

CWPP Stakeholder Meeting  
December 6, 2016, 10 am – 3 pm  
Blue Ridge Ranger Station, Hotshot Bay

**Meeting Objectives**

1. Learn about updates/revisions to the Proposed Action based on analysis for the project
2. Discuss, clarify and offer feedback from stakeholders on updates/revisions of the Proposed Action
3. Learn about/discuss CWPP economic analyses underway:
  - Campbell Global (under contract with National Forest Foundation and Salt River Project)
  - Coconino National Forest
4. Look at a proposed timber processing site in the field, Site 211 on FR211 across from the Happy Jack Fire Service buildings.

**Participant List: See Appendix**

**Updates/Revisions to the PA and Preliminary EA NEPA – Polly Haessig** (see handout and presentation on website)

- Public scoping Feb-April of 2016 (23 comments integrated into the PA)
- Analysis of stands in the treatment areas, wildlife surveys and archeological surveys across the CWPP footprint
- Minor changes to the Proposed Action (PA) treatments
  - added proposed processing sites which was something that a cooperating agency wanted the FS to consider in the analysis.

MSO – Habitat Types Updates

As the project moves forward there will likely be more MSO PACs – 2016 75% of the project area was surveyed, in addition to the other 25% that was surveyed in 2015

- All but one MSO PAC was occupied (30) (it is likely occupied but surveys of it occurred rather early in the breeding season)
- Majority of them were pairs
- Summer of 2017 will be repeating surveys across the area and monitoring the existing birds and some just outside the project boundary
- Project overlaps with East Clear Creek Watershed Health project boundary. The Cragin team has been working together with the Rim Country EIS team and USFWS to classify habitat types consistent with previous projects and further updating it for the Cragin project area.
- Recovery habitat includes mixed conifer and pine-oak stands.
  - Mixed conifer includes – ponderosa pine, SW white pine, douglas fir, white fir, gambel Oak, Aspen, Maple
- MSO nest/roost replacement habitat has also been defined for the project area, and the East Clear Creek Watershed Health project was examined for stands that were classified as such.

- MSO PACs are less than 1/3 of the project area, but the habitat for living, foraging is much more extensive.
- MSO Recovery habitat is largely south of the reservoir.

#### Thinning Updates (Treatment Names)

- North of the reservoir is ponderosa pine and is managed as northern goshawk habitat
  - There are post-fledging areas (PFA) outside of the MSO PACs
- New MSO PACs that overlapped with previous proposed thinning were changed to MSO PAC thinning treatments.
- Hand thinning adjacent to private inholdings and around campgrounds was dropped but it is included in the prescribed burning as a pre-treatment. This pre-treatment will be done prior to burning so that when the areas are prescribed burned later the fire will not encroach into private lands and the hand thinning will provide some fuels reduction along the boundary.
- Thin from below treatment was dropped as a distinct treatment. However, during project implementation the silviculturist may include thinning from below as a prescription.
- Baker Butte: There are 35 trees over 24" dbh that must be cut to improve view from tower, and the 27 acres will also be thinned from below as a fuels reduction treatment.
- 2 types of recovery habitat for MSO: mixed conifer and pine/oak.
- 2 types of PACs treatment –
  - MSO PACs will be thinned in flatter areas (< than 40% slope) so that if a wildfire comes up from the canyons to the ridgetops it will reach a treated area and will moderate the burning so that the wildfire can be managed.
  - Thinning will emphasize uneven-aged development of the stands, creating a mixed forest type, allowing for some small patches for some regeneration too (generally less than an acre) and reducing the mistletoe where needed.
- Nest/roost recovery treatments will be treated just like the PACs, creating PAC-like habitat, maintaining a more closed canopy cover
- Goshawk PFA will be thinned less than the goshawk foraging areas outside of the PFAs.
- Ponderosa pine habitat is managed for goshawk foraging and will be thinned to provide for openings and interspaces in groups of trees and thinning will be designed to develop an – uneven-age structure

#### Absorbed treatments into the other treatments.

- Roadside treatments were meant to create safe environment for firefighting, now absorbed into surrounding areas – with caveat for fire
  - Prioritized for timing? – implementation plan will take into consideration timing of thinning first vs. prescribed burning first – pending limitations
- Right of way Treatment along SR87 – merged with surrounding thinning treatment areas
  - ROW along the south side of Highway 87 (~200 ac), allows for 30 feet of clear zone tree removal and thinning within the remainder of the ROW.
- Hand thinning around some private lands and campgrounds– merged with prescribed burning treatment
  - 87 acres, will be a pre-treatment

