

Joint NEWFC/CNF Bi-monthly Meeting Minutes
May 12, 2010

Next Meeting July 20, 1 PM, SCCD

Forest Service attending: Joe Gates, Laura Jo West, John Bueller

NEWFC Board Attending: Lloyd McGee, Tim Coleman, Russ Vaagen, Maurice Williamson, Derrick Knowles, Mike Petersen, Steve West, Dick Dunton

Others attending: Scott Ketchum, Phil Ross, Elanor Distler, Tom Distler, Scott Nielsen, Russ Larsen, Chuck Gadis, Sheila Stalp, Mike Poulson, Claudia Michalke

Agenda:

1. Greetings/introductions
2. Lloyd's time
3. Laura Jo's time
4. East Wedge Update (Claudia)
5. State Capital Budget Allocation
6. Round Table Update
7. Kettle Face
8. Minimum Roads Strategy
9. Projects Update
10. Schedule Next Meeting Time

Discussion

1. Lloyd's time

NEWFC Taskforce has been working on the Kettle Face Project (Barney's Junction to S. Fork Boulder Creek in Ferry County) with the Forest Service and toward a draft project proposal. The project goals are to reduce fuels and restore healthy forests. Lloyd was invited to attend an official audit by Region 6 USFS for Finn and Huck projects. It was quite interesting and in-depth experience. Lloyd noted NEWFC's annual meeting will be either June 17 and invited everyone to participate.

2. Laura Jo's Time

Our timber accountability audit takes place every two years. Anything that is "outside the box" was noted. Laura Jo is meeting with lots of individuals and working with her team to get up to speed regarding existing projects. A decision on the Hanlon appeal is expected to be out in a week from R-6. The Forest is hoping to fill the vacant Natural Resource Staff Officer position within a week.

---Stimulus funding

Q. What is the status of the Stimulus funding?

A. Funding has come in for hiring contractors. The good news is there is more money than current needs. We'll be assessing additional projects where we can use funding.

Q. Will you be able to share the audit report?

A. Yes, but it won't be done for a couple weeks, then a plan for remedial action will be created. The final report will be out in 30 to 60 days. Q. How long does it take to put together and IDIQ?

A. There are two parts to a IDIQ – no timelines given.

---Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act Project

Q. What is the current status of the Colville CFLRP?

A. The proposal was submitted last Thursday and covered about 1 million acres about half of which is national forest with the remainder tribal, state and private lands. Funding must be allocated by September 30. One concern is the longer it takes for award recipient to be announced the harder it will be to spend allocated funds within required timeframes. There are 5 projects submitted in Region 6, 2 of those are from Washington (Tapash and Colville). The Region did say updates to a project can be done every year.

Q. How will funds be spent?

A. Funds can only cover implementation costs. No funds can be used for planning.

Q. The proposal guidelines said no CFLRP funding can be used for roads. Is it permissible for other funding sources to be used?

A. Cannot use matching funding for road construction. Other (non-CFLRP) funds could be used for road construction within project area.

4. East Wedge Project

Claudia met with Laura Jo West and Lynn Kaney this morning. 900 stand exams have been done. Lynn asked for another 123 plots to be completed and that Claudia believes will be done by Monday. Lynn will have a rough draft proposed action out within a week. Botanical survey will be completed this spring by George Wooten. Claudia is looking for a fuels specialist with NEPA experience. The district is at \$106K dollars in expenses and \$53K in-kind match. Lloyd noted the \$460K the FS got is sufficient to do NEPA work, but there are no funds at this time for implementation. Claudia meets with Bill Shields on a weekly basis. She thanked the Forest Service for their quick turn around of funding requests; usually about 10 days. So far NEWFC in-kind donations exceed \$52K.

Q. Have you determined what kind of short-fall you might face?

A. No. Not sure yet if we have enough money (with additional funds coming) that we'll have enough funding to cover all costs.

5. State Forest Health Funding

WA state legislature budgeted \$2M to DNR to help fund Forest Service fuel reduction projects. Some of this funding may be allocated to Summit Pierre. Forest Service is not yet sure what that amount might be. Joe's job is to accelerate work once funding comes in.

