

## **Panhandle Forest Collaborative Meeting Record**

Wednesday, September 14, 2016

Bonner County Administration Building, Sandpoint

**Members:** Glen Bailey, Greg Becker, Bob Boeh, John Finney, Phil Hough, Liz Johnson-Gebhardt, Steve Klatt, Mike Petersen, Laura Wolf

**Forest Service/Partners/Guests:** Dan Dinning, Fred Fischer, Ryan Foote, Alan Harper, Aubrie Hoxie, Ed Koberstein, Tim Knight, Adam Liljeblad, Judy Morbeck, Peg Polichio, Karen Roetter, Lanora Rosenberry, Sid Smith, Matt Staudacher, Stephen Smith, Jon Songster, Erick Walker, Ed Wingert

**Facilitator:** Emily Olsen

### **Meeting Objectives**

- Learn about Good Neighbor Authority in Idaho from Idaho Department of Lands staff
- Discuss the upcoming Tower Fire Salvage and Reforestation Project monitoring
- Visit with Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation leadership and learn more about the organization
- Share additional project updates

### **Approval of Minutes**

- The July 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting Record was approved and will be posted on the PFC's website.

### **Policy Updates from Legislative Staff**

- Wildfire Bill: Staff feel "as close as they've ever been" to passing fire funding legislation by the end of September, potentially as part of an energy bill. Senate and house bills take different approaches and require reconciliation.
- Introduced a Future Careers in Logging Act; children over age 16 could work with their family logging operations in limited circumstances where they are directly supervised by a family member.
- Rep. Labrador recently introduced the Self Sufficient Community Lands Act.

**Public Comment** - *None*

### **Update on the 5-Year Action Plan (5YAP) & PFC Work Plan**

- Idaho Panhandle National Forest (IPNF) has been working collaboratively to update the 5YAP. The IPNF completed the 5YAP guide through a collaborative process, and is now working to finalize the 5YAP project plan by November. Staff will likely meet with collaboratives and other external groups to determine which projects would be best for collaborative group engagement.
- IPNF staff shared draft 5YAP maps. The Forest Projects Committee will spend time with the maps and provide feedback to the rangers.
- In the North Zone, Potters Wheel will be the next big project. Staff are approximately 90% finished with fieldwork and are working on issues related to elk security and the cost of treatments per acre. Staff are preparing to draft a proposed action, which may be a good engagement point for the PFC.
- Bunco Roush is the next project on the docket, and has great potential for collaborative engagement. Since the last PFC meeting, staff increased the scale of the project significantly to 30,000 acres to integrate recreation with more restoration work and address other issues. The

project area has been flown with LIDAR, but data is not fully processed. IPNF staff hope to bring the project to the PFC soon for a more in-depth discussion.

- **Action Item:**
  - Forest Projects Committee will meet to review the 5YAP Draft Maps and send feedback and questions to the appropriate district rangers.

### **Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation**

- Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation (WFF) has invested in the NFF's facilitation and coordination of the PFC for the past two years, as well as other *Treasured Landscapes* campaign work. Trustee Lanora Rosenberry reported that she's happy to see how well the PFC members work together.
- WFF accepts letters of inquiry twice a year, invites proposals, and then makes funding decisions. WFF has three initiatives. The International Initiative focuses on women and their families overcoming violence and poverty, the Children's Initiative focuses on children and issues related to domestic violence, and the Sustainable Forests & Communities Initiative focuses on the triple bottom line – community enterprises that foster social, ecological, and economic benefits. Grants are limited to Weyerhaeuser's traditional service area in the Pacific Northwest and Great Lakes.