- Hand thinning will be tied into the prescribed burning, machine equipment may be used, depending the slope
- Thin from below – less stocking more regeneration, now merged with Ponderosa Pine treatment, “thin from below” can occur in any of the treatments

### Processing Sites

- Ideas arose after public scoping, SRP asked team to consider sites, sort yards, places for processing timber and biomass before it is hauled to mills that are far away.
- The FS conducted research on what they are, what they look like in AZ, how they have been used, how they have been analyzed under NEPA, and how might the economics benefit from a nearby processing site.
- It was determined that there was a potential cost benefit and research showed that they have been used on other forests outside of this region. The FS IDT then had to look for feasible locations within or adjacent to the project area
- Economic Analysis (by the USFS) showed that processing sites, close by the project area, would facilitate the utilization of more forest resource, possibly remove more biomass material and result in some cost saving.
- Processing allows for more volume and less weight to be hauled to mills or other facilities for final processing.
- Load limits for bridges in the area and on federal highways, 80,000 pounds.
- Concentration log yards – accumulating for sorting, drying, debarking, etc.
- Suggestion: the requirement to remove biomass is a major factor in the economic viability of the project.
- The thinning as described in the EA may include biomass thinning – cutting trees <6 inches dbh, but where it will exactly occur and over how much area will be determined as part of implementation and silviculture prescription development.
- Biomass removal may also depend on whether implementation is in a timber sale contract or as part of a stewardship contract.
  - Note that “slash” is different than biomass. Slash is activity generated material (limbs, tops and needles) and the analysis is looking at a variety of methods to deal with this including: machine piling and burning in units or at landings and lop and scatter.
  - How activity slash is dealt with will depend on the type of contract (timber or stewardship) and the equipment that is used in the logging
- The small processing sites will likely be one-time use sites for a specific timber sale/stewardship contract in the local area. A few of the processing sites may be used for multiple sales/contracts and may be in use longer than 5 years.
- This concept (processing sites) is new ground, there is a special use permit on the ASNFs for brush processing
- FS is still in conversation with the Regional Office about this process and its importance for this project.
- Comment: Distance to trails – ¼ mile distance – would be nice to include that information in the “draft”
- Sound and noise analysis have been done

## Question and Answer

- Q: Conditional use permits versus provisions in the timber sale contract?
  - A: Timber sale contract with specification/provision for processing site use (not conditional use). Or if the timber is sold to someone else, then a conditional special use permit would be developed for the use of the processing site. Ancillary permits for storm water pollution prevention and control and possible other permits will be necessary
- Q: All sites are identified?
  - A: yes, there have been preliminary site choices, for different uses/resources
  - Identification of Sites: Spatial analysis and on the ground verification, slopes less than 5% - South of the reservoir large areas of flat slopes are hard to find; distant from meadows, sinkholes, streams, recreational sites, trails, private lands and residences etc.
- Q: Biomass/residue removal or processing?
  - A: intent to remove as much as possible 5.9 – 0.1 inches is desired for removal
- Q: But is it required to be removed?
  - A: depends on the silvicultural prescription and is also contract/site dependent
- Q: Slope on fall lines for dropping trunks down the slopes – how will falling occur on steeper slopes?
  - A: any slope greater than 40% cannot be logged mechanically – forest plan standard.
- Q: Rehab of the site after the project is complete?
  - A: ADEQ specifications would need to be met, also graded, sloped, reseeded, retain as many large pines as possible – contract or special use permit would mandate the rehabilitation

## Design Features for project

- Coordination with ADOT including signage (trucks crossing/entering) highways and prevention of tracking mud and dirt onto the highway.
- Coordination with SRP and APS on operations near powerlines.
- Thinning trees in the right of way improves visibility and safety in the clear zone when crashes occur. During implementation, the contractor will have a safety plan for the public driving on the highway.
- Forest Plan Amendments (to the old Forest Plan)
  - There will be an amendment to allow for implementation during the breeding season as part of the implementation plan. This will be consulted on with USFWS.
- Implementation plan will divide the project area into blocks for treatment to address effects to owls during breeding season
- Preliminary EA will be under the current Forest Plan; the final EA and draft decision will be under the new forest plan when it can be implemented.

