

**Panhandle Forest Collaborative Meeting Record**  
Wednesday, July 13, 2016 – 9:00-11:00 AM  
Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District, Fernan Office

**Members:** Glen Bailey, Bob Boeh, Jeff Connolly, Phil Hough, Liz Johnson-Gebhardt, Mike Petersen, Brad Smith, Kevin Wade

**Partners/Guests:** Marc Eberlein, Karen Roetter, Kirk Sehlmeier, Sid Smith, Judy Morbeck

**Facilitator:** Emily Olsen

**Meeting objectives**

- Discuss PFC business, including grant funding and collaborative projects
- Share updates about the NRCS Joint Chief's Opportunity, 5 Year Action Planning effort, and upcoming field trips

**Welcome & Opening Announcements**

- Sid Smith shared that the Senate recently had a hearing with Chief Tidwell. Senator Risch asked specifically about the budget for winter travel planning on the Idaho Panhandle National Forest (IPNF). Chief Tidwell said that winter travel planning is a priority to move forward in FY17. PFC members were encouraged to hear the update.

**Agenda Review and Approval of Minutes**

- The May 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting Record was approved and will be posted on the PFC's website.

**Discuss how to use PFC Grant Funding**

- After much discussion and a phone call, the PFC voted and decided via consensus to use the PFC's grant funding (\$17,760) to support third party monitoring for the Tower Fire Salvage and Reforestation project.
- The PFC learned that Sharon Hood from the Rocky Mountain Research Station is conducting monitoring on post-fire effects on cedar and hemlock. She's already put in plots to monitor how the trees are dying. Priest River District staff noted, however, that she's not looking at soils or compaction (aquatics).
- The group agreed that the Forest Projects Committee should meet to determine:
  - (1) What would the PFC like to monitor (e.g., soils, compaction, old growth, wildlife, etc.)?
  - (2) Could the PFC also monitor whether on-the-ground work matches the proposal and contract?
  - (3) If litigation occurs, are there specific points from the petition that could be incorporated into monitoring?
  - (4) Who are the potential contractors?
- Once the Forest Projects Committee determines the monitoring focus, NFF staff will develop a request for quotations (RFQ) to send to potential contractors. NFF will also ask the PFC to review quotations that come in and select a contractor.
- Potential contractors brainstormed by PFC members included the University of Idaho, University of Montana, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Northwest Management, and Art Zach.

- **ACTIONS:**

- **In August, the Forest Projects Committee will meet to determine the monitoring objectives and a list of potential contractors.**
- **NFF will develop an RFQ and send any quotes that come in to the PFC for review.**

### **Discuss Current and Potential PC Projects and Priorities**

- PFC members learned that the Potter's Wheel project is moving forward and there is a proposed Good Neighbor Authority project called Hanna Flats.
- Bob Boeh shared that the forest products industry and Forest Service put up funding (industry put up \$1 Million over five years) to help implement Good Neighbor Authority in Idaho. The funding will help the state work on NEPA-ready projects that are outside of the Forest Service's normal work plan (to help achieve more work than planned). The projects will benefit from collaboration.
- Members expressed concern that the priorities continue to shift and they seem to learn about projects after-the-fact.
- Members decided that a joint work plan, developed with the IPNF, would help align the PFC with the IPNF for collaboration on priority projects.
- The group discussed the importance of meeting with Shane Jeffries (new Acting Forest Supervisor) and Mary Farnsworth (hopefully via VTC or Skype), as well as applicable district rangers, to develop a draft plan in time for the full PFC to review the plan during the September PFC meeting.
- New projects: PFC members discussed Bunco-Roush, including the map provided by Dan Scaife and Laura Wolf's thoughts on the project. The group discussed how the project occurs in the wildland-urban interface and does not seem to align with the PFC's desire to work on landscape-scale projects. Along with Hanna Flats, members would like to discuss potential new projects, including the project objectives, in more detail with IPNF staff during the work plan meeting.
- **ACTIONS:**
  - **Emily agreed to draft a letter for PFC approval. *Completed – Letter is attached.***
  - **The PFC agreed to send the letter to Mary Farnsworth and incoming Acting Forest Supervisor Shane Jeffries.**
  - **The Forest Projects Committee will meet with Forest leadership as soon as possible to develop a proposed work plan. The goal is to bring the proposal to the PFC's September 14<sup>th</sup> meeting for discussion and approval.**

### **Five-Year Plan Update**

- Mike Petersen shared the new 5-Year Action Plan (5YAP) Guide and updated the PFC on the process. A positive outcome of the process has been the development of new and stronger relationships between the IPNF and collaborators, and social license for restoration work.
- Members discussed some concerns. For example, though the 5YAP collaborative effort is having an impact on the project criteria, the effort may not be influencing the projects that are ultimately selected. Additionally, there were some changes— such as the elimination of catastrophic fire impacts as a screen during the selection process – that raised questions.
- There will likely be another 5YAP meeting in September.

