Monthly Meeting Minutes
April, 26th, 2022
1:30 – 3:00pm PST

Attendance
Castile, Al – CDA Trails Working Group
Carver, Peg – Benewah County
Garringer, Jake – Governor Little’s Office
Higbee, Chantilly – IDEQ CRO
Johnson, Dean – Benewah County
Kilmer, Marc – Sen. Risch’s Office
Nettles, Ashley – IPNF, Cda Ranger District
Mendive, Dirk – Con. Fulcher’s Office
Peterson, Mike – Conservation interest
Polichio, Peg – SAF, Citizen
Smathers, Bob – Idaho Farm Bureau
Smith, Brad – Idaho Conservation League
Timchak, Ben – USFS IPNF St. Joe Timber Staff
Thompson, Amy – IPNF, St. Joe Ranger District
Whitcomb, Hilary – US Fish & Wildlife Service
Wolf, Laura – Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game
Facilitation: Dani Southard and Maisie Powell, National Forest Foundation

Greeting and agenda review

Dani Southard reviews the agenda and welcomes participants to the meeting with a round robin of introductions.

Follow up from March Meeting

- Chantilly Higbee sent updates for the March meeting record that went out with the most recent draft.
- The March meeting record was approved with no amendments or corrections.

Round Robin Updates

- Ashley Nettles informed the group that the RAC nomination packages did not go out when expected, but there will be a quick turnaround. She also mentioned that there is a hard return to office date set for the Forest Service for June 6th and the USFS is cleared for in person meetings.
- Peg Polichio attended the regional USFS meetings where partners were invited to discuss the national strategies. The USFS is increasing wildfire treatments by 20 million acres on USFS lands and by 30 million acres on non-USFS lands. The meeting has a diverse representation brought to the table to discuss the plans.

Administrative items

Confirming future meeting formats and schedule

- There will be a field trip in May. Dani confirms that there will not be a meeting on May 24th and will be replaced with this field trip. The field trip is scheduled for Tuesday, May 31st.
- The next meeting in June will be in person, but there will be the option for folks to attend virtually.
- The Smelterville Forest Service Office is a potential meeting spot. Dani will coordinate with Ashley Nettles
Update: Catalyst Fund Grant submission
- Future facilitation support was discussed at the March meeting. Dani and other NFF staffers put in an application request to the Catalyst Fund Grant that includes a funding request for the SBFHC and Panhandle Forest Collaborative largely based off the Collaborative Landscape Forest Restoration Program request that was submitted in 2019 and referenced all three Panhandle Forest Collaboratives.
- Dani reached out to the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative to see if they wanted to be included in this funding request. Given the quick turnaround, they decided to opt out.
- Funds would be split between the two collaboratives. We will have results in July.

Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership (IFRP) meeting Recordings
- This was a joint meeting with the Montana Forest Collaboration Network.
- Most of the topics were based around the new infrastructure funding and what this funding means for collaboratives working across boundaries.
- There was a variety of influential speakers discussing how to move collaboration forward.
- All meeting recordings are accessible on IFRP website, Link: http://idahoforestpartners.org/virtual-sessions

Legislative matters and updates

Marc Kilmer: the MAP Land Act is a plan for agencies to digitize and upload records around recreational access. This passed the House and is waiting for the President’s signature. In addition, a delegation sent a letter regarding exempting certain groups from rate increases.

Dirk Mendive: The waters of the United States is an area of importance to the Congressman, as is 30x30 and issues related to Wilderness. There is a bill looking to designate more Wilderness in Idaho, so they are watching this closely.

Jake Garringer: the Western Governors Association is hosting a webinar series about working lands and working communities.