## Schedule

- Preliminary EA out for public comment in the spring – May, 2017.
- Q: Sharing the draft versions of the EA with stakeholders early?

- A: No, that is why we are having this meeting, but there are not large substantial changes to the PA with the exception of the Processing Sites. The FS schedule is very tight and doesn't allow for a period of stakeholder review.
  - However, as pieces of the plan become more concrete can there be another stakeholder meeting (before the comment period) to hear about what how the inputs are being considered as part of the final Draft EA.
- Q: Will there be advanced notice as to when the EA will be out to the public?
  - A: yes, everyone will be notified
- Q: the new objection process (as seen in 4FRI) will be the same?
  - A: 30 days, not 45
- Q: Discretion to make it 45 days?
  - A: yes, the line officer can do this
- Attached general timeline/schedule attached to the notes?
  - A: New forest plan consideration may cause the schedule to change some
  - A: We can explore that option
  - A: We may need to think of a venue that meets FACA and can address detail questions from stakeholders as well as broad concerns from the public – allowing for continued feedback
- Q: Will the ID Team address the comments one by one?
  - A: The FS has developed a tracking document for public and stakeholder comments prior to and during scoping but that has not been put on the FS web. It would take more work to put it on the web.
  - A: NEPA process streamlines our response to scoping comments – we don't have to specifically respond to each individual comment.
    - Comment from stakeholder: This is very helpful to the public and stakeholder to know that they have been heard.
- Q: Request that there be an extension of the comment period from 30 day to 45 day
  - A: This is a high priority for the timeline schedule, so 30 days will be the comment period
- This is fuels reduction and not restoration, restoration will be happening with 4FRI
  - Tree cutting needs to happen right the first time
- East Clear Creek Watershed Health EA – overlaps the Cragin area, lots of stream restoration components happening now and have happened since that project was decided upon in 2006. Proposing a new restoration project in Long Valley, called the Long Valley Meadow Restoration Project, 2017.
  - The project area includes some incised headwater meadows in the Cragin WPP area and the Clint's Well Forest Restoration Project area.
  - This project is now on the Schedule of Proposed Actions and will have public scoping this winter.

**Campbell Global Economic Analysis** – Steve Horner and Ann Anderson (NFF is preparing a handout on the analysis which is not yet available)

- Funded by NFF and SRP, the economic analysis attempts to identify implementation cost structure and potential cost-savings treatment practices.
  - Data was collected by the contractor (Campbell Global) from the FS and other sources to develop original data relative to physical conditions, forest restoration by-product yields, operational factors and market conditions.

*Underlying assumptions discussed include:*

- Cost saving methods may or may not be viable in this project – things that add efficiency to the project have been included.
- Created their own inventory with LiDAR and tools from NAU – stand maps for stratified inventory
- Pre-harvest inventory using above data and field plots
- CG interpretation of data sets, (portions of stand data were estimated by CG through a variety of practices as FS stand/timber data was unavailable) to create logging **yield estimates** (saw and pulp logs and biomass (not created in processing) – include top wood, limbs, and leaves)
  - 1/3 (36%) volume is biomass, low value with long distance for transport, 11% is 12” or greater log diameter, remaining 53% is estimated to produce logs less than 12” diameter.
- Transportation network
  - Existing road segment GIS-layers may not all connect together, needs to be a continuous line to run the analysis (forest to mill). Campbell Global created continuous road network layer.
  - speed limits (and log trucks driving under the limit on rough roads) and weight limits considered for haul times
  - 74 origins (stands/units) from the CWPP footprint and sent out to 15 mills to determine drive times in hours. ~1.5 hrs to Winslow; ~2.5 hrs to Snowflake; ~2 hrs to Williams; ~3 hrs to Phoenix.
    - if you can’t have a 3 turn per-truck haul in a day it is not economical (Brad)
  - Sequencing: start harvesting in the SW in “tiles” - using ecological optimization work from ERI/RMRS for fire risk would be great info to put into the economic analysis.
  - The FS will have an implementation plan as part of an appendix in the EA. The implementation plan will show and describe a sequence of prescribed burn and timber logging areas and their schedule. It will be developed to have thinning treatments prescribed burning occur in highest priority areas first while minimizing disturbance effects to MSO. FS IDT is working with USFWS on this plan.
- Costs and Values (determined based on AZ sites, products, etc.)
  - Capacity assumptions – logging, trucking and sales capacity were incorporated into each scenario for different mills so as not to produce unattainable scenarios.
    - Ex: 3 separate logging operations, 20 loads per day (500 tons per day) per each operation (logging “side”)
  - Treatment costs clarifications:
    - Harvest cost for saw-log, pulp-log and biomass removal, Per green ton
    - “Clean Chips” are assumed to be made from pulp logs, a 2” chip without needles, not a microchip – market is for colored chips that are sold in a bag for landscaping
  - Q: Fuel price for trucking rate?
    - A: Current price

