

## PANHANDLE FOREST COLLABORATIVE (PFC) MEETING RECORD

Wednesday, November 18, 2020 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. PDT

<https://www.nationalforests.org/collaboration-resources/panhandle-forest-collaborative>

### MEETING SUMMARY

#### Attendance

**Members:** John Finney, motorized recreation representative; Alan Harper, timber representative; Phil Hough, community non-profit representative; Liz Johnson-Gebhardt, community non-profit representative; Eric Nave, timber representative; Mike Petersen, conservation group representative; Brad Smith, conservation group representative; Laura Wolf, wildlife representative.

**Technical advisors:** Jeanne Higgins, Phil Kano, Jeff Lau, Dan Scaife, and Susan Stanley, Idaho Panhandle National Forest (IPNF); Lance Burton and Cindy Vaughan, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS); Marc Kilmer, Office of Congressman Russ Fulcher's Office; Karen Roetter and Mitch Silvers, Office of Senator Mike Crapo; Stefany Bales, Office of Senator Jim Risch; Jake Garringer, Office of Governor Brad Little; Bart George and Mike Lithgow, Kalispel Tribe; Phillip Blundell and Christy Johnson-Hughes, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Stakeholders:** Jace Hogg, Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation; Derek Antonelli and Susan Bates-Harbuck, Idaho Native Plant Society; Paul Sieracki, community member; Ellen Yost, Wild Idaho Rising Tide; Lyndsie Halcro, Bonner County Parks and Waterways.

**Facilitators:** Ben Irey and Andrew Hursh, National Forest Foundation.

#### Action Items

- Next meeting is Wednesday, January 20, from 1 – 3 pm PST on Zoom.
- USFS technical advisers can provide an update on project funding after seeing what is approved by Congress with regard to the Great American Outdoors Act and Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- The Collaborative approved a letter from the group regarding the Rosie Cedar project; Ben Irey will supply Mike Petersen with PFC letterhead to finalize that document.
- Laura Wolf's before-and-after photos of Bottom Canyon will be uploaded to the website.

#### Bin Items

- A topic to consider for future discussion is approaches to safely conducting field trips in the upcoming season.
- At a future meeting, Britney Morlin may provide an update on partnerships and funding from USFWS for grizzly bear work.
- A group of interested parties (likely including Liz Johnson-Gebhardt, Brad Smith, Jeff Connolly, Josh Stanley, and Bart George) meet independently to communicate about the potential use of NIXEL for grizzly bear alerts in Bonner County and what that system actually entails.

- A separate joint meeting between the PFC, the Shoshone-Benewah Forest Collaborative may be worth pursuing after the January PFC meeting, to facilitate discussion about future CFLRP proposals.

## **MEETING RECORD**

### **Welcome/Introductory Comments**

The group approved the September meeting record.

### **Recreation Update**

- Idaho Trails Association ultimately had a robust season of trail work.
- Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness also had a successful field season despite COVID: the adopt-a-trail program worked well, and nearly 1700 people were reached through the goat ambassador program.

### **Legislative Update**

A summary of the Daines-Feinstein bill has been sent out to the group.

### **Fish and Wildlife Service Update**

- Partner funding is in the works for on-the-ground projects to reduce human/grizzly conflict and to construct habitat oases/corridors.
- Expect future updates about the status of this funding and information about potential projects.

### **Update on Grizzly Bear NIXEL Alerts**

- There may have been some miscommunication with Bonner County about what to expect with the system, as some had the impression it would interfere with 911 operators.
- A group of interested parties (likely including Liz Johnson-Gebhardt, Brad Smith, Jeff Connelly, Josh Stanley, and Bart George) may meet independently to communicate about the potential use of NIXEL for grizzly bear alerts in Bonner County and what that system actually entails.

### **Project Updates:**

#### **Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Initiative and Shared Stewardship**

- Watch for the launch of the new "no boundaries forestry" webpage, which will have helpful content and data on priority landscapes, forest action plans, shared stewardship, and more.
- The Joint Chiefs' proposal was referred out from the Regional Office to the DC office where it awaits approval. It may be approved in mid-December but likelier sometime in January.
- The package was a \$4.7 million proposal, including funding for forest health and hazardous fuels work, the scattered lands project, Buckskin Saddle, Honey Badger, and Chloride Gold.

### **Rosie Cedar**

This is a North Idaho Strike Team project near the interstate, on the south side of Fourth of July Pass. The Collaborative approved a letter ("pre-scoping") from the group regarding the Rosie Cedar project; Ben Irey will supply Mike Petersen with PFC letterhead to finalize that document.

## **Honey Badger**

The draft proposed action for this project should be released in mid- to late December.

## **Bottom Canyon**

Construction on this project may begin in summer 2021; it will likely involve complete or periodic closures of Road 206. Cedar planting will occur after riparian work and road reconstruction. The group reviewed before-and-after photos of some of the work that has occurred so far, and these can be uploaded to the PFC website.

## **Kaniksu Winter Travel Plan**

The goal is to complete winter travel planning by 2023. Initial steps will begin this winter.

## **Prichard Creek**

Idaho Forest Group (IFG) has entered an agreement to make Trout Unlimited, Idaho Fish and Game, and the Department of Environmental Quality partners on this project. BLM has provided funding for streamside vegetation planting, some of which has already occurred. IFG is working on putting a conservation easement on the property, which is nearly complete.

## **Public Comments**

- A concern about old growth logging was raised, and an adviser from the IPNF noted that this is not permitted by the Forest plan.
- Eric Nave suggested that he could offer drones to facilitate future before-and-after project photo series.
- The group engaged in some discussion about the feasibility of safely conducting field trips next year, a conversation that many would like to continue in future meetings.

## **Final Thoughts of PFC Members**

- Zoom meetings are working as well as they possibly could so far, but folks are eager to meet again in person.