Other Federal (non-FS), State Agency or County matters and updates

Chantily Higbee: Chantily provides the group with an overview on reference streams and the Department of Environmental Quality’s (DEQ) mapping tool.
- Reference streams were created due to Idaho code for the purpose of meeting Clean Water Act requirements. The DEQ created a guide for agencies to identify these reference streams.
- The use of ecological indicators helps agencies evaluate water quality. Indicators include macroinvertebrates, fish habitat, and others. The data collected from reference streams is used as benchmark data.
  - Reference streams are compared to test streams to ensure they comply with the Clean Water Act.
  - There are 140 potential reference sites. Of those 140, 22 are tracked annually.
- A reference site is a specific locality on a water body that is minimally or least disturbed and is representative of water bodies located in that particular region. It must be minimally disturbed in the absence of human impact.
  - There is a certain set of criteria that allow streams to be reference streams including no spills, low road density, no agriculture impact, etc.
- In the Coeur d'Alene region, there are 35 potential reference streams. Bruin Creek is an example from the Smeagle project. The scale goes from 1-5 where 5 is the highest quality. Bruin Creek received a 78% using the criteria.
- The mapping tool is on Idaho DEQ website. Users are able to type in bodies of water by name to search for streams and their assessment, as well as specific data for each time the stream was sampled.
- This tool can be accessed here.
Q: How often are streams sampled
A: Chantilly is unsure of the exact answer. There are established goals for sampling, but this is also dependent on the needs of the region. There is not a set timeline, but Chantilly can get more info on this process if anyone is interested.

**Forest Service matters and updates**

**Lacy Lemoosh field trip logistics**

Amy Thompson provides the expectation for the field trip. Participants are expected to provide their own transportation, food, water, and toiletries. Without having a May meeting, some of the coordination will require email. If folks have a hard hat or could borrow one, please bring these.

There is a tentative meeting time and place set for St Maries at 10 am. The USFS is in the early stages of planning, so there could still be time to add specific stops that are of interest to the group. Snow is still a limiting factor.

The group will look at root rot, a replaced culvert from 2019, and a pre-commercial thin that is a plantation site (a site that was planted then thinned). There will be specialists out there who will be able to speak to their area of expertise and the planning process. They are trying to keep the walking distance to around 1 mile.

Amy plans to invite Coeur d’Alene and Nez Perce tribes, the neighboring Clearwater National Forest. Should anyone else be invited? Industry folks?

Please email Amy if there is something you are interested in seeing in the field.

Q: Will there be any work looking at old growth?
   A: Amy will ask a silviculturalist to speak to this when we’re in the field.

Q: Could you all discuss different types of treatments and provide examples of these for the group?
   A: Yes, we will look at different treatment examples.

**Lacy Lemoosh draft storymap presentation (Amy Thompson)**

The storymap is an overview in draft form, but Amy thinks it could be helpful to start some discussions to help guide the finished product. The storymap looks at a variety of factors that could be influenced by a project, things like aquatic invertebrates, traffic, etc. The goal of the project is to reduce wildlife risk near private property and maintain recreation uses.

Amy is hoping to soon include information about the collaborative’s engagement soon, and she will also share details around other opportunities for public involvement through the NEPA process.

They are using the NEPA and are implementing the 2015 Idaho Panhandle Management Risk Plan.

Most of this project area is suitable timber base. Just because it is listed as suitable does not mean it all is actually suitable. There might be old growth stands, seedlings that are too small, critical habitat, etc.

The storymap shows info about forest health, things like root disease and dwarf mistletoe. We have a general idea of what is going on throughout the area, but there is still a need to have people go out and get more data.
The fire map shows WUI, wildfire hazard potential, legacy fires, and fuel reduction.

Recreation is another consideration in their planning. The area is used for hunting, boating, fishing, hiking, skiing and snowshoeing. This project is close to highly populated areas.

Scenic integrity, transportation aquatics, wildlife, and history are other maps and surveys for this project.

This is in draft form and Amy is open to suggestions. She is hesitant to share the whole thing while it is still in its draft stages.

At the time of scoping, they will take concerns, comments, and feedback. There is a 30 day period, and then the USFS will incorporate these in the Environmental Analysis. They are hoping to have this comment period so it will overlap with the field trip. Amy will let Dani know when the official comment period will open.

General updates from CdA River RD, St. Joe RD, or Supervisors Office

Ashley Nettles is on track with the Character Salvage and a draft EA will be out May 11th or 12th. This will be followed by a 30 day comment period.

Campground updates: Bumblebee Campground will be closed for 2022 season due to a sale. Kipp Price should be open most of the season except for 1 week. Bay Hank Campground will open May 20th. The Rosie Cedar decision was signed in early April and is out for objection.

Adjourn. Next meeting: Tuesday, June 28th, 2022 (hybrid meeting, potentially at the Smelterville USFS Office (Dani will follow up with Ashely Nettles)