### **Good Neighbor Authority in Idaho and the Hanna Flats Project**

- Peg Polichio, Jon Songster, and Ed Wingert provided an overview of Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) and discussed Idaho's approach to implementing GNA. See the GNA Q&A documents (attached) for more details on GNA in Idaho.
- Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) staff are working with Forest Service Regions 1 and 4. Idaho and the Forest Service recently signed a statewide master agreement (10 years) that authorizes the Forest Service to work with IDL. The Idaho Panhandle, Nez-Clearwater and Payette National Forests have shown interest in working to develop the first GNA projects.
- GNA allows the Forest Service to leverage state resources to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration. The State of Idaho will serve as a trusted agent to do work on state and federal lands. Through investments from the timber industry, Idaho has program funds to begin several projects. Revenue that's generated will be banked and reinvested directly back on forest lands. Program goals include (1) increasing the pace and scale of on-the-ground work, (2) increasing fiber supplies to mills, and (3) creating a self-sustaining funding stream over the next 3-5 years.
- GNA allows for NEPA and planning, but some things – such as road reconstruction – are excluded. The Forest Service still makes NEPA decisions and approves timber-marking guides. The Forest Service does not abrogate federal estate authority or responsibilities.
- Example of how GNA works: IDL signed an agreement with Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest to take on a partial thinning project. IDL will auction off the project at end of September. IDL estimates \$1 Million in receipts, which will be held in trust and reinvested back into restoration.

### **Hanna Flats**

- Hannah Flats will be the first GNA project on the IPNF. The project was listed in the Governor's Farm Bill list, but NEPA hadn't been completed and the project was not in the program of work.
- IDL is planning to utilize creative staffing teams (Forest Service, IDL, and contractors) to analyze and implement the project.
- **Action Item:**
  - PFC can comment and contribute as necessary. If the PFC is interested in being involved in the project, the group can work with Matt Staudacher to determine appropriate points of engagement.

### **Tower Fire Salvage and Reforestation Project Monitoring Work**

- Through WFF funds for technical assistance, the NFF/PFC is hiring a graduate student to work with Rocky Mountain Research Station scientist Pete Robichaud on post-fire soils, aquatics, and hydrology monitoring. The student, Anna, and Pete will begin monitoring the project in October and will meet with the PFC and Forest Projects Committee as the work moves forward. Anna will be working from the RMRS office in Moscow.
- PFC offered to help as needed.
- Alan Harper offered use of fixed wing drone for project flyovers.
- Anna and Pete will produce a final report for the PFC. NFF would like the Forest Projects Committee to provide guidance to Anna and Pete to ensure that the report meets the PFC's needs and expectations.
- **Action Items:**
  - Emily will connect Alan with Pete to see how the drone could be used during the project.
  - Forest Projects Committee will meet with Anna and Pete once the monitoring work begins to determine the PFC's involvement and discuss the project deliverables.

### **Mill Creek A to Z Project on the Colville National Forest & Recent Litigation**

- Mike Petersen shared a presentation about the Mill Creek A to Z Stewardship Project on the Colville National Forest. The presentation is attached.
- In developing the project, the Colville National Forest and Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition (NEWFC) wanted to answer the question of "How can we get more work get done without changing current laws?" The Forest Service decided to use 3<sup>rd</sup> part NEPA contracting. The Forest Service selected the area, and solicited bids for NEPA contractors in 2012. Cramer Fish Sciences was selected as the contractor to complete NEPA, and they led public engagement through field trips, public meetings, and collaborative engagement. The project was designed to follow NEWFC guidelines.
- Through evaluation panels and other mechanisms, the Forest Service approved every step of the process. Vaagen Brothers won the bid for the 54,000 acre project.
- The project has been highly controversial because of the contracting mechanism and analysis of cumulative effects. The draft EA received objections. As a result, Cramer Fish Sciences repeated the cumulative effects analysis. The project again received objections. NEWFC is planning to intervene on behalf of the Forest Service.

### **Letter in Support of Winter Travel Planning on the IPNF**

- John Finney shared the Recreation Committee's draft letter in support of winter travel planning on the IPNF, and asked for the PFC's approval. The letter is attached.
- PFC members learned that the Forest Service has been allocated \$120,000 for the planning process. The IPNF has not yet determined a strategy for planning and public engagement.
- The PFC congratulated John, Brad, and Phil for putting a lot of work into the letter.
- PFC members and guests asked that the following people be copied on the letter (which will be addressed to Chief Tidwell): congressional delegation, Regional Forester, Forest Supervisor and District Rangers, Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative, Boundary and Bonner County Commissioners, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho.
- **PFC members voted and reached consensus on the letter.**
- **Next Step:**

- Emily will work with John and Brad to prepare the winter travel planning letter for delivery. The Recreation Committee decided that the letter should come from Mike and Liz on behalf of the PFC.

