

Panhandle Forest Collaborative
Meeting Minutes
Sandpoint DO
April 9, 2014

Present: Brad Smith, Mike Petersen, Paul Sieracki, Laura Wolf, Phil Hough, Glen Bailey, Liz Johnson-Gebhardt, Jeff Connolly, Bob Boeh, John Finney

Forest Service: Erick Walker

Facilitator: Karen DiBari

Announcements: Several members signed individually and submitted to the Idaho Department of Lands in support of nominating the Idaho Panhandle National Forests 5 Year Action Plan-identified landscapes for consideration as landscape-scale treatment areas under the 2014 Farm Bill. Due to NEPA streamlining provisions, there are likely to be lawsuits when the categorical exclusion is used. The hope is that designated landscape-scale treatment areas will have projects that are collaboratively developed so that reasons for litigation are reduced. Several members expressed that without the collaborative process, the CE provision is of great concern.

Brad will contact the Idaho Dept of Lands office to get the final package that the Governor submitted for circulation.

Bottom Canyon Alternative:

Mike Petersen reported that Tom Crimmins is unable to attend today's meeting, but Mike Petersen talked with him and overall Tom is pleased with group's responsiveness to suggestions from his presentation and the way the process has gone.

The group discussed each section of the draft alternative and made edits and clarifications. Additions were made to an "acknowledgements" section and addition of language into the watershed recommendations as suggested by Kajsa Stromberg. After discussion of each section, the group took a "thumbs" vote, followed by a vote on the total alternative upon completion.

ACTION: All active members of the PFC voted in full support of the alternative as presented, with the exception of Paul Sieracki who voted sideways ("can live with" the alternative) based on his concern about current road densities in the Bottom Canyon landscape.

A suggestion was made that the PFC recommend that the IPNF use a categorical exclusion (CE) for Bottom Canyon, but there was not agreement in the group about this, so the proposal was withdrawn. Concerns mentioned included that use of the CE provision could put a target on the Bottom Canyon project due to litigants wanting to test the Farm Bill in the courts and that would delay the project implementation. Also there is a concern that analysis wouldn't be thorough enough under a CE.

Next steps: Mike will submit the document to Chad early next week, and will try to set up a meeting to present the alternative to Chad and his staff and get feedback on next steps. He will send the info out to the committee and people can let him know if they're interested and available. People who expressed interest so far are: Liz, Bob, Paul, Brad. Karen will incorporate the final changes and circulate to the PFC and Forest Projects Committee.

Johnson Twin/Horseshoe

Erick Walker provided an overview of the Johnson Twin/Horseshoe project, which crosses the North and Central Zones and was identified in 5 Year Action Plan (see attached map).

- Erick is the lead line officer on the project
- Johnson Twin is within Bonner County (21,000 acres); Horseshoe is 95% Shoshone, 5% Bonner County (14,000 acres)
- Project area has not been decided yet
- Currently doing a roadside salvage project in the area, brushing, culverts
- Forest Service is sending people in the field this summer to start collecting data
- Project is for timber harvest as well as implementing the Forest Plan so all specialists will be involved in identifying opportunities and desired conditions; want to restore white pine and larch, have pockets of root rot
- SWAG – 17 MBF, though may increase
- This area hasn't been managed in several decades
- Starting stand exam data
- Great opportunity to do PFC field trips with the Forest Service
- One year gathering information for the proposed action
- Proposed action to decision timeframe: 18 months – year
- Project that the sale would happen at the end of FY18 or early FY19
- Erick is open to identifying the boundaries, discussing scale, etc.
- Have bull trout; don't know yet about lynx
- The interdisciplinary team will involve people from both districts.

- Erick will touch base with Chad about how to reach out to Shoshone Collaborative and Shoshone County Commissioners. Shoshone County Collaborative – not very active right now, but the PFC would want to invite them to be involved.
- Options for how the PFC could engage:
 - PFC and FS talk about the project as it goes along to develop the action/no action alternative
 - PFC could develop its own alternative
- Erick will talk with Mary and Chad about their view on what the best process will be, and the PFC will also discuss.
- Discussion about location and making the project fairly large scale; may offer opportunities for prescribed burning to support elk.
- Potential fall field trip- October 1st?

Statements of Cooperation

Several members gave Karen their statements of cooperation and others are still completing them. Due to time constraints, this issue was tabled until the next meeting.

Upcoming meetings:

Desire to do a field trip in May or June, focused on Bottom Canyon. Field trip goals: look at units and start talking specifics about how/whether things will work. Mike will bring this up in the meeting with Chad and his staff.

- **NEW: Wednesday, May 28, 2014**, time and location TBD – field trip
- **Wednesday, June 11, 2014, 1:00 – 4:30 p.m.**, location TBD
- **NEW: Tuesday, July 22, 2014**, time and location TBD – field trip
- **Wednesday, August 13, 2014, 1:00 – 4:30 p.m.**, location TBD
- **NEW: Tuesday, September 16, 2014**, time and location TBD – field trip
- **Wednesday, October 1, 2014, 1:00 – 4:30 p.m.**, location TBD
- **Wednesday, December 3, 2014, 1:00 – 4:30 p.m.**, location TBD