

Wasco County Forest Collaborative Group

ODFW Screen Shop

October 6, 2016

Attendees

Bill Noonan, Coordinator

Tammy Tripp, Minutes

Committee Members

Dave Jacobs

Jeremy Thompson

John Nelson

Dan Van Vactor

Pat Davis

Rich Thurman

Harvey Long

Ryan Bessette

Brenna Bell

Ron Schneider

Collaborative Members

Rick Larson, RMEF

Tyson Bertone-Riggs, ODF

Kristen Dodd, ODF

Kameron Sam, USFS

Chris Rossel, USFS

John Dodd, USFS

Casey Hawes, USFS

Casey Gatz, USFS Barlow

Mike Hernandez,

Andrew Spaeth, Sustainable Northwest

1:00 PM – Opening Remarks and Introductions

Bill called the meeting to order. Topics under discussion will include Kameron and Casey H. clarifying Retained Receipts; Stewardship Contracts, and a project overview. Also up for discussion are what the next steps will be and the upcoming Fire Workshop.

Bill asked for introductions. Kristen Dodd, ODF will be replacing Dave Jacobs who is retiring and Tammy Tripp, Wasco Co. SWCD will replace Abbie Forrest as minute taker.

Retained Receipts

Kameron asked Casey Hawes, USFS, who is on detail from Siuslaw National Forest and oversees its Forest Stewardship Program, to provide background information on what Retained Receipts are and the rules governing their use under Stewardship contracting. Casey called attention to the excerpt from 61.2, Exhibit 02, Examples of appropriate Stewardship Project Work Items that was handed out at the last meeting. Casey discussed the history the Stewardship Program, noting the Wyden Amendment allows for the protection, restoration, and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat, and other resources on public or private land within the watershed, providing that it ultimately is of benefit to the national forest.

Casey H. covered how using the value of the timber in a particular project area is used to help fund stewardship restoration projects. These funds are also available to transfer to other projects on and off forest, providing they are used for restoration, protection and improvement of natural resources. John Dodd asked about the restoration of a recreational site. Casey H. said depending on where it was located it could be a water quality issue, which then the funds could be used to decommission the site and move it elsewhere. He added other uses include fish passage or other aquatic organism barriers, installation or removal of culverts, riparian restoration, road repairs for water quality issues, noxious weed removal, road closures, and trash removal.

The process is this: Once project planning is completed, proposals are put together, prioritized, and then recommendations are made. From there they go to the Regional Forester who then passes recommended projects on to the District Ranger for consideration.

Bill asked how long does the process take. Casey H. replied that projects are submitted in October, sent to Regional HQ in November and approved in January. Brenna asked if the projects need to be NEPA ready. Casey said there is no requirement however; project funding cannot be used for NEPA. Casey Gatz asked if there were any NEPA ready projects on the shelf right now. Cameron said he would need to gather some information and see what they have.

Pat asked Kameron if he had any idea of where to apply the Retained Receipts. Kameron said not yet, they have some ideas but nothing firmed up. The group discussed how the money is split between the Ranger Districts, NEPA requirements, and examples of how the funds could be used. It was noted during the discussion that if using Retained Receipts for a project – on or off forest, NEPA applies.

Dan Van Vactor discussed the Badger irrigation project they've been working on to get the ditch piped and was wondering if their project could be put in the que for funding. Dan asked what they needed to do and if Chris was the contact. Chris replied that they don't pay for infrastructure and under the Wyden Authority any off forest stewardship work must have a NEPA completed even if it is done with in-kind contributions. The off-forest projects must benefit the National Forest therefore the restoration work must be in a watershed attached to the forest.

Brenna suggested that since Retained Receipts won't pay for infrastructure that the funds be used for things the group requested in their Rocky Burn recommendations. Kameron stated that they are currently incorporating the group's recommendations into the Rocky Burn project.

Andrew asked what the process was for the collaborative to come up with a project then get it into the USFS que for funding consideration. Casey G. said as far as the group bringing in a project, he suggests they work with the Resource Specialists. They may be able to take on a small project that the groundwork is already completed on, but currently do not have the capacity to do the NEPA on a large scale project. There is a lot of work on the Rocky project that isn't even funded yet.

