

NEWFC / Forest Service Bi-Monthly Meeting
Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2013
Stevens County Conservation District

Next meeting: January 16, 2014

Attending Forest Service: Laura Jo West, Kathleen Ward, Craig Newman, Jon Day, Franklin Pemberton, Tim Sampson

Attending NEWFC: Russ Vaagen, Ron Gray, Timothy Coleman, David Heflick, Skyler

Attending public: Russ Larsen, Commissioner Steve Parker, Mark Teply, Sheila Stalp

A. Agenda:

Introductions / Agenda Review

- 1) NEWFC Update
- 2) Forest Service Update
- 3) Current Issues
- 4) Project Updates

Discussion:

- 1) NEWFC Update

It's been great having Gloria helping with NEWFC coordination. We are considering options for expanding collaboration including contracting with the Cadre'. **Russ will contact Sharon Timko, et al about future options – he will cc Laura Jo.** NEWFC had a meeting with Spokesman-Review Editorial Board and an op-ed about NEWFC got published a couple days later:

<http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2013/nov/07/editorial-colville-forest-stewardship-program/>

- 2) Laura Jo Update

2014 Budget is about \$600K less than 2013 – this is a very conservative estimate. CNF is moving aggressively forward with projects – expect stable budgets in vegetation management. Recreation budget took a big hit – it is now barely able to cover fixed costs. CNF produced 46 mmbf in FY 2013, but future year budgets were tapped to achieve that. The construction and maintenance of roads (CMRD) budget is drastically reduced.. CNF looking to stewardship to accomplish road maintenance in order to support restoration objectives. The majority of our roads budget is used for maintenance and road rehabilitation/stabilization in support of forest restoration and recreation. Even though very little of our CMRD budget is used to construct new roads, Congress / public doesn't want more roads being constructed, hence reduction in construction/maintenance budget. As with recreation budget cuts in CM funds is a national trend (trails, facilities, and legacy roads funding is all down drastically). CFLR project funding is expected to be somewhat less than what was asked for, but that is not unusual and likely full budget will be realized. Because of the government shutdown things did not get done, contracts timed out and getting things done on the ground was stalled – CNF is playing catch-up.

Churchill landscape planning – DH raised question about transition when Churchill no longer is able to help with planning. Orient watershed landscape assessment meeting with Derek will be next week. Jon is doing a forest-wide restoration assessment, map-based, looking at insects and disease. This will dovetail with the work Derek is doing. Laura Jo noted the assessment was a communication strategy. DH noted there is a lot of the same work being done on the Wenatchee-Okanogan.

Q. Are adjacent forests doing a similar assessment?

A. Yes, Umatilla is doing something similar and there is a major movement in Region 6 as well – also Region 1.

Q. Has fire budget been impacted.

A. R6 has held some money back in case of emergency.

3) Current Issues

- Capital Christmas Tree

300-450 people were at the tree cutting and Kalispel Tribe gave the blessing. The tree was taken by truck to Newport for a celebration and then around the Tri County area. The tree is now being trucked to Washington DC.

- Prescribed fire training

Tim (FMO) is excited about doing this training. Likely in spring and looking at prescribed fire in the field and discussion of strategy and practices. Gloria recommended discussing budget versus decision process and realistic expectations.

- Hastings Bill

The bill is currently in Senate E & R Committee.

4) Project Updates

- East Wedge and A to Z -- After Action Review

There is an after action FS project review. Two core questions being asked 1) what areas have greatest uncertainties and biggest leap forward and why? and 2) what areas are you most interested in learning about and what is the greatest impact and why? East Wedge had a similar objective as A to Z and what have we learned from EW and how can we apply those lessons to A to Z? What worked and what didn't?

- Deer Jasper

There was a productive IDT meeting held recently. A proposed action will be out for public comment in January – either a comment period or comment period with an objection period. A decision will be out in February. **David asked about submitting comments before a proposed action comes out – Kathleen will get back to David with that answer.** David recommended a PA with Objection not be used.

- Summit Pierre

Forecasted new snowfall might create conditions unsuitable for a field trip. David lives 5 miles from the project review site and he will look at it the morning of the scheduled field trip and then send a message out at about 8 AM regarding whether the field trip will go

ahead or have to be cancelled – **make sure to check email before leaving for this field trip.**

- Renshaw

The Proposed Action is being finalized this winter and then the project will move fully forward. Amy moved to another position and her reposition caused some delay in project collaboration. There will be more Renshaw collaboration meetings.

- A to Z Project

Steve Teply (Cramer Science) is doing the NEPA analysis for this project. He passed around copies of a document giving an outline of what, where, when, why and assessment strategy. Currently he and his team are in a fact finding stage. He is breaking the project area into two separate NEPA analysis areas.

Laura Jo said the CNF objective is not to impact the agency's time in any significant way because if that does occur it will defeat the purpose of the project. Mark said there was an all-hands meeting last week to discuss to refine/inform their processes.

Q. Where does the collaboration piece fit into this?

A. During the draft proposed action there will be a synthesis of assessment, roll out a straw dog of a proposed action for public scoping, roll it out through NEWFC as a third party contractor.

Q. What does the contract specify re collaboration?

A. As a group NEWFC hasn't discussed this. Steve: expectation is that collaboration will begin with the public scoping process.

End

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