### Project Timeline & Status Updates

- **NRCS Joint Chiefs' Program & Jasper Mountain** – Greg Becker, NRCS, updated the PFC that the NRCS determined not to submit a Joint Chiefs' application for the Jasper Mountain project area. NRCS and Forest Service staff determined that the project was too far along to be competitive during the process (noting that it's a very competitive year). Greg reported that the lesson learned is to start the process as early as possible. In the meantime, NRCS will continue to work with private landowners and provide assistance around the project area. Greg thanked the PFC, Liz, and Jeff for encouragement and assistance connecting with landowners, and noted that there may be future opportunities to work on a Joint Chiefs' proposal. For example, Bunco Roush may be a candidate for a proposal in 2017.
- **Jasper Mountain** – Moving forward. Sale package will be advertised during the second quarter of FY17 for 15 Million Board Feet. The sale will be a single IRTC.
- **Bottom Canyon** – Implementation is moving forward and will continue through FY19. Lone Cabin Stewardship sale will occur in the first quarter of FY17.
- **Buckskin Saddle** - The project was originally 45,000 acres, but the planning boundary has expanded east and west. The number of new is still being determined, but IPNF staff are looking at a 2021 sale. They'll need to complete additional stand exams the summer of 2017 to better ID treatment areas, and they'll use LiDAR.
  - **Next Step:** Bob would like data from initial stand exams – insect and disease, inventory, etc. Ed Koberstein will follow up with Bob.
- **Hughes Creek** – LiDAR flown and piezometers are in thanks to great efforts from Priest Community Forest Connection, volunteers, tribe, state, and Forest Service. Jill put together a short report. They are currently looking at 3 grants for implementation.
- **Granite Reeder** – Tim Knight shared an update. The biggest issue is the lack of engineering plans, but the IPNF could potentially use fees from camping and boating for the engineering fees. They're estimating the project cost to be \$500k to \$1 M. If costs are less than \$500k, the Forest Service will probably have funds for it. Hope to have engineering plans by fall 2017.
- **Lightning Creek** – The Winter Warming Hut is 95% completed. The Winter Riders club is doing basic finishing work during an upcoming work party. There will be a dedication on October 8<sup>th</sup>. Phil shared the following updates from Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness (FSPW):
  - Weed monitoring and treatment – Early indications suggest that the results will be good. There are still some lingering patches away from trails.
  - Morris Creek reroute is coming along well and in good shape.
  - Scotchman Peak Trail reroute will be completed soon.
  - Mountain Goat Ambassador working well and making a difference.
  - Whitebark pine seeding will take place at end of September.
  - Beetop-Roundtop trail reroute is completed. Road improvements will begin in October. Work on the small bridge across spring creek will be completed this fall or early in the spring.

### Upcoming Meeting Schedule

- The next PFC meeting will be **Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup> at the Bonner County Administration Building (1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room) from 12:00-3:30 PM.**

## **RECAP: Meeting Action Items**

- **5YAP:** Forest Projects Committee will meet to review the 5YAP Draft Maps and send feedback and questions to the appropriate district rangers.
- **Hannah Flats:** PFC can comment and contribute as necessary. If the PFC is interested in being involved in the project, the group can work with Matt Staudacher to determine appropriate points of engagement.
- **Tower Project Monitoring:** Emily will connect Alan with Pete to see how Idaho Forest Group's drone could be used during the monitoring project. The Forest Projects Committee will meet with Anna and Pete (from RMRS) once the monitoring work begins to determine the PFC's involvement and discuss the project deliverables.
- **Winter Travel Planning/Recreation Letter:** Emily will work with John and Brad to prepare the letter for delivery. The Recreation Committee decided that the letter should come from Mike and Liz on behalf of the PFC.
- **Buckskin Saddle Project:** Bob would like data from initial stand exams – insect and disease, inventory, etc. Ed Koberstein will follow up with Bob.