

Panhandle Forest Collaborative Meeting Record
Wednesday, May 11, 2016 – 12:00-3:30 PM
Bonner County Administration Building, Second Floor Conference Room

Members: Liz Johnson-Gebhardt, Mike Petersen, Brad Smith, Phil Hough, John Finney, Glen Bailey, Bob Boeh

Partners/Guests: Karen Roetter, Greg Becker, Sid Smith, Judy Morbeck, Britta Mireley

Forest Service: Ryan Foote, Tim Knight, Dan Scaife, Ed Koberstein, Matt Staudacher, Jeff Lau, Felipe Cano

Facilitator: Emily Olsen

Meeting objectives

- Discuss the 5-Year Action Plan (5YAP) and process to update the plan
- Share project updates, focusing on the 2016 field season

Welcome & Opening Announcements

- Collaborative Restoration Workshop: Mike Petersen, Liz Johnson-Gebhardt, Alan Harper, Ryan Foote, and Emily Olsen were at the [Collaborative Restoration Workshop](#) in Denver in April. Members noted that Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell and USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources & Environment Robert Bonnie were present throughout the workshop, and the audience was engaged. PFC members received a lot of interest about the Bottom Canyon Project – the project is a model for collaborative restoration.
- Mike reported that he and others have attended recent Shoshone-Benewah Counties Forest Health Collaborative meetings, and have offered advice based on the PFC’s structure and process. Mike said the meetings have gone very well, and the overall process has been a positive experience.
- Liz recently worked on a second [National Collaborative Cadre](#) project with the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests in Georgia. Liz will return in June to organize a community workshop, work with the Forests to improve internal communications, and build collaborative capacity.

Agenda Review and Approval of Minutes

- The March 11th Meeting Record was approved and will be posted on the PFC’s website.

Public Comment

- No public comment.

New Members & Brief Review of Operating Protocols

- Based on recent attendance, Greg Becker is eligible to be a voting member starting in July. The following participants are eligible to be voting members if they attend two meetings in a row: Steve Klatt (Bonner County Parks & Waterways) and Kevin Wade (Backcountry Hunters & Anglers).
- The group also discussed what is required to be a voting member - *To become an active member, a person must actively participate in two consecutive meetings and agree to operate under guidelines outlined in the operations manual. A member must be in “active” status to make decisions during a meeting (to vote).*

Policy Updates

- Sid Smith reported that Idaho Senators signed a letter to Senate leadership requesting that they fund the Secure Rural Schools program. Sid Smith will keep the PFC updated, seeing as it's still early in the legislative process.

NRCS Update – Joint Chief Program & Jasper Mountain

- Greg Becker reported that progress is continuing towards a [Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership](#) proposal for the Jasper Mountain project. With Tim Knight, Greg has been discussing the potential for roadwork and pre-commercial thinning on national forest lands, in addition to work on private lands.
- Greg will work with Liz and Jeff Connolly to start outreach efforts to local landowners near the Jasper Mountain project in June.
- The application process will likely begin in July; Greg will continue to coordinate with the PFC and Idaho Panhandle National Forest (IPNF) staff as needed.
- Greg also reported that NRCS in Idaho is offering grants to assist private forestland owners in reducing the impacts of wildfire. The deadline to apply for grants is May 20th. [More information is available here.](#)
- **Action Item:**
 - In June, Greg Becker will work with Liz and Jeff to start outreach efforts to local landowners near the Jasper Mountain project area.

LANDFIRE Maps & Natural Range of Variation Discussion

- Ryan Haugo, with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), recently produced maps of historic canopy cover, succession class, fire regimes, and forest canopy height in Idaho. TNC is looking for feedback on the maps, which could help describe the natural range of variation for the IPNF.
- Bob Boeh shared the maps and asked IPNF staff to review and provide feedback if they are interested. Members noted that the maps provide another option to consider when collaborating on restoration projects, guiding the scale of projects, and influencing planning efforts such as the Five Year Action Plan.
- [Click here to download the maps.](#)
- **Action Item:**
 - IPNF staff and PFC members are encouraged to review the LANDFIRE maps and provide feedback or questions to Bob Boeh to pass along to TNC staff.

Five Year Action Plan Update & Discussion

- IPNF staff reported that the Five Year Action Plan (5YAP) effort continues to move forward as an open, collaborative effort. So far the IPNF has hosted two meetings with representatives from collaborative groups, counties, and other organizations, and will hold two more meetings.
- Through the 5YAP effort, IPNF staff hope to balance priority projects across the forest, and provide for flexibility to react to fire, insect and disease, and other situations.
- *Question:* How is the project size determined? *Response:* Sizes are chosen in order to have a diversified program of small and large projects, and funding and staff capacity are considered. Through the 5YAP, the IPNF will look for NEPA efficiencies and other considerations.
- PFC members discussed how the economic situation in North Idaho has changed since the last 5YAP (4 years ago), and also talked about the possibility of removing criteria for the distance from a project to a mill (though members noted that there's a reason for the criterion – it's important to ensure the economic viability of a project).