- Discount rate determination - more risk associated with N. AZ with timber type, wood supply risk, capacity for scaling up on the mills, etc.
- 5 year implementation/processing time, assuming start date of September 2017 – 3 processing sides and not overwhelm the mills
- Modeled Scenarios
  - Preliminary results that assume standard implementation measures indicate a net-cost project is likely due to high treatment costs, low product value, and long haul distances to markets.
  - Preliminary results indicate that incorporating a central processing site near the treatment sites may be cost effective.
  - Several alternative treatment practices such as allowing small-diameter trees and biomass to dry before transport could create cost savings. Other practices such as road improvements or traffic control can reduce haul costs, and reducing slash treatments or amount of sub-merchantable tree removal should be examined for potential cost savings if treatment objectives can still be met.

### USFS Economic Analysis

- Doesn't identify operation efficiencies
- In the preliminary EA: Find out cost to the US gov't: road work, maintenance – not industry costs, only costs/impacts to the USFS and citizens forest assets.
- Analysis like Steve's is done at a stand level, not for the entirety of the project area
- Q: is USFS looking at how the treatments will be implemented while leaving more slash on the ground?
  - A: Described the conditions and we could evaluate lop and scatter/pile and burn and this will be very variable and cannot be applied throughout, will have to be more specific. Exists within the PA and could be a considered in certain areas. The fire/fuels analysis will discuss the impacts of lop and scatter and how the project will meet forest plan woody debris standards during logging.

### CWPP Processing Site – 211 RD- Field Portion of the Day

- This site is one of the three ~15 acres sites and has proximity to power and phone
- Issues/challenges to this site
  - 2 nearby residences that may have impact on the location if there are concerns
  - It is located in the camping corridor, which will be closed when there is processing
  - Installation of a temporary road (in and out, or loop) for work
  - After the stakeholders meeting the processing site location was moved to an alternative location on FR211, further away from the two residences.
- Other 15-acre sites are 9033H which has corrals and a stock tank and the 613F site
- There are two 10-acre site and three 5-acre sites within the project area, other processing sites exist outside the project area
- Comments on the preliminary EA will have an impact on the overall 8 sites (keeping all or losing some)
- Any foundations that are built for the project would need to be removed and reclaimed after the project (this includes re-seeding)

- This site could be used year-round for the duration of the project; sites could also be fenced if needed.
- The length of term of the processing sites is not finalized; 4FRI may be able to use the site for their work, but the analysis would need to be in their NEPA
- Contracts for the sites would be reviewed by the timber staff and then by the core team for CWPP
- Why not use 1-2 large sites, instead of 8 medium-small sites?
  - There needs to be a diversity of sites and there is the option of long-term leases from private landowners
  - To load and move material 2 miles versus 10 miles is not much more, the cost becomes substantial with the installation of foundations and infrastructure at the sites, especially large ones.

## Appendix

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Hannah Griscom	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Patrick Rappold	Arizona State Forestry
Fred Guadet	Arizona Trail Association
Jeff Spellman	Camp Colley
Steve Horner	Campbell Global
Ann Anderson	Campbell Global
Pascal Berlioux	ECO
Rebecca Davidson	National Forest Foundation
Wally Covington	NAU
Diane Vosick	NAU - ERI
Bradley Worsley	Novo Power
Ron Klawitter	SRP
Charlie Ester	SRP
Buzz Walker	Town of Payson
Joe Miller	Trout Unlimited
Julia Camp	USFS – Coconino NF
Lynette Miller	USFS – Coconino NF
Mary Price	USFS – Coconino NF
Polly Haessig	USFS – Coconino NF
Mike Duncan	USFS – Coconino NF
Tom Runyan	USFS – Coconino NF
Henry Provencio	USFS – Coconino NF 4FRI
Scott Francis	USFS – Coconino NF
Shaula Hedwall	USFWS