

NEWFC / Forest Service Bi-Monthly Meeting
Meeting Minutes
May 16, 2013
Stevens County Conservation District

Next meeting: July 18, 1 PM, location TBA

Attending Forest Service: Laura Jo West, Gayne Sears, Karen Honeycutt, Rodney Smolden, Robert Sanchez

Attending NEWFC: Russ Vaagen, Ron Gray, Timothy Coleman, Maurice Williamson, David Heflick, Dick Dunton, Chris Childers, Mike Petersen

Attending public: Matt Scott, Gloria Flora, Commissioner Steve Parker

A. Agenda:

- 1) Laura Jo Update
- 2) NEWFC Update
- 3) Expanding Collaboration
- 4) Projects Update
- 5) 50th Anniversary of TWA
- 6) County Input

Discussion:

- 1) Laura Jo Update

Personnel update – new natural resources staff Kathleen Ward will be joining the CNF next week ... very skookum re forestry and boots on the ground. Veg management and forest NEPA coordinator job announcements are out – hope is to have them filled by July. Becki Heath will be moving into deputy regional forester role; Debbie Kyle will be filling Becki's role as acting. Kelvin Davis has retired and his replacement, Cesar Romero, will be stationed in Republic. Temporary hires are coming on board after a few delays. James Pass is filling Tom Pawley's shoes on a temp basis.

The Forest is dedicated to meeting its restoration objectives. There's a lot of focus on the Malheur and resources have been diverted to help putting out landscape level treatments on that forest. The CNF gets a lot of support from R 6 and additional support this year to accomplish its mission. Funding is for 43 mmbf and going after additional resources including borrowing from out-years funding for this year --- currently there is no plan devised to replace those funds. We're adding in adjacent harvest units in Flower Trail area to provide additional volume. In sheer dollars it would take \$2.5 million in additional funding to get to 60 million board feet. A to Z can provide additional capacity without increasing costs. A lot of the Forest's work with PNW Research is helping to move the Forest outputs forward.

Q. How does A to Z fit within 2013 outputs?

A. It doesn't

Forest Planning – not much to report. Present work is on alternatives and then evaluation of those. Working on DEIS. Expect for an early next spring release of DEIS for the CNF – at this time there are no surprises from previous descriptions (Summit and NEWFC alternative included). Expect a final decision in 2015. The Forest will not be sending any personnel out this summer on wildfires not specifically assigned to fire. This will affect the budget.

Q. Any changes to engine capacity?

A. No.

Q. Who will replace Harris Sherman

A. No word yet on who that will be.

2) NEWFC Update

The Coalition has been working on expanding collaboration. At this time we are looking at two more forums, one being focused on recreation and one on ranching. We will be looking for neutral parties to bring to the table. The perception is NEWFC has a bunch of agreements that others can't be part of – a proposal is to have a separate process that is open to a fresh set of collaborative agreements. Various committee structures have been proposed including vegetation, recreation /transportation and range. As a coalition we are trying to figure how to work this out and what does that look like. What are the core issues; i.e. mill closure, road access, firewood, etc.

Russ: what are suggestions how to move forward? Laura Jo: I think we're addressing the issues from various directions, including the mystery and misinformation about NEWFC and NEWFC/CNF relationship. Deer Jasper and Renshaw have helped to expose what NEWFC is doing. Attacking the "fear piece" is important – or that NEWFC is a secret club. Roads issue is a big piece.

Russ: The collaborative process, points of contact / communication. We see that as in the historic context of NEWFC. We are participating in Deer Jasper and Renshaw is one way to show how NEWFC collaboration interfaces with Forest Service process. Basically, NEWFC will participate in the new collaboration and see how our process can morph into that.

Laura Jo – what I'm hearing is holding on to the core of what has happened over the last ten years and a willingness to expand beyond that and let go of the old core.

