

Panhandle Forest Collaborative Meeting Record

12:30 – 4:00 p.m., March 20, 2019

Bonner County Administrative Building

ATTENDANCE

Members: Jeff Bynum, conservation group representative; Commissioner Jeff Connolly, Bonner County; Kurt Dyroff, conservation group representative; John Finney, motorized recreation representative; Alan Harper, timber representative; Liz Johnson-Gebhardt, community non-profit representative; Britta Mireley, alternate for Phil Hough, conservation group representative; Mike Petersen, conservation group representative

Technical advisors: Jessie Berner, Felipe Cano, Dan Scaife, and Jason Smith, USDA Forest Service; Tim Kastning, Office of Congressman Russ Fulcher; Sid Smith, Office of Senator Jim Risch; Andrew Moore and Ed Wingert, Idaho Department of Lands; Cindy Vaughan, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Austin Terrell, Idaho State Department of Agriculture

Guests and observers: Erin Plue, Idaho Forest Group

Facilitators: Ben Irely, National Forest Foundation facilitator and Zach Goodwin, National Forest Foundation note-taker

MEETING OUTCOMES

Decisions

- NFF is asking all collaborative groups to move their websites to NFF's site. The PFC confirmed their support to move the website to NFF's website.
- November meeting record was approved.

Action Items

- Liz Johnson-Gebhardt to get in-touch with Erin Plue regarding Idaho Forest Group's Pritchard Creek project.
- Alan Harper to send Ben Irely the Resource Advisory Council's request for proposals. Ben Irely to then distribute these documents to the PFC mailing list.
- Liz Johnson-Gebhardt to connect with Felipe Cano regarding the Innova Foundation grant.
- Alan Harper to connect with Jessie Berner regarding new logging technology. Alan to invite others from PFC on a related field trip.
- Ben Irely to coordinate with the American Forest Resource Coalition to plan a summer field trip to the Honey Badger project area.
- Ben Irely to distribute PFC member contact list to members and key Idaho Panhandle National Forest staff.
- Ben Irely to add the Sandpoint Ranger District's Chloride Gold Project to the projects list
- Ben Irely to connect with Jessie Berner and Mike Petersen regarding A to Z projects.

- Felipe Cano to send Ben Irely the press release regarding the IPNF's awards. Ben to then distribute these documents to PFC mailing list.
- Ben Irely to add the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) as a standing agenda item for future meetings.

Bin Items

- PFC members to send Peg Polichio and Erin Plue their thoughts regarding the Shared Stewardship discussion that will be held at the Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership meeting, April 30 – May 1 in Boise, Idaho.
- NFF to begin coordination an "All Collaboratives of the IPNF" meeting regarding the release of the IPNF's five-year vegetation management plan.
- Dan Scaife to notify PFC if there are any Potter's Wheel objections.

MEETING RECORD

1. Welcome, introductions, and approve agenda for today's meeting

Ben Irely introduces the agenda and PFC members review and approve November's meeting record.

2. Announcements

- A memorandum of understanding regarding Shared Stewardship was approved in December 2018 between Idaho Department of Lands and the USFS.
- An upcoming meeting – Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership meeting (April 30 – May 1) will focus on Shared Stewardship, what it is, how it works, and how it can be leveraged across Idaho. The meeting is seeking attendance from collaborative groups from across Idaho.
- Felipe Cano, reported out on a recent ranger meeting in Butte, MT regarding Shared Stewardship. Specifically, the meeting focused on vegetation management, but fuel targets were also brought up as potential avenues to conduct Shared Stewardship. Importantly, Shared Stewardship is a collaborative effort that should recognize and employ a "we're all in this together" mentality. Furthermore, Shared Stewardship is not just about states stewarding federal land but also about federal agencies helping across boundaries.
- IPNF recently received USDA Secretary Award for being a good example of how Shared Stewardship can function effectively using the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA).
- Jessie Berner advised the group that the recently passed Farm Bill authorized county and tribal governments to operate under GNA provisions. The USFS will be looking for new opportunities to use its granted authorities.
- Kurt Dyroff noted that the Western Governors Association (WGA) is also interested in Shared Stewardship. In fact, a memorandum of understanding between the WGA and USDA was recently signed to "Establish a framework to allow the FS and WGA to work collaboratively to accomplish mutual goals, further common interests, and effectively respond to the increasing suite of challenges facing western landscapes."

- Felipe Cano noted that recent IPNF work on aquatics has been nationally recognized for its use of GNA, specifically in regard to aquatic organism passage.
- Alan Harper brought to PFC's attention a potential restoration project (~2,000 acres) on land owned by Idaho Forest Group (IFG) on Pritchard Creek. IFG would like to seek funding support through the Forest Legacy Fund. Applications for this grant are to be turned in June 2019, and if the application makes it through stage one, Alan will likely be seeking letters of support.
- Jeff Bynum is seeking projects that Backcountry Hunters and Anglers can work on over summer 2019.
- Alan Harper advised the group of Resource Advisory Councils (RAC). RACs make decisions on \$600 to \$700k of available funds for local disbursement at their discretion. A request for proposals will go out soon (in the next couple of weeks or so), and the RAC usually seeks out projects with matching funds.
- Paul Seracki resigned as a member of the PFC.
- Felipe Cano advised the group that FS is actively seeking ways to share maintenance of recreation amenities, specifically the Hanna Flats and Ledgewood day use sites.
- The PFC expressed serious interest in the "All Idaho Collaborative Meeting" and thought it could be productive to have that meeting be the roll out for the 5-year vegetation management plan.

