

**Blue Mountains Forest Partners**  
*(formerly known as Grant County Collaborative)*  
**Full Group Meeting**  
**April 19, 2007; Field trip to Dad's Creek**  
**Minutes**

**Participants** *(please see appendix for participant affiliations)*

**Facilitator/Coordinator:** Karen Steer, Sustainable Northwest

**Recorder/Logistics:** Diane Browning

Jeff Maben	Walt Gentis	W. Toop	Irene Jerome
Eric Wunz	Patty Hammet	Bob Vidoric	Jeff Fields
Brooks Smith	George Meredith	Dave Hannibal	Curt Qual
Dan Bishop	Andy Daniels	James Johnston	Asante Riverwind
Ryan Falk	Hersh McNeil	Tim Lillebo	Scott Turo
Kim Conlee	Roy Walker	Lisa Doolittle	Tad Houpt
Rick Brown	Glen Johnston	Bob Parker	Mat Carter
Charlie O'Rorke			

**I. Welcome and introductions, Senior Center in John Day**

After a welcome by Karen Steer and group introductions, Karen S. reviewed the agenda, emphasizing the overall mission and objectives of the group. The group then loaded Forest Service vehicles and headed to the Dad's Creek project area. *See attached meeting agenda for objectives and field trip themes.*

**II. Field Trip Stops**

***Stops 1 and 2: Logging on private lands along Jeff Davis Creek.***

The group visited a site that Charlie O'Rorke had logged last year, and a site that had been logged several years ago. The logging was primarily economically-driven and there was very little mistletoe in the area. He left an uneven stand, leaving the best trees.

***Stop 3: Riparian area***

The group walked to a BLM-managed riparian area within the project area. It contained numerous large Ponderosa Pine trees and an accumulation of duff and mistletoe infestation. This was federal land bordering a previously logged area on private land. The area across the stream contained 20-30 bug killed snags. The group discussed differences between BLM and Forest Service management, specifically that the BLM guidelines were not as strict in terms of diameter limits and basal area when involved in thinning treatments. Group members shared their difference perspectives on "lighter" touch restoration (less large log extraction and understory thinning) and basal spacing, and the benefits of different approaches to each method. A Forest Service specialist on mistletoe gave a presentation and handout on mistletoe issues and methods of treatment.

***Stops 4 and 5***

The next two stops showcased unique sites in the project area. Discussion centered on the proposal to thin in riparian areas for the release of aspen and increase hardwoods resilience. Group members shared their perspectives on even-age management, diameter limits, and

restoration within riparian areas. They agreed that it would be difficult to develop criteria and rules for the whole project area, and that general sideboards/zones of agreement could be developed but specific considerations would be given at site-specific areas.

### ***Final Stop***

The last stop was to a place more typical of the project area: a thicket of small diameter pine with some bark beetle infestation. Discussion focused on what it would take to improve the health of these areas while making it economically feasible to do so. Comments included:

- We can't forget about the economics:
  - If several larger trees per acre were included in the mix it would make the work cost-effective.
  - Taking out trees in the 16" - 18" dbh range would make the project more economical
  - Leave large trees that are genetically resistant to diseases and more fire resistant.
  - Precommercial thinning, hand or machine piling might cost about \$450.00 to \$850.00 per acre.
- Focus on what needs to be done for restoration purposes first, and then the economics of it second - Don't let economic constraints hold us from considering a project in an area.

### **III. Project Initiation Letter**

According to the Project Initiation Letter, there is some ambiguity around what the Forest Service might do in riparian areas and using even-age silvicultural prescriptions. They will reword the PIL to clarify and/or eliminate this wording: No overstory removal, riparian 'restoration' rather than riparian 'harvest' and no regeneration harvest.

### **IV. Overall Points of Agreement and Next Steps**

Group members shared their impressions of the day's discussions. Comments included:

- A regeneration harvest is not necessary for restoration purposes on this project area
- We have not determined overall Zones of Agreement around basal areas and diameter limits, but realize that this will be – to some extent – site specific.
  - There is general agreement with trees between the 16-18in dbh range for restoration purposes.
- We need to protect and enhance large trees
- Mistletoe – we may need to reduce stand densities to deal with mistletoe infestations, but overstory removal might not be necessary
- Roads analysis – if the FS needs to use closed roads in order to perform restoration work then that is okay as long as roads are closed again afterwards.
- Monitoring – it will be important to monitor the various activities and treatments in order to learn what has worked well and not so well for incorporation into future projects.
- Economics – we need to discuss how the black pine stand thinning will be economically viable.

Full consensus was reached on having the subcommittee continue working with the Forest Service on this project. Details of this will follow shortly.

### **V. Group Structure and organizational issues**

The meeting wrapped up with discussion of organizational issues:

1. **Fundraising** – The Fundraising Subcommittee presented a summary of progress to-date:
  - A \$15,000 grant proposal was submitted to the National Forest Foundation.  
*Please contact Karen for a copy of the grant proposal, workplan and budget.*
  - George Meredith will serve as the interim treasurer until one is elected by the group
  - A brochure and fundraising plan is being developed.
2. **Organizational structure** – The group discussed the need for solidifying an organizational structure, particularly developing an ‘Operations Committee’, with co-chairs and members from the other committees. This will be discussed more in-depth at the next meeting.
3. **Upcoming events and activities** – Several possible events were discussed, and are listed in the grant proposal. These include a ‘Science Roundtable’ discussion, and a community exchange/trip to Lakeview to visit with the Lakeview Stewardship Collaborative group.
4. **Group name** – After reviewing several options, the group agreed by consensus on the name ‘*Blue Mountains Forest Partners*’. Yay!
5. **Updates** - Karen Steer announced that she will be leaving Sustainable Northwest May 1, but that Sustainable Northwest will continue their commitment to the group. More details to follow.
6. **Second project subcommittee field trip** – A field trip is scheduled for April 27<sup>th</sup> to visit the lower Scotty/Damon prospective project site. 9am to 1pm, leaving from the Forest Service building. This is organized for the second project subcommittee, though all interested members are invited to participate.
7. **Next meeting** - The next meeting is scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup> from 4-7pm. The agenda will include continued discussion on organizational structure and events (Lakeview Exchange, Science Roundtable, etc). This will be at the Senior Center or at the Forest Service Building.