

MEETING RECORD
Stakeholders Forum for the Nantahala & Pisgah
Plan Revision D R A F T Meeting Record

Tuesday, December 8, 2015

12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Pack Memorial Library

Asheville, North Carolina

Members

Kyle Brown, Quality Deer Management Association

John Culclasure, Ruffed Grouse Society

Kevin Colburn, American Whitewater

JD Diefenbach, Sierra Club, Wenoca Chapter

Phil Elliott, Columbia Forest Products

Sam Evans, Southern Environmental Law Center

Susan Fletcher, Pisgah Hardwoods

Jim Gray, (alternate for Jeff Johnson)

Ruth Hartzler, Carolina Mountain Club

Steve Henson, retired, former ED of S. Appalachian Multiple Use Council

Bill Hodge, Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards

Lang Hornthal, Root Cause

Hugh Irwin, The Wilderness Society

Ryan Jacobs (alternate for Gordon Warburton), Wildlife Resources Commission

Bill Kane, NC Wildlife Federation

Josh Kelly, MountainTrue

Zach-Lesch Huie, Access Fund

Andrea Leslie, Wildlife Resource Commission

Deirdre Lightsey, Back Country Horsemen of NC

Ben Prater, Defenders of Wildlife

Curtis Smalling, National Audubon of NC

Morgan Sommerville, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Megan Sutton, The Nature Conservancy

Julie White, SORBA/IMBA

David Whitmire, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Council

Alternates Attending as Observers

Richard Mode (Alternate for Bill Kane)

Greg Yates (Alternate for Bill Yarborough), NC State Forest Service

Jill Gottesman, (Alternate for Hugh Irwin)

David Reid, (Alternate for JD Diefenbach)

U. S. Forest Service

James Melonas, National Forests of NC

Michelle Aldridge, National Forests of NC

National Forest Foundation

Karen DiBari, National Forest Foundation

Mark Shelley, National Forest Foundation

Welcome

Karen DiBari welcomed all participants to the meeting. Twenty-six Stakeholders Forum (SF) members (or their designated alternate) were present.

They were joined by 8 Forest Service staff and 5 other additional observers. Karen reviewed the agenda and objectives for the meeting. She also reviewed the ground rules for the meeting.

National Recreation Area Proposal and Work of the Stakeholders Forum

Members raised concerns about an article that appeared in the Blue Ridge Outdoors on November 18th. The article outlined an MOU, signed on December 8, that was endorsed by a group of environmental and recreation organizations, including some SF members. Several SF members alleged that the efforts surrounding the MOU violated the collaborative process.

The SF discussed the importance of ensuring transparency and avoiding surprises amongst members. Some suggested that when the Stakeholders Forum does come to an agreement, the individual SF members and their organizations will not come out against what is agreed to. There were some questions about what "agreement" means and a request to have some clarification on the topic.

- Action: Josh Kelly will share a copy of the MOU with the entire Stakeholders Forum.
- Action: The NFF will review the code of conduct regarding commitments of SF members to uphold SF agreements, transparency and avoiding surprises. The NFF will bring recommended additions back to the SF for consideration at the February meeting.

December Meeting Record

CONSENSUS AGREEMENT was reached in support of the draft November 10, 2015 Meeting Record with no substantive changes.

Definition of Restoration (see attached handout)

The Forest Service (Michelle Aldridge) provided an overview of restoration as it applies to forest planning and the 2012 Planning Rule.

Map Presentation (see attached document)

Jon Hallemeier (U of GA/Coweta Listening Project), demonstrated the Community Viz tool he has been working on with the Forest Partnership and for his graduate research with the Coweta Listening Project.

He referenced the different layers he currently has available and the origin of each layer. The Stakeholders Forum would need to determine what questions need to be answered and what data is needed. The data layers currently included are: Wildlife - Wildlands, Timber - Feasibility, Conservation - Inventory Areas, State Natural Heritage Areas, Water - Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Jon explained that Community Viz can help the SF understand how various values and interests relate to each other in the Nantahala & Pisgah NFs and identify where there is synergy or where more conversation is needed. This tool could be potentially used by the SF by adding different data layers and incorporating different attributes.

The SF members discussed their interest in using maps and spatial data to identify potential recommendations on the forest plan. Many questions about the data layers emerged during the discussion.

- Action: Jon H. will share data source information with the SF
- Action: The NFF will explore how to integrate mapping data into the work of the SF.

Spectrum of Management Intensity

A small group of SF members/alternates (Ryan Jacobs, Josh Kelly, Gordon Warburton) worked on a spectrum diagram to illustrate the continuum across currently identified management areas on the NPNF from less intensive to more intensive management. SF members had positive feedback on the spectrum in terms of helping to conceptualize the variation across management areas, but wanted to remove the acreages from the fall 2014 Forest Service draft since they are no longer accurate.

