

Wild Rivers Coast Forest Collaborative

Monthly Meeting Notes: August 8th, 2019

Present: Jenna Knobloch (Sustainable Northwest), Amanda Astor (American Forest Resources Council), Kim Hunter (USDA Forest Service), Cathy Bounds (Bureau of Land Management), Kailey Clarno (USDA Forest Service), Wade McMaster (USDA Forest Service), Phil Chang (Oregon Department of Forestry), Amy Amrhein (Office of Senator Jeff Merkley), Rich Nawa (Kalmiopsis Siskiyou Wildlands), Jim Seeley (Wild Rivers Coast Alliance), Barbara Cisneros (USDA Forest Service), Court Boice (Commissioner Curry County), Kelly Timchak (Lower Rogue Watershed Council), Marnie Maybell (USDA Forest Service).

1. Shasta Agness: Update from Forest Service

- See handout titled "2019-8-06ShAgnessEISTimeline-WRCFCSubmittal" for timeline:
- None of the comments were surprises. There was quite a bit of concern about road decommissioning and management in Late Successional Reserves.
- Next steps are to address these comments in a proper manner working on a draft Record of Decision (ROD).
- Drafting the ROD will take some time. ROD will be signed by Forest Supervisor Merv George.
- Draft ROD and objection resolution period expected to occur in November.
- 45 day legal notice: Objection-Response Period with Draft ROD. The FS will also be doing Tribal Consultation.
- Reading room will soon be back online with all documents.
- Collaborative opportunities for involvement: Implementation, Contracting, ROD, Monitoring.

Question: Any decisions about how this will be implemented? Stewardship, timber sales, Good Neighbor Authority, etc.?

- No decisions yet, there will be opportunity for the collaborative to weigh in.

Question: Did the Forest Collaborative or the Forest Service initiate Shasta Agness?

- The collaborative came together with Forest Service, lots of discussion. The collaborative put together the proposal. It has been a 6 year project.
- Two ways to think of the timeline. Thinking vs scoping? A lot of project have a lot of footwork before. It's important knowing- what where is the next one.

Question: Where are the Biological Opinion from Fish and Wildlife Service & National Marine Service Regional Biological Opinions?

- These will be posted by the Forest Service along with other Shasta Agness NEPA documents.

2. What is next for Wild Rivers Coast Forest Collaborative?

Zones of Agreement & Small CE Project.

- There is interest in doing smaller project(s) that can go from planning to implementation in a timely manner.
- The priority for Gold Beach Ranger District is community protection.
- Group should identify small project focusing on meadow enhancements & unique habitats
- AFRC would like CEs or programmatic EAs focused on a road systems and area of high fire risk. Combine with finding working with NRCS and adjacent landowners. Develop a 5 year plan for fuel breaks.
- Integrate private timberland located in the WUI between Federal and small private holders.
- Follow the Smith River Collaborative model by mapping what you want to work on and then planning & implementing small projects in those areas.
- Small project idea: On the Otter Point along the coastal hiking trail, State of Oregon parks has a property containing pygmy forest plant habitat there are ice plant invasive growing everywhere. WRCFC could organize a work party to address.

Sudden Oak Death (SOD)/All Lands Project

- Sudden Oak Death restoration as an all lands project.
- Wild Rivers Coast Alliance has been involved since first meeting, strongly support an all lands project, especially around SOD and Gorse.
- Gorse and SOD are important, but they are big problems. How can WRCFC meaningfully engage or contribute? Working on fire risk is something we can get our hands on.
- Participating in monitoring/test kits for SOD, WUI might be more appropriate for project planning.

Recreation

- Jim: Outdoor Recreation, mountain biking has become a popular outdoor sport. Coos Forests have developed a mountain biking trail.
- Oregon Coast Trail state level attention, especially south of Port Orford where it is dangerous to walk alone the road.
- Dedicated Recreation Themed Meeting: Siskiyou Mountain Club, Dave Lacey. Wild Rivers Coast Mountain Biking Club, hunting and fishing outfitters, Mike Miller/Curry Citizens for Public Access.

- WRCFC will need to clarify with Rogue River Siskiyou forest before you get too on an idea related to on-forest recreation. There may be direction out of the Regional Office (RO) or the Washington Office (WO) that limit options for recreation projects.

3. Facilitation/Coordination Transition

Federal Forest Grant Program (ODF Grant Program, Phil Chang)

- Organizing theme has been developing, advancing, and communicating Zones of Agreement.
- There are other opportunities for collaborative governance grants for operating principles, etc.
- Solicitation from last cycle will be very similar to last round.

Transition

- WRCFC should also explore Ford Family Foundation funding.
- Until funding and a permanent facilitator is identified, facilitation will happen on a rotating basis.
- The next meeting will be facilitated by Teresa Bird and notes will be taken by Kelly Timchak.

