

**Panhandle Forest Collaborative**  
5/21/13 draft meeting minutes  
Sandpoint District Office, Sandpoint  
1:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Members present: John Finney, Liz Johnson-Gebhardt, Bob Boeh, Erick Walker, Laura Wolf, Mike Petersen, Phil Hough

Forest Service: Tera Little, Kimberly Johnson

Facilitator: Karen DiBari

Minutes from 3/20/13 meeting approved.

Recreation Committee – John Finney reported

- Court ruling in southern Idaho – judge identified that the Forest Service (FS) was arbitrary and capricious in not doing winter travel planning; wasn't completed in adequate time frame; planning rule said that over the snow vehicles didn't need to be included in travel planning but the judge said it does need to be included; the Idaho Panhandle National Forest (IPNF) is now considering expanding winter travel planning to the whole forest.
- FS is still waiting for the biological opinion on threatened and endangered species on forest plan
- Once the biological opinion is completed, then likely the forest plan will be released directly
- Brad and John will be talking about doing a process to develop an interim plan for the Selkirks; need to determine whether it makes sense to put time and energy into an interim plan or just to focus on the broader plan.

Forest Projects Committee – Mike Petersen reported

- Good meeting on May 9<sup>th</sup> at the Fernan District; present were Mike Petersen, Jeff Juel, Bob Boeh, Jeff Connolly, Tom Crimmins, Brad Smith, Phil Hough and many district staff
- Plan is to develop a Panhandle Forest Collaborative (PFC) alternative to be considered along with the current alternative in draft form and a no action alternative
- Mike Petersen will be the point of contact for the PFC; Chad Hudson will be the point of contact for the FS

- Timeline
  - By mid-November, FS will have collected field data
  - By mid-Dec – issues and indicators
  - Late Jan 2014 – FS finalize alternatives
- Project area is 11,000 acres and treatment area is 1,400 acres under current alternative; this is where most of the site specific data will be gathered
- Committee interested in what the plan is for the rest of the acreage
  - Timber
    - How will the whole project area (beyond the treatment area) be managed for sustained yield over time?
    - Interested in exploring the possibility for a 10-year stewardship project or combo w/timber sale for 30 million board feet
    - 3-4 million board feet (350 mbf per acre/per year) potential
  - Significant roads system
    - What roads are needed to manage this area over time?
    - Motorized recreation opportunities
  - Landscape evaluation/ analysis
    - Could something similar to what Paul Hessburg and Derek Churchill are doing on the west side of the Cascades be done here?
    - For efficiency's sake, could data be collected this summer beyond the treatment area in order to have that information for management over time?
    - Need to determine how to do the surveys efficiently; reach out to other forests who are moving this forward in a similar approach
    - Set the basis for the premise to help mesh data collection with alternative development
    - Identify areas that aren't going to be treated and don't analyze those
    - Example of Black Hills; large-scale analysis close to 100,000 acres (almost the whole forest); analysis didn't look at every single acre but at characteristic acres in order to do the analysis
  - Key issues: integrate wildlife trends and populations into the discussion about timber/vegetation trends as well as hydrology trends
  - Bottom Canyon is at a unique moment due to availability of a mining settlement funds; work could actually get funded so it makes sense to look for larger opportunities
  - Side note: \*\*\*Colville is going to have the industry do the NEPA to help overcome the funding limitations
    - FS has to approve the NEPA; if the no action decision is made, the industry will have to eat the cost of the NEPA

- **Action steps:**
  - Subcommittee meeting to document bullet points about the project and summarize above ideas to present to Chad Hudson and his staff - 1 p.m. PCFC on Monday, June 3, 2013
  - Upcoming meeting: June 13<sup>th</sup> field trip starting at 8 a.m. at the Fernan District Office
    - Will spend an hour or two in the office on a presentation about watershed analysis from Erin
    - Then go out into the field; if possible look at a partially marked area
    - Suggestion that time be added to the agenda for that day to so the committee and FS staff can talk about the larger analysis concept
  - FS will identify sideboards in order to further clarify what's possible

#### Treasured Landscapes

- Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness will be working with Erick Walker's staff this summer to train 10-15 volunteers in weed assessments (June 6 and 7); Jennifer Costich-Thompson and Ken Thacker will be jointly running the training; each volunteer will "adopt" a trail and gather data for reporting back to the FS
- High alpine floristic surveys to identify suitable whitebark pine habitat; training is June 12 and 13 – will go out in groups of 3-5 people on several organized trips this summer; survey work will determine where the whitebark pine restoration work (prescribed burns and planting) will be done in future field seasons
- Backcountry Horsemen will help bring in
- June 6 and 7 weed volunteer trainings; Weed spraying
- Morris Creek – volunteer work day on upper portion on Public Lands Day (September 28)

#### Upcoming work on the Sandpoint District

- Erick Walker reported that the next sale for Sandpoint is Johnson-Twin Creek area near Clark Fork; will likely be a joint project with Central Zone in FY18 and there will be multiple projects as a part of it; wild guess for volume 15 mbf; PFC could potentially get involved FY16 to enable a year-long planning cycle

#### Protocols

- The ad hoc structure committee met via teleconference and addressed several outstanding issues regarding roles and communications. The group approved the changes. With regard to how consensus is defined, the group decided to add in the matrix used by the Northeast Washington Forest Coalition.

- **Action steps:**

- Karen DiBari will incorporate the matrix and circulate the “final” copy to the membership.
- The group reviewed the Harney County Declaration of Cooperation and agreed to put this on the July meeting agenda. The following organizational representatives volunteered to prepare their declaration statements in advance of that meeting as examples: Priest Community Forest Connection, Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, Idaho Forest Group, The Lands Council
- Liz Johnson-Gebhardt and Mike Petersen will complete their two years of being chair and vice-chair in November 2013. The issue of PFC leadership will be put on the September agenda.

Upcoming meeting dates

- After reviewing the dates of IPNF Forest Leadership Team meetings and other known conflicts, the group set the following dates for PFC meetings (1:00 – 4:30 p.m. in Sandpoint):
  - Wednesday, July 17, 2013
  - Wednesday, September 25, 2013
  - Wednesday, November 13, 2013