

**Grant County Collaborative
Meeting Minutes for January 24, 2007
4 – 7 pm at the Federal Building in John Day**

Participants:

Facilitator/Coordinator: Karen Steer, Sustainable Northwest

Recorder: Irene Jerome

In attendance: Boyd Britton, Susan Jane Brown, Asante Riverwind, George Meredith, Karen Coulter, Bryan Nelson, Deana Nelson, Royce Dotson, Art Andrews, Jeff Maben, Ted Merrill, Shaun Robertson, Scott Turo, Jeff Fields, Tim Lillebo, Kirk Ausland, Matt Carter, Rick Brown, James Johnston, King Williams, Mark Webb, Steve Dahl, Mike Billman, Irene Jerome, Bill Toop, Tad Houpt, Dan Bishop, Dave Traylor, Emily Platt, Lisa Doolittle, Eric Wunz, Curt Qual, Brooks Smith, Ryan Falk, John Morris, Mike Browning, Stan Benes, Scott Cotter, Eric Werner, Andy Daniels, Glenn Johnston, Roy Walker.

I. Welcome and Old Business

Boyd Britton, County Commissioner, and Karen Steer welcomed everyone. During introductions, each individual also gave their “mission” be it personal or for the group he/she was representing. Karen Steer briefly summarized the Nov. 20 minutes and asked that any corrections be submitted to her.

II. Updates

Jeff Fields discussed his progress with the “guiding