

Wasco County Forest Collaborative Group

ODFW Screen Shop

February 2, 2017

Attendees

Bill Noonan, Coordinator

Tammy Tripp, Minutes

Steering Committee Members

Kristen Dodd, ODF

Jeremy Thompson, ODFW

John Nelson, At. Large D21

Brenna Bell, BARK

Pat Davis, Watershed Resources

Ryan Bessette, WCSWCD

Rich Thurman, At Large

Harvey Long, Rec & Tourism

Bob Sjorlund, CTWS

Ron Schneider, High Cascade

Collaborative Members

Rick Larson, RMEF

Tyson Bertone-Riggs, ODF

Jim Thornton, USFS

Kameron Sam, USFS

Chris Rossel, USFS

Dave Jacobs

Casey Gatz, USFS Barlow

Andrew Spaeth, Sustainable Northwest

Guests

Kathryn Anerdt, USFS

1:00 PM – Opening Remarks and Introductions

Bill called the meeting to order. Topics under discussion will include a presentation by Tyson on the Federal Forest Restoration Program, and Casey will discuss the Rocky Burn NEPA process. Bill said he hasn't heard anything back from the National Forest Foundation Grant nor from OWEB, perhaps later this month.

Bill asked for introductions all around. Bob Sjorlund, CTWS, will take over for Clay Penhollow on the Steering Committee.

Federal Forest Restoration Program Presentation

Tyson reviewed the program with the group. Topics covered in the presentation included the components of the program including funding; how it functions in Oregon through collaboratives, partnerships, and the Good Neighbor Authority. Also covered the ways in which the program was supported through grants. The full presentation can be found at:

http://www.wascoswcd.org/linked/wcfcg_odf_presentaiton_ffr_prog_feb_2017.pdf

Bill asked if there were any way to get funding through the program for projects. Tyson said there was through providing direction for funding projects. He also asked if NEPA constrained the things the group could do. He said yes. Funding is not passed through the collaborative but directly to the projects/contractors. Discussion continued on NEPA constraints and contracts. Bill asked if there were anything the collaborative could do to help speed up the NEPA process for Rocky Burn. Brenna asked with the hiring freeze, does this affect the Good Neighbor Authority? Tyson said the Fire Seasonal are exempt and the GNA might be a good tool for the feds to use if there isn't enough staff to accomplish its goals. The states don't have as many regulations as the federal agencies when it

comes to getting projects on the ground. Kameron added that when they applied for the Two Chiefs grant, feedback included things they could do better next time, this included getting more partners involved such as other agencies and landowners to work across boundaries, to go beyond the Forest Service Boundaries.

They start taking applications for the Two Chief's Initiative in the summer and they are due in the fall. It is important to have landowners and other agencies in place, this will create a stronger application. It would be a good fit for the urban/forest interface zones. Kameron suggested that the group take these things in consideration when working on projects.

Bill asked where the group wanted to go and what they wanted to do. Andrew discussed the Rural Voice for Conservation Coalition and funding opportunities. Group discussion ensued.

Casey said that the Rocky Burn continues to take high priority. As things evolve the collaborative will be informed on progress as soon as they know about it. Rich asked if it included a target date for NEPA to be completed. Brenna and Casey discussed the scoping issues and process on CCR. Kameron said the group is welcome to look at the proposed action and share their insights into the project. Casey said he could bring their proposed action for CCR so they can see where they are at in the process to the next collaborative meeting. He asked if the group was interested in that. Brenna and group said they were.

Bill brought the group back to discussing their purpose and direction.

1st - Keep their eye on Rocky Burn process and to not miss the application window for Retained Receipts in the fall. The group will need to get something to Kameron by Nov 30th for submission. He reminded them that they won't be meeting in July and August but they could use the field trips to help shape the Retained Receipts application.

2nd – Work on ways to create cross boundary partnerships

3rd – Lobbying efforts – getting Wyden involved.

4th – Create education opportunities around fire.

5th – CCR presentation for feedback

There are just 4 meetings left to get these things done.

Andrew asked why the group didn't meet in the summer. Bill said, not formally, due to vacations, work schedules, and workshops. Jeremy suggested either at the next meeting or the one after the group map out what is going on, identify opportunities, other groups such as watershed councils, agencies, and look at cross jurisdictional opportunities.

John added that school outreach would be a good start. The Dalles Watershed would be a good place for a school field trip. Particularly for seniors that have an eye on career possibilities. Brenna advocates to invite Representative Walden come speak to the collaborative. John said it would definitely give him an opportunity to see behind the scenes of the collaborative. Perhaps give the collaborative a chance to weigh in on the upcoming Farm Bill. Brenna volunteered to research the Farm Bill. Some discussion ensued concerning how difficult it might be to have a senator come here due to publicity. Bill said he would email Dan and see if he could get Senator Wyden to come to talk to the collaborative.

Casey suggested it might be better to have a subcommittee to put together the “big picture” for the group to look at. Jeremy felt it might be more educational for the group to do it as a whole. Dave added that NRCS has GIS layers that show what has been done on both sides of the fence under different programs. Discussion ensued.

Andrew felt that Jeremy’s plan of getting a bigger picture look would be of value, to see who is involved in what projects in the area. Select agencies could attend the March meeting to present what their projects are in the Rocky Burn area and where there might be potential for cross boundary work.

Brenna added that it would help when applying for the Two Chiefs grant. Kameron said they had applied for that for the Rocky Burn but were short on partnerships. Jeremy said there could be projects around the outskirts of Rocky Burn that could be incorporated.

Rich said that he didn’t think the CCR would take that long to review and they could probably get through it quickly at the March meeting. Jeremy suggested perhaps there would be an hours’ worth of presentations from ODF, ODFW, USFS, Watershed Councils, and the SWCD.

Tyson proposes to do the presentations in April and use March for business, such as discussion about hiring a coordinator, the CCR, and devote April to connecting the dots. Brenna said they might all learn something through it that might help with Rocky Burn. Casey added, besides Rocky, there could be project overlaps that they weren’t aware of.

Casey said he’d need about 45 minutes for CCR and he’ll send information out to Bill the week before. Perhaps start the connect-the-dot discussion in March and finish in April. Kristen, Jeremy, Ryan and NRCS would have about 10 to 15 minute presentations on projects around Rocky Burn. Casey will compile a list of shovel ready Rocky Burn Projects.

Discussion ensued concerning sending a letter to the Senate Ways and Means Committee to express support for state investment in the collaborative process. Discussion also ensued concerning fleshing out the job description for a coordinator. Brenna suggested a sub-committee be formed to do the hiring. She also asked how much the Forest Service allows for volunteer writing/input into NEPA – Casey said he’d need to look into that. Jeremy asked if the state, under a GNA could initiate a NEPA. Rick said that the South Gifford-Pinchot hired a professional forester to do a stand exam for NEPA and then did the NEPA for the Bear Creek watershed. They did the NEPA themselves then handed it over to the Forest Service. Kameron said that ODOT does NEPA as well then gives it to the USFS to review. Discussion ensued.

Bill closed the meeting, went over a summary of goals that he’d garnered from the meeting and stated he would send those out to the group in an Executive Summary in a couple of days.

Adjourned 3:20 PM
Tammy Tripp