had been ranked based on the responses he'd received by some members. The group engaged in lengthy discussion concerning the projects on the list, with members voicing concerns about projects that affected their areas of interest. It was decided to select the top 3 to 5 starting with the previously received responses. Initial ranking set Tier 1 as the Logout, Noxious Weeds, and Gate Creek. Tier 2 – Keeps Mill, Dog River, and Eastside; Tier 3 – Eightmile, Crow Thinning, and Trail Maintenance; Tier 4 – Watershed Boundary; and Tier 5 – Ramsey Creek and Trail Maintenance2.

Continued discussion ensued with members remarking that they may have voted differently if they'd had more information at the beginning. Dave suggested that the group settle on their top selections to be put into Tier 1 and everything else falls into Tier II, the group agreed. Harvey pointed out that it is difficult to decide as some projects should be done before others, such as logging should be done prior to trail maintenance. Discussion ensued about prioritization considerations and concerns. The group settled on selecting 6 projects for each tier.

After break the group settled on Tier 1 consisting of: Eightmile, Gate Creek, Noxious Weeds, Crow Thinning, Eastside, and Logout.

Kameron said that projects with partners and agreements in place are high priority. Such as weed control projects with BPA and the county. Claire noted that she is working with a partner group on trail maintenance for the 44 Trail. Kameron noted that their priorities are: 1-partnerships, 2-thinning, piling, and planting, 3-weed control, 4-infrastructure such as culverts, ditches, erosion, and roads. It was mentioned that knowing the Forest Service priorities prior to the process would have been nice.

Chris asked if there was a major category the group is interested in that hasn't been addressed. Jeremy said fish and wildlife habitat, Ron offered meadow enhancement for deer and elk. Kameron said that they are behind in certain areas due to capacity limitations. There are more projects but lack NEPA to make it to the list. Rich said he was surprised there were no under burning projects on the list. Kameron said those types of projects are currently in process as part of their fuels program. However, that is stalled right now due to lack of key personnel to implement. Further group discussion ensued.

Fire Workshop

Rich said that Louisa Evers, the BLM Fire Ecologist will be speaking. She, Mel Gard, and Rich had completed a landscape analysis of the entire Barlow area which as guided their 1,000 acre burn each year just to maintain landscape conditions. The group was reminded the workshop was at 9 and to meet at Barlow around 8. There would be a short field trip after.

Summary

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

Adjourned 3:18

Tammy Tripp