3. Congressional Policy Updates

- Sid Smith advised the PFC that the recent federal lands package has been signed into law. Additional sportsmen provisions will allow both FS and BLM to permit federal land for shooting ranges. It will also allow for bows to be transported within National Parks and will allow for volunteers to assist with wildlife management in National Parks.
- The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has been permanently reauthorized, but allotment and disbursement will be on a year-to-year basis. The PFC would like an update on LWCF at the next PFC meeting.
- The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) has also been reauthorized and the funding increased from \$40 million to \$80 million. Applications for the newly allocated \$40 million will likely open in May.

4. Updates on Good Neighbor Authority

- Ed Wingert advised the group that the Hardrock and Jasper 2 projects were sold last year but are not moving forward. Some road work was completed in Jasper 2 last fall. However, both the projects could start moving forward later this fall or winter.
- Hanna Flats and Black Boulder should be auctioned off in June or July 2019.
- Scoping for the Hanna Flats project originally targeted 2500 acres, but NEPA analysis limited the designated area to 1843 acres and sale preparation further limited the area to 1723 acres. There will be 0.7 miles of temporary road construction associated with this project. The project will be split into two parcels: the northern parcel to be known as Hanna Flats and the southern parcel will be known as Thin Lamb. The Hanna Flats portion constitutes ~

900 acres and 8 million board feet of timber and the Thin Lamb portion constitutes ~ 800 acres and 7 million board feet of timber.

5. Project Timelines and Status Updates

Buckskin Saddle

- The March 19th, 2019 open house in Clark Fork was successful and well attended.
- The IPNF hopes to have a proposed action put together by May 2019.
- A presentation to the Idaho Roadless Commission is expected to be conducted near the end of May 2019.
- A decision is scheduled to be made by September 2020 with the sales coming out in 2021.
- Alan Harper expressed concern regarding the NEPA process not being amenable to modern logging technology, specifically winch-assisted harvesting which allows for timber harvest to occur on steeper slopes. However, NEPA does not allow for harvesting to occur on slopes greater than a certain steepness. FS representatives think it would be a good idea to schedule a field trip to explore these advances in timber harvesting technologies.

Honey Badger

- A good update on the project was provided at the last PFC meeting. However, the project proposal will likely be available to the public beginning in the first part of May. FS has put a lot of energy into three topic areas for pre-scoping process: first, forest health; second, watershed health and water quality improvement; and third, sustainable recreation outcomes. Additionally, the FS has put together an ArcOnline Story Map that will be released for public consumption to better explain the project to an interested public. Finally, FS would like to see a lot of stakeholder input. This is especially important due to many communities being proximate to project borders.

Hughes Creek

- Hughes Creek project has been completed, but monitoring will continue through the summer.
- Recommended that this project be pulled off the list.

Lightning Creek Road

- Lightning Creek Road project is also effectively done, so it should also be pulled off the list.

Bottom Canyon

- Sufficient project updates were provided at last PFC meeting, however, the 206 road reroute is in its final design phase and should be available later this year.
- All parcels have been sold.

Kaniksu Community Project

- The project is currently in on-the-ground verification phase and the size is still being planned. Currently, it could be anywhere from 95k – 130k acres. Public meeting design will occur around April 1 and it will be important to pin down good locations to hold these public meetings.
- FS is looking into opportunities under the Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership for this project.

Potter's Wheel

- Objection period ends on April 15th, and PFC advised the organization of a Subcommittee to be prepared for any objections.

Scattered Schoolhouse

- The project scope is currently looking to be around 250 – 300 acres, but it could be slightly larger. FS is looking into creative solutions in light of Farm Bill's allowance of intra-agency management.

Kaniksu Winter Travel Plan

- There is more to come regarding this project, but it will be going out to the public within the next month.

Bog Creek

- Bog Creek road will likely be opened up for administrative use exclusively and not to the public.

Chloride Gold

- FS advised that this new project will be introduced soon. It will likely look a lot like the A-Z project on the Colville, and the FS is not looking to move this through internally. FS is looking to put out a bid for a large landscape project, which would likely include a 3rd party NEPA analysis.
- NFF is looking to organize a peer learning session re: A-Z project in order to replicate best practices and subsequent outcomes in future projects.

6. Round robin: meeting critiques

[In round robin fashion, each member and visitor was given a moment to reflect on how this meeting has gone and to suggest changes for future meetings.]

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.