Management Areas

The 2012 Planning Rule states that the terms “management area” and “geographic area” may be used to describe how plan components apply to specific parcels of National Forest System land, with locations shown on maps. Geographic areas are based on place while management areas are based on purpose.

The Forest Plan will outline what part of the forest will fall into each of the different management areas. Each management area is associated with a different mix of multiple-uses and management directions.

Framework for SF Recommendations (see attached document)

The Forest Management/Designations Committee (FMD Committee) and the Sustainable Recreation Committee (SusRec Committee) each met twice since the November meeting. They reviewed examples of other collaboratively developed comments on forest plans. The NFF provided a diagram/flow chart that the two committees helped to conceptualize which shows key SF input opportunities (e.g. Forest-wide desired conditions, objectives, guidelines, and standards [DOGS], Buckets/Management Areas, Management Area DOGS, Geographic Area/s and Geographic Area DOGS).

The FMD Committee decided to develop goals for three different “buckets” or management areas, and associated desired conditions. The FMD Committee generated many ideas but there wasn’t time due to

Thanksgiving to fully vet and distill the information. The SF began to review their work. Initial questions/issues included:

- Natural Range of Variability – The FS clarified that within the 2012 Planning Rule, NRV is considered along with other factors. According to the definition, NRV is a tool for assessing ecological integrity and does not necessarily constitute a management target or desired condition. The SF and the FS discussed potentially holding a webinar for those most interested in NRV to further discuss it in detail.
- Roads – The FS stated that site-specific decisions on roads within the Forest Plan. Desired Conditions will guide implementation.
- Budget – SF members debated whether to limit desired condition recommendations based on budget restraints. Clarification on this issue is in the 2012 Planning Rule. This is the guidance the Forest Service follows:
 - *Desired conditions. A desired condition is a description of specific social, economic, and/or ecological characteristics of the plan area, or a portion of the plan area, toward which management of the land and resources should be directed. Desired conditions must be described in terms that are specific enough to allow progress toward their achievement to be determined, but do not include completion dates. (NOT BUDGET-CONSTRAINED)*
 - *Objectives. An objective is a concise, measurable, and time-specific statement of a desired rate of progress toward a desired condition or conditions. Objectives should be based on reasonably foreseeable budgets.*
- Three “buckets” identified by the FMD Committee – the SF discussed how these corresponded approximately with Management Areas 1 and 2 as identified by the FS.

The Sustainable Recreation Committee shared its work, which included forest-wide desired condition recommendations and some bucket-focused desired conditions. The SF did not have time to substantially discuss the draft document, but SF members are interested in building on this initial work.

James Melonas stated that the FS interdisciplinary team (IDT) and the SF are converging in terms of discussions and work products. He said it may make sense to share the FS drafts for discussion and feedback from the SF and other members of the public.

- Action: The NFF will add the bucket information to the SusRec Committee’s draft document and will share it with the full SF for review.
- Action: The NFF will clean up the FMD Committee’s draft document to ensure that desired conditions and objectives are in their proper categories (for apple to apple comparisons).
- Action: The NFF will determine how to support discussions of the FS information and the committee-generated work at the January meeting.

Meeting Preferences

The NFF shared results from the recent preferences survey on meeting locations and timing. The preferred time for meetings was 10a – 4p and the preferred location was in Asheville. Other suggestions included alternating Asheville meetings with other locations every one or two meetings. The next meeting will be held in Asheville. SF members requested that the meeting not be located downtown due to parking issues.

Upcoming Meeting Details: January 12, 2016 from 10a – 4p at the North Carolina Arboretum, 100 Frank Law Olmstead Way in Asheville.

Membership

Jeff Johnson, a wood products representative, has resigned from the SF. The SF had several options:

- Find another wood products person to invite;
- Not fill the seat;
- Consider Jim Gray, who has been serving as the alternative to Jeff Johnson.

Josh Kelly nominated Jim Gray to fill the seat. The SF reached CONSENSUS AGREEMENT to have Jim Gray serve as a member of the SF in Jeff Johnson's place.

Action Items and Preparation for January Meeting

- Action: Josh Kelly will share a copy of the MOU with the entire Stakeholders Forum.
- Action: The NFF will review the code of conduct regarding commitments of SF members to uphold SF agreements, transparency and avoiding surprises. The NFF will bring recommended additions back to the SF for consideration at the February meeting.
- Action: Jon H. will share data source information with the SF
- Action: The NFF will explore how to integrate mapping data into the work of the SF.
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Record of Decisions

The Stakeholders Forum approved the Meeting Record for the November 10, 2015 meeting

Consensus

Yes

The Stakeholders Forum approved Jim Gray to fill the seat vacated by Jeff Johnson.

Yes