Q. When will funds be made available.

A. That is unknown. The state is presently working through their process.

Q. What are your staffing needs?

A. We need a Level 3 sale planner. We could pick up a furloughed DNR person if they are available. Also looking to Region 1, Montana, to see if they have someone they can send this way.

6. Round Table Update

Mike Poulson (Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers) gave a brief update. Roundtable overarching goal was to see if everybody could agree how to manage the Colville National Forest. We ran into brick wall in April and decided to stop the process or at least take a sabbatical from it. Mike feels more has been accomplished since the roundtable ended than towards its closure. Wilderness is the big issue. There was a lot of trust built during the process.

Q. Will there be a report coming out of this process?

A. We said we were going to do that but Marcus and I decided we didn't want to upset on-going discussions. To a certain extent we didn't want to put down "this is where we hit the wall." It's not time to do that.

Q. Will this process help the Forest Service?

A. (Laura Jo) Yes, definitely. It would be incredibly helpful to have a slice of the community at the table to get with a broad range of interests as possible. We get people asking us why we listen to the Coalition.

Mike: We didn't term the roundtable as "broadening the base of the coalition." We said we wanted to "broaden the base of collaboration."

Russ: We've been talking with some recreation user groups about forming a coalition similar to NEWFC. NEWFC is mostly about forestry issues. Recreation is so dispersed in terms of interests, all of which can breed mistrust. NEWFC isn't driving recreation. There will likely be a time when/where forestry will overlap with recreation.

Lloyd: There were 16 people at the table representing a variety of opinions – only 4 were from NEWFC. Early on a Backcountry Horseman group member asked to join and was immediately seated. The number of participants was kept small enough to allow for good communication while also having broad representation at the table.

Laura Jo: There are tangible results to NEWFC on the industry side. For some other interests there aren't those tangible results. NEWFC is unusual because it has stuck together for such a long time – from my experience that's not typical.

Lloyd to Scott: What can we do better?

Scott: you have to get the right people at the table. There's been a lot of good things that have come out of the process. You know I have problems with some things that have happened.

Maurice: It's been said and it's easy to say the timber industry is in decline – with regard to the current market conditions. I did some polling of industry groups and it appears NE Washington mills will invest \$30M in equipment upgrades. Lumber tally in NE Washington is about 1 billion feet from all ownerships. The Republic mill was a pine mill though it did run fir, but it wasn't designed for it. The cost of pine got too high and people quit using it and switched to other wood.

7. Kettle Face

Collaboration is currently underway. Part of the challenge here is working out differences with regard to restoration thinning. The coalition intends to develop collaborative prescriptions for ecological restoration.

8. Minimal Roads Strategy

An engineer from R-6 office spoke to a group recently regarding road maintenance. The annual need is \$55M to maintain roads but only \$13 M is allocated. There is a need to shut down roads if they are not needed. This issue in particular is a rub with motorized recreation users. Recent project appeals have been related to this issue. Roads were designed for a certain maintenance level that is not being met under current budget.

Laura Jo: this is the biggest issue we face. What is the road system we want? We need to take a comprehensive look at this. What sort of routes are necessary for a linked system for harvest retrievals? What sort of resource damage is being caused? I want to refocus away from monetary costs to need.

Maurice: We don't think this should be done on project by project basis, because doing so encumbers projects. The coalition is looking at formulas that might for instance say closure of this mile of road might be equal to a quarter mile of new road.

Joe: Roads were designed as a system.

Mike: what we'd like is a logical system. That process needs to bring ranchers, recreation, NEWFC and others to the table.

9. Projects Update

Joe handed out a list of projects dated May 10, 2010.

Lloyd: what is status of Finn and Scotchman?

Joe: last word is the bid package is being put together. We've been using the Region 1 strike team since last fall. Not sure when Finn will be offered – there are some problems that are being worked through.

10. Next Meeting

June 17 is NEWFC's annual meeting 3:30 p.m. is the BBQ – everyone is invited to attend – location likely to be Lost Falls Brewery. July 20, 1 PM is the next CNF/NEWFC meeting.

Adjourn: 3 PM

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