- Dan Scaife noted that the Bunco Roush project is coming up and may be of interest to the PFC, and Ryan Foote noted that the IPNF has already made significant investments in the Potter's Wheel project and expects to build momentum this summer.
- Members also asked about Buckskin Saddle; Bob Boeh and Brad Smith previously requested data from stand exams, and an updated volume estimate.
- **Action Items:**
 - Matt Staudacher will look into whether or not a long-term NEPA schedule exists for the INPF, or if there's something similar he could share with the PFC for the purpose of 5YAP discussions.
 - At the next meeting, the PFC will discuss the Bunco Roush project and determine whether members have the capacity (and interest) to collaborate on the project.
 - Ed Koberstein will send Bob Boeh and Brad Smith the Buckskin Saddle project data that's available.

PFC Grant Funding & LiDAR

- PFC members returned to the subject of available grant funding (\$17,760) for the group to use to contract out for GIS analysis and/or supplemental data collection to help advance collaborative discussions and accelerate projects. Funds must be obligated by December, 2016.
- Forest Service staff noted that the funds could help with LiDAR on several projects, including Bunco Roush and Hughes Creek.
- The IPNF is already planning to use LiDAR for upcoming projects, but the scope of the work is not yet determined; the PFC's investment would cover a portion of the work.
- PFC members were interested in learning more about the LiDAR projects, including cost estimates, and information about the companies that offer LiDAR services.
- **Action Items:**
 - Jeff Lao will work on providing the PFC with more information about the LiDAR work for the purpose of PFC grant funds.
 - At a future Forest Projects Committee or PFC meeting, members will discuss the PFC's grant funds, LiDAR options, and other opportunities to use the grant funds, and work on a proposal for the full group to discuss at the July meeting.

Winter Travel Planning Letter

- Brad Smith and John Finney reported that the winter travel planning letter, which the group would like to send to the Washington Office and Chief in support of funds for winter travel planning on the IPNF, is in progress.

Project Timeline Updates

- **5 year action plan** –Continuing the process to update the 5YAP (see details above)
- **Bottom Canyon** – Dan Scaife shared maps (attached) showing the IPNF's plan for a different road location for FR 206 that would be out of the floodplain and old growth area. **There will be a field trip on July 13th (9 AM at the Fernan Office) for the PFC to see the proposed location.**
- **Jasper Mountain** – Sale will be advertised in the second quarter of FY2017 (potentially January). The sale will come out as a stewardship project.
- **Buckskin Saddle** – Postponed; planning may begin in FY2017
- **Hughes Creek** – Idaho Conservation League and Priest Community Forest Connection recently submitted grants to support implementation. Implementation scheduled for 2017. IPNF and partners are seeking funds for LiDAR.
- **Granite Reeder** – No updates

- **Potter's Wheel** –Once the IPNF wraps up the NEPA work on salvage projects, Potter's Wheel collaboration should kickoff with the PFC and Shoshone & Benewah Counties Forest Health Collaborative. The PFC is interested in a field trip to the site.
- **Lightning Creek** –
 - Winter warming hut: Design was stamped by an engineer. Lumber will be delivered by IFG. Students will arrive in July to begin work. Emily will Doodle the PFC to set a time for a PFC field trip to the project site.
 - Treasured Landscapes projects: Phil Hough noted that the weed warriors program will begin this summer. New Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness staff Britta Mireley will run this program. Whitebark pine treatments will also begin this summer, with seeding in the fall.
 - Scotchman Peak trail: Anticipate finishing the Scotchman Peak trail reroute this summer.
 - Road closures: Currently working on the East Fork obstacles; may potentially open this summer, though not to motorized use.
- **Grizzly Fire Salvage** – Waiting to hear back on the emergency situation determination. Working on prep work and layout. EA should be signed by June.
- **Tower Fire Salvage** – Consultation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service may delay the decision. The signed decision is expected mid-late June. Currently working on layouts and prep.
- **Action Items**:
 - Mike Petersen will work with Dan Scaife on logistics and an agenda for the Bottom Canyon road field trip, and will send more information to the PFC soon.
 - Mike Peterson will work with Dan Scaife to set a date for a Potter's Wheel field trip. The group noted that August may be a good month to look at.
 - Emily Olsen will poll the PFC to set up a date for a field trip to the winter warming hut construction site, and will send more information about logistics soon.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule & Field Trips

- The next PFC meeting will be **Wednesday, July 13th at the Fernan Office** (Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District – 2502 East Sherman Ave., Coeur d'Alene, ID). The meeting will start with a PFC business meeting, followed by a field trip to the Bottom Canyon site. Please keep an eye out for more details in June.

Adjourn.

RECAP: Meeting Action Items

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