

Next meeting: Next Meeting November 16, 1 PM, SCCD

Joint NEWFC/CNF Bi-monthly Meeting Minutes – DRAFT
September 14, 2010

Forest Service attending: Elizabeth Brann, Linda Fee, Laura Jo West, Rodney Smolden, Craig Newman

NEWFC Board Attending: Phil Carew, Lloyd McGee, Ron Gray, Tim Coleman, Dick Dunton, David Heflick, Jeff Juel, Serena Carlson (executive director)

Others attending: Claudia Michalke, Tricia Woods, David Hallide, Sheila Stalp, Josh Anderson; Doug Seymour, Traci Hanlan, Ed Campbell, Dean Hellie, Wes McCart

Agenda:

Introductions; Review Agenda

1. Supervisor West Update
2. Lloyd Update
3. East Wedge Project
4. Project Planning and Timelines
5. Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act Proposal
6. Public Comments

Discussion:

1. Supervisor West Update

The Forest Service is currently doing an internal Forest Plan review with a formal internal review beginning in October. We expect to release the draft plan this coming spring for public review. There is some talk about splitting apart the CNF from ONF-WNF. Laura Jo felt given the Colville's unique communities that may be justified.

Q. Is it for sure that Forest Plan revision must go through NEPA?

A. Yes, an environmental impact statement will be prepared for release next spring. Expect a revised draft by next fall and a final draft spring 2011 with a decision sometime in 2012.

2. Lloyd Update

The coalition is near a final agreement on the Kettle Face Project. Power Lake Project work is in full swing and start up of Walker is soon to come. November 2 will be the first collaborative meeting of the East Wedge Project. A key objective is to speed up the process from start to finish to help expedite projects. Lloyd will attending the Western Governor's Association meeting in Denver next week and is speaking on a panel about community collaboration. The Coalition will give a public showing of its video in Colville, September 23, 6:30-8PM at the Community College – everyone is welcome.

3. East Wedge Project

Project cultural resource reviews are currently underway by contractors from the Colville Tribe. Soils work is to begin soon. Claudia expects all fieldwork will be completed by early October. On any of the stands where previous ground-based logging operations took place a soil assessment will be done. The Forest Service has approved this project's Purpose & Need and project goals. At this time there does not appear to be implementation funds (sale & contract prep) available to this project.

4. Project Planning and Timelines

Elizabeth Brann is Don Gonzales' replacement. She handed out and reviewed copies of an April 2010 ten-year CNF vegetation management schedule. The Forest expects to offer 42 million feet of timber volume off the Colville Forest this year which includes 30 mmbf of sawlogs.

Q. Can separate projects be "packaged" where they exist in the same watershed?

A. Yes and in fact some projects will be packaged in one NEPA document.

Efficiencies are very dependent on staffing levels. Contracting is beneficial provided there is adequate time to prepare for contractor arrival. A sudden infusion of money can temporarily complicate processes in part because of accounting procedures and policy requirements. If you start today to change your ASQ it would take 5 years for that to happen. It takes at least a year to bring a new permanent employee on staff. Project costs are less for shorter turn-around projects and more for longer turn around projects.

In 2008 there were three Proof of Concept forests and only the Colville chose to continue with that program. POC would provide a sustained budget certainty for some categories. There are several reasons POC didn't work: 1) lack of state funding, 2) a down economy, 3) lack of commitment at the regional level. POC will not be continued in 2011. It turned out to be difficult to maintain sustained budgets. From Oct 1 to March 15 there is a great degree of budget uncertainty what will get funded and what won't. Strategic budgeting is a process of individual forests seeking funding. Westside forests have more volume/acre which reduces their cost per unit compared to the Colville. Even so, the Colville unit cost of production remains competitive.

Q. What is the difference between POC and other forests and going back to the old way of getting budget?

A. POC we assume we know our budget whereas the rest of R6 didn't know theirs. In 2009 we got the same as we got in '08 and the same will be true in 2011. Another advantage was that CNF could beef up its staff because we could rely on funding. We are at 95% of costs. With current and possible future budget constraints coupled with increasing costs we are looking at workforce issues. From start to finish is a 4-year process.

Q. East Wedge is a strategy to improve efficiencies and pass savings on to the next project. If we can repeat this process again and again can we grow acres treated?

A. We pushed several sales up that we had planned to sell later. That's why we are a bit short in 2012 and 2013. East Wedge will help that out, however.

Q. Re: budget from R6. There is a new forest plan that will be coming out in a couple of years. What is the sustained yield? Is the budget based on target volume or what's available.

A. The budget is not very strategic in the vegetation arena. I see historic allocations by forest. There has been talk for years about the Colville being a "good buy" in terms of its output. However, the CNF is not getting enough money to meet its target. There is no repercussions when other forests don't produce their targets. It would be useful if reallocation did occur to places like the Colville that are producing at objective levels. Each resource areas has its own formula. The recreation budgeting is not related to ASQ and is instead based on existing facilities.

5. Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project

The Coalition would like to prepare an application for 2011. Doug Seymour said the Tribe is suffering from the same planning budget shortfalls as the Forest Service and would be interested in participating in development of a diversified CFLRP strategy. The point of contact within the Forest Service's Colville staff is Elizabeth. Lloyd will be the point of contact for NEWFC. There was agreement to pursue joint planning to develop a proposal.

Friday September 24 in Colville there will be a basic class on how to procure grant funding and training.

6. Public Comments

Tricia Woods: some people aren't familiar with NEWFC or what you do. The Colville Chamber is interested in keeping lines of communication open among the community. The Chamber is participating in NEWSTART which has a recreation focus. Craig Newman is coordinator of NEWSTART. He said there is a plan that is out and encouraged everyone to review of its content. Traci Hanlan suggested that NEWSTART include the Park Service, DNR, LPO Wildlife Refuge, Colville Forest and Colville Tribe lands. There are currently openings on the Board of Directors of NEWSTART – contact Traci or Craig for more information.

Next Meeting

November 16, 1 PM, is our next scheduled meeting.

Adjourn: 2:45 PM