Russ: Deer Jasper has been working well though it's a bit awkward, especially when non-NEWFC participants don't show up for meetings. LJ: perhaps ask people why they are not coming to meetings. Russ: we are hearing NEWFC is putting pressure on the CNF and manipulating outcomes. NEWFC is focused on veg management. Bringing problem solvers to the table to further discuss other topics is important to improving the process.

Q. Gayne – groups that we put together in Deer Jasper and Renshaw – how can we bring others to the table?

A. Russ: NEWFC has its prescriptive agreements but we have a long history of stepping outside of those agreements – we have demonstrated a willing to move outside of those agreements.

Russ: We were uncertain how we were going to collaborate in Deer Jasper or Renshaw. We are hopeful that we get through these processes while honoring our process and meeting the interests of other participants.

David: there have been capacity issues. His capacity changes will not allow him to be the point person to the CNF and participate in eastern CNF process. Participating in the CFLRP projects will be a focus.

Q. Laura Jo: who will be the point person?

A. Maurice is the point person for NEWFC. Jeff Juel will be working on the eastern CNF and Dave will be working on western CNF. Dave will no longer be working on Renshaw.

Q. Will Lisa be available to take notes at Deer Jasper meetings?

A. Yes, but she was at training last week and sometimes she just won't be available.

3) Expanding Collaboration

NEWFC is still trying to work the bugs out of collaboration. CNF is trying two different collaboration approaches in their Deer Jasper and Renshaw projects. Rodney noted the CNF helped get those collaboration going but then let them operate separately. David noted these were supposed to have been facilitated. David noted that having a forest service person in the room allows for getting a hold of specialists should a question arise. Rodney noted the ability to separate the 'science' from the 'social opinion' there are going to be problems created. David: the problem who is stating those parameters and that is where a facilitator is really important.

4) Projects Update

- Walker – it is being cruised at this time and contract expected to be let in August. 5mmbf estimate.
- Kettle Face south – August contract, 15. 971 mmbf.
- East Wedge – decision is not published, but implementation contracts are being let and decision in June
- Current CE – is out for comment
- Deer Jasper / Renshaw -- public announcements of these projects will be out in a week or two. Deer Jasper decision is expected by end of this calendar year. Renshaw decision is expected April of 2014.
- Power lake – Gayne handed out project maps and described changes that have been made since the Decision was made. Admittedly, there was a struggle for NEWFC in communicating their concerns to the Forest, and how restoration treatments proposed by Derek Churchill could be accomplished. Laura Jo noted the Forest engaged in these changes to support collaboration. Changes have been made to the Effects Analysis and applies all those except for roads over .5 mile in NEWFC restoration zone. The roads definition is largely confused over what the official policy is. Mike asked if NEWFC

board in attendance approved the changes as reflected on the map handed out by Gayne? There was agreement to support those changes – Mike will convey those changes to AWR.

David suggested leaving helicopter units out of the mix because they are typically not costs effective.

- Budget: CNF received 112% of average in FY 2013 and likely 1.2% more because the Forest met its targets. Budgets are based on a rolling three-year average (as percentage of total). The budget is taking a nose-dive but the Region has agreed to let the CNF down easy. Recreation budget is cut by 70%. CNF has been merged now into CFLRP, so future funding has more certainty.

- A to Z – The RFP is out and bids will be received until June 19. The Research Station will also likely be involved. Successful bidder will do NEPA. Laura Jo noted it is an agency goal to make this a successful project.

- East Wedge – will the CNF be carrying forward lessons learned from the project. Laura Jo really wants to get an evaluation done.

5). 50th Anniversary of The Wilderness Act

Gayne will be coordinating this national celebration of the 50th Anniversary. She asked NEWFC for volunteers to work with her. An objective is to bring greater awareness to this issue across the three county area. Tim, Mike and Matt agreed to participate in the committee preparing for the event. Commissioner Parker stated an interest in being involved.

6) County Input

Commissioner Parker noted the county has their county management plans, but could provide help in bringing people to the table and he was willing to help foster community cooperation.

End

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