Dave Jacobs suggested in the short term that they take a look at whatever NEPA ready projects the forest service has on the shelf right now. Mike noted that there are a lot of NEPA completed projects that the group could take a look at and prioritize.

Dan asked how much funding is in the budget for next year. Casey H. said around \$500,000 between the four Ranger Districts. It's a forest service wide collection of funding but not split evenly between the Districts per se. Funding priorities are looked at such as land management, restoration needs across all the forests. About \$350,000 goes to the west side and around \$150,000 ends up on the east side.

Dave Jacobs said that in the short term the team should take a look at whatever NEPA ready projects the Forest Service has now.

Mike stated that in the past, complications have been with off-forest landowners. They don't understand the NEPA process and that Forest Service funding can't pay for NEPA. There are a lot of NEPA completed projects but no funding. He suggests the Forest Service look at projects like Sportsman's Paradise, The Dalles Watershed, and Sportsman's Park and get those to the group to look at.

Chris discussed the role of the Collaborative, stating their purpose is to be engaged in the process; to share ideas and prioritize stewardship projects with the line officer; help with planning and project development; and engage the local community. Benefits the project will achieve as well as past performance of the collaborative are taken into consideration under whether the project qualifies as best value under the process.

Casey H. shared that in Siuslaw; they have several collaboratives operating and have defined operational boundaries. This has helped to focus and define goals and objectives for each of the groups. Mike pointed out that this is the first time a collaborative has operated in this area which is one of the reasons why not much money has been spent in this area.

Andrew asked how many of the projects on the shelf are structured as IRTCs. Kameron said he didn't know off hand. They look at where the needs are to determine what projects get done. They have to balance timber sales with stewardship goals. They can have a really good project but if the timber value is low for that project area then there is nothing to pay for the project.

The group was reminded that there will be an all-day Fire Workshop at the Wamic Grange in Wamic on November 16th, starting at 9:00 AM. There will be three presentations including a speaker at lunchtime. Afterwards, the group will go out to and look at Phase 1 of the Rocky Burn Project. Lanisa Evers, BLM, will give a talk on fire history. She's the author of the Columbia Fuels Assessment. Dr. John Bailey, Forest and Fire Ecologist will talk about the Role of Fire and fire prescription. Andrew added that signups can be done through Sustainable Northwest's website.

After break discussion included how the Hood River Collaborative and the Clackamas Groups operated. Bill asked what the Collaborative's role in the funding process. Casey G. said that the District staff fill out applications for funding then give them to the Hood River Group. They look at the projects, prioritize them, and make recommendations. The prioritized list is then given back to Forest Service staff who then sends it on to the District Ranger.

Dave asked what would it take for this group to get a list of shovel ready projects. Casey G. said probably next week they could get one. Dave then suggested the list gets sent out to everyone, it gets reviewed, a poll get taken and recommendations made. They could pick the top 3, 4 or 5 and present it to Kameron for funding. Brenna asked when the deadline was to have projects considered for funding. Casey said it was Oct 28th. He said he might be able to get the deadline extended so the group could meet and actually discuss the projects. Projects are all available on line to review. Bill asked if it could be confirmed that the deadline can actually be moved.

Discussion ensued about how to implement a review process. Jeremy suggested that the group avoid focusing on the dollar amount but build justification for the project. Ryan asked when the funding has to be spent. Casey H. said the project can be across multiple years. It would depend on workforce capacity. Ron pointed out that this is a new group and to get these deadlines noted on calendars for next year. He asked if it would be possible to have Forest Service staff to give a presentation projects they want to get done. Pat said he would like to see a discussion on a method to prioritize projects, such as by watershed. Dan said the group needs to define its long term goal. John asked how much description will be provided on the project. Casey H. said that one or 2 pages, to include the project name, cost, what's to be accomplished and other helpful information. Brenna asked if there is a website where this information can be found. Casey H. said use the Mt. Hood National Forest website. It has all the project information posted under project planning.

Bill recapped the meeting:

Casey H. will confirm the sub-committee recommendations on Nov 3. Bill will get the project list from Casey G. and send it out to everyone. It will be prioritized and sent back out for review.

Bill asked if the group would like Lisa Northrupt (Kameron's Supervisor) to be invited to speak to the group at some point in order to get to know each other. Rich asked if she would be willing to go to the Regional office and ask for more funding.

Adjourned 3:30 PM

Tammy Tripp