### **NRCS Join Chiefs' Program & Jasper Mountain Update**

- Kirk Sehlmeier reported that NRCS sent mailings to 200+ households in the Jasper Mountain area in June. At least six landowners are interested in working together.

- NRCS needs interest from the Forest Service (Tim Knight) if they're going to move forward with a Joint Chief's proposal. Regardless of whether or not a proposal moves forward NRCS can still assist the landowners. However, if the proposal moves forward and is successful, the Forest Service would receive funding (potentially significant funding) to do additional roadwork and pre-commercial thinning in the Jasper Mountain area. The proposal deadline may be pushed back from fall 2016 to December 2016.
- The PFC encouraged NRCS to send another round of letters to drum up more landowner support, and thanked Kirk and Greg for all the work to-date to engage landowners.

### Winter Travel Planning Update

- Brad Smith and Phil Hough have been in discussions with John Finney and local snowmobilers regarding the winter travel planning process and the proposed Scotchman Peaks Wilderness. They are hoping to find a solution that meets everyone's needs in the larger context of winter travel and wilderness. Brad, Phil, and John will continue to update the PFC.
- PFC members asked how a letter developed by the PFC might interact with wilderness proposals on the Montana side (Kootenai National Forest). Brad and Phil clarified that the PFC letter would likely only focus on winter travel planning on the IPNF. Phil also noted that he and others recently met with the Idaho delegation in Washington DC. The likelihood of wilderness moving forward on the Idaho side (IPNF) is somewhat likely, and would be a short piece of legislation. The Scotchmans proposal is consistent with the IPNF forest plan, which builds on the Idaho Roadless Rule – the provisions align with existing travel restrictions.
- The PFC could be a strong community voice in the future for the winter travel and wilderness causes.

### Project Timeline Updates

- **Bottom Canyon** – PFC members took a field trip after the meeting to check out the Road 206 relocation proposal. The new road proposal is a bit lower on the hillside than the original proposal, but still well above the streambed. Dan Scaife also reported that the funding situation has change a bit since timber prices are currently lower than when the project was developed. The IPNF may need to find additional funding to finance the roadwork.
- **Jasper Mountain** – *No update during this meeting.*
- **Buckskin Saddle** – *No update during this meeting.*
- **Hughes Creek** – Liz reported that they're starting field work in July, and are in need of volunteers. They're going to put in piezometers to do measurements the last week of August. If PFC members or organizations are interested in volunteering (August 18-20 and 27<sup>th</sup>, plus other dates), contact Liz or Jill Cobb ([jcobb@fs.fed.us](mailto:jcobb@fs.fed.us)). Liz also reported that the IPNF did get LiDAR data for the project in conjunction with other work on the IPNF. The LiDAR data should be ready for dissemination in December 2016. There's still a gap in funding for the implementation work. The partners, including the Kalispell Tribe, continue to be very involved.
- **Granite Reeder** – No updates
- **Potter's Wheel** – The IPNF announced that a field trip would be held August 11<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 AM-3:00 PM for the Copper John and Potter's Wheel projects. Members can contact Mike Petersen if they are interested in attending.
- **Lightning Creek** – Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness are doing weed mitigation work. They recently completed an assessment showing that treatments last year were effective. The Scotchman Peak trail reroute is progressing, and will be finished during National Public Lands Day (September 24<sup>th</sup>). The Mountain Goat Ambassador program is going well; however, the IPNF and partners are considering adding seasonal porta-potties to the trailhead to deal with waste. Phil noted the need

for additional recreation monitoring, and proposed that the group could look into more sustainable funding for conservation corps work in the future.

- **Tower Fire Salvage & Reforestation Project** – The IPNF recently sold two sales from the project. One went to Idaho Forest Group and the other to Vaagen Brothers Lumber. The PFC was happy to hear that the sales went to two local businesses. Some members noted that Alliance for the Wild Rockies may be pursuing litigation on the Tower project. NFF staff looked into the issues and confirmed that there's not pending litigation at this time.

### Miscellaneous

- Mike reported that he's working with many partners on a Bunker Hill Superfund Risk Assessment. He's also been studying the Shoshone County risk plan. The goal is to get someone like the EPA to fund a study. The Shoshone-Benewah County Collaborative endorsed the idea.

### Upcoming Meeting Schedule & Field Trips

- The next PFC meeting will be **Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup> at the Bonner County Administration Building (1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room) from 12:00-3:30 PM.**

**Adjourn.**

### RECAP: Meeting Action Items

- In August, the Forest Projects Committee will meet to determine Tower Fire Salvage monitoring objectives and a list of potential contractors.
- NFF will develop an RFQ for the Tower project monitoring and send any quotes that come in to the PFC for review.
- Emily will draft a letter with the PFC's request to develop a work plan for PFC approval.  
*Completed – Letter is attached.*
- The PFC agreed to send the letter to Mary Farnsworth and incoming Acting Forest Supervisor Shane Jeffries.
- The Forest Projects Committee will meet with Forest leadership as soon as possible to develop a proposed work plan. The goal is to bring the proposal to the PFC's September 14<sup>th</sup> meeting for discussion and approval.