4. Chetco Bar Salvage & Good Neighbor Authority (GNA)

Presenter: Phil Chang, Oregon Department of Forestry

Salvage GNA Sales

- Spring 2018, I presented to the WRCFC about implementation of Chetco Bar Salvage units using Good Neighbor Authority. This is an update.
- Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest (RRSNF) did do 2 sales through GNA, small portion of overall Chetco Bar salvage.
- What is GNA?
 - It is a mechanism to get more work done using state personnel to increase the capacity of the Federal Government. The agencies can use the state as their agent to do work on Federal land.
 - This was passed by Congress in 2014.
 - We use state processes to layout, state contracts to sell timber, state people administer.
 - State will front the cost for the project before they ever earn money from it. After recouping costs, additional revenue is held in a state account for the forest for additional restoration work on the forest such as prescribed fire, non-commercial thinning, culverts, invasive species, roads, etc.
- This project:

- ODF looks for GNA projects with high social agreement projects. Roadside, etc.
- We heard there was interest in revenue being spent on wood placement in rivers and fuels work in Shasta Agness Planning Area.
- We had hoped a couple hundred thousand dollars would be generated.
- What happened: We sold 1 of 2 sales.
- Long Ridge generated \$52k Revenue, also saved money because it avoided road reopening costs for the Forest Service.
- The Forest Service only had so much sale prep capacity. We helped the FS sell one more sale. Got it closer to full implementation than it otherwise would have been.
- Why it didn't work out?
 - ODF are all hands on deck during summer because of fires. 3 months behind on sales such as Chetco Bar.
 - Bottleneck on heritage surveys. These slowed the offering to the market.
 - Market conditions were not ideal. Chetco bar was extensive, impacting private etc. There was a lot of black wood on the market.
 - There is a finite amount of appetite for salvage wood.
- There was no salvage on the Klondike fire and the main reason: Chetco was expensive and it was not fruitful.
- Future fires: Identify small salvage opportunities. Ask industry: what you can take?
- Based on the experience we had with these sales: I'm going to encourage our field units to focus on green sales over salvage. We were delivering the last wood to a glutted market.

GNA Program Income

- What does that process look like?
 - ODF considers it Federal money, but it is held in a state account.
 - Unlike stewardship contracting there isn't a formal mechanism for collaboration, but because its Oregon we want collaboratives to be part of the process.
 - There is a GNA supplemental project agreement on the Willamette NF with the role of the Collaborative explicitly written in.
 - GNA Program Income can be spent on planning and monitoring (unlike Stewardship).
 - On Mt Hood NF:
 - There is controversial site for huckleberry restoration in natural stand. Significant noble fir removal.
 - Treatment was a compromise with the Warm Spring Tribes. What we offered the collaborative group: \$15-\$20k for monitoring.
 - GNA Revenue can be spent on planning (contracting a CE document), surveys.

- This is unique to GNA revenue that you can't do with retained receipts or KV.
- Q: ODF has faced their own capacity issues with fire. How does ODF plan to address this?
 - We are building the team as we go
 - GNA Foresters are implementers, FFR Coordinators are development/planning
 - Developing drawdown plans during the summer.
- How should the collaborative engage?
 - To generate program revenue you need to find a good commercial project that the FS is in a position to delegate.
- Q: What happens when the revenue doesn't cover the cost?
 - A: We are being cautious about taking on projects.

4. Proposed NEPA Changes Expanding use of Categorical Exclusions (CE's)

Amanda Astor, American Forest Resource Council

- AFRC represents timber purchasers.
 - We are developing our own comments, we don't have them finalized.
 - We have their publicly available comment letter (WHO ADD).
- Comment period was extended, ends August 26th.
- EIS have become very long regulatory documents, should only range up to 300 pages.
- Washington Office guidance: CE's should be the norm.
- New CE: Up to 7300 acres restoration activities, allowed range of 4200 of commercial harvest.
- In areas where the Forest Service values public involvement, they are still going to do that.
- Forest Service still has the option to do additional public engagement on projects. I'm going to be surprised if the FS here only did the minimum required in Scheduled of Proposed Actions (SOPA). This will be helpful in areas outside of Region 6 where members of the public are less involved.

Tyson Bertone-Riggs, Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition

- RVCC provides support and capacity building for community based groups.
 - We also provide a common voice on important issues.
 - This process involves developing an issue paper. The leadership team has not formally signed onto a comment letter about the proposed NEPA changes at this time.
- Most relevant: Creation of new CE's we'd expect to intersect with work on the ground. Public input would be changed.
- I would recommend looking at the EADM and NEPA website, they have an analysis of changes.

- The proposal allows CEs to be stacked. They could do three quarters of project planning through CEs.
- Any given district could have more than minimum required public input but these would remove legal protection of public involvement.
- Faster planning is a positive outcome. It would be better to look at staffing issues.
 - They don't have internal training for NEPA.
 - We want more staff, bigger budgets.
 - Process should involve collaboration, public input, and best available science.

Q: We have plantations we haven't been clearcutting. Open the door for more regeneration harvests/clear cutting?

Amanda: They could be doing that anyway under current NEPA, and they are not. I don't think they are going to change.

Wade: Merv George, current RRSNF Supervisor, has shared that his top 3 pet peeves are road closures, pesticides, and clear cuts.

Q: Would this make road establishment easier?- When someone is 4 wheeling, it becomes a road, then there are more roads to maintain.

Tyson: Yes, it would allow for conversation of user created trails to official.