

NEWFC / Forest Service Bi-Monthly Meeting
Meeting Minutes - Draft
March 20, 2014
Stevens County Conservation District

Next meeting: May

Attending Forest Service: Kathleen Ward, Rodney Smolden, Jon Day, Eic Trimble, Kent Contraris, Tim Sampson, Gayne Sears

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

Attending public: Commissioner Steve Parker, Commissioner Mike Manus, Josh Anderson, Sheila Stalp, Mike Poulson, Bill Way

A. Agenda:

Introductions / Agenda Review

- 1) NEWFC Update
- 2) Forest Update
- 3) Farm Bill
- 4) Project Updates
- 5) Follow up Items

Discussion:

- 1) NEWFC Update

The Forestry Coalition has been working on a revised Strategic Plan. Follow up meetings were held earlier in March with Mark Teply. The Coalition is pleased Stewardship Contracting Authority was renewed. The Farm Bill CE has raised concerns. We'd like to know where the Forest Plan revision is at.

- 2) Forest Update

Mark your calendar: April 30, 9 AM at CNF supes office – prescribed fire class

Churchill strategy – is being applied in the Orient and Sanpoil projects. After Renshaw, Timber Mountain (was part of Lost Granite Squirrel) is next landscape scale where Churchill approach will be applied. A separate approach is being considered for wetter landscapes. Limestone/Silver is being considered as a potential location to apply wet forest modeling. Jon met with Paul Hessburg and Derek Churchill to discuss a comparison of FS veg models that will be compiled in an assessment and then used to determine site-specific prescriptions in places on the forest that are out of whack.

Churchill is providing training. Derrick Pass will be working directly with Churchill. This is a learning process for everybody including Derek.

-- Forest Planning

There is a deadline set that the DEIS will be on the streets this July. The Forest is taking a hard look at the product that will come out and potentially changing the composition of the Planning Team. Gayne said the Colville plan is likely to be released first. Rodney

said specialists are being asked to participate in writing specialist's report, which affects their capacity to do project work.

Q. NEWFC would like clarification regarding the alternative that Laura Jo said would reflect NEWFC's agreements – is that alternative actually going to be in the DEIS?

A. Gayne will look into that.

Q. Is there still an opportunity to provide new information?

A. Yes, there is always that opportunity.

Q. Is release of the DEIS the next opportunity for NEWFC to provide input?

A. Yes and No.

Q. Would it be helpful for NEWFC to review a draft of the alternative that represents its agreements – to help inform the DEIS? Is it more difficult to make changes to that alternative after release of the DEIS?

A. That probably would help - that's a good question to ask Laura Jo.

-- Budget

The notice from WO was sent to RO re CNF budget, so should know what budget numbers are by May.

Q. Is there budget weakness in recreation – will there be a negative impact to access?

A. There is a potential impact to employees and to customers. Rodney said there won't be as many campgrounds available, recreation special events might be reduced, not as many people to manage recreation program, a more unified approach and law enforcement positions will not be filled.

Commissioner Parker asked the Forest to engage the county commissioners as a way to help maintain recreation infrastructure.

Q. Will the road maintenance budget will be affected?

A. That budget is separate from recreation.

Q. Is the rec budget being cut across the nation?

A. Yes, and we are also paying for increase past (Proof of Concept) budget years.

Q. What did you mean about a "more unified approach" to managing recreation?

A. FS is looking at project staff stopping on their way to a project area to clean a restroom, for instance.

Q. Is it technically illegal to clear out trails.

A. No, provided they are designated as open.

The Forest is lobbying the RO to change their formula for determining recreation budget.

There is an opportunity to establish fee sites on the Forest. Other forests use that as a significant source for funding their recreation program.

A new staff, Michelle Paduani, starts work on Monday. She will fill Amy Dillion's position. Michelle is a former US Fish & Wildlife Service and background in recreation management.

3. Farm Bill

The Forest spoke to state forester rep. Aaron Everett regarding selection process re forest health treatment areas. He said selection is based on 1) National Insect map, 2) has to be an area of declining forest health (a) 10 tpa, b)10-35, c) >35 tpa loss) and 3) must be threat to health and human safety. Several of the Forest watersheds have been selected. Jon sent out maps to forest specialists and feedback from them will be sent to the state. Recommended areas are in every county – maybe 25 in the state. CMR has sent a letter to the governor asking him to select projects in the CNF. The Forest will submit documentation to the governor to hold its place in line.

Mike Poulson said he thinks the Colville NF is the best place to do these projects and he can't imagine a project going forward in the Colville NF that NEWFC objected to.

Q. What is the deadline to reply to Aaron?

A. April 8 is the deadline for the governor to apply to Sec. of Ag.

Q. Is the CNF saying unless there wasn't collaborative agreement – a project would not go forward?

A. Rodney would need to talk to Laura Jo about this before answering the question.

Q. Will the CNF use CEs only to capture only dead and dying trees?

A. No.

Rodney recommended a field trip be set up to have this discussion out on the ground, possible at Current Creek.

A recommendation has been made to fill Republic district ranger position. A number of local applications for this position were received.

4. Project Updates

-- Renshaw: a meeting is being planned.

-- Deer Jasper: The intention is to get the project out by the end of March.

A to Z: Mark Teply from Cramer Fish Sciences was in to talk to NEWFC representatives a week ago. He met with a variety of groups but has not heard much from conservation groups. Road maintenance and construction are important issues and some reduction in roads to reduce stream crossings. CFS process is different from the typical Forest Service process.

Action: Roads issue - there is a need for a temporary roads policy – at this point what is called a temporary road could be anywhere from a few hundred feet to two miles.

5. Follow up Items

-- A field trip to Malo Eastlake was considered as a post project monitoring review.

-- Mark Teply will be meeting with Mike Petersen on Monday – others are welcome to join him.

-- Gayne will kickoff the 50th Anniversary of The Wilderness Act at the Tundra Swan Festival this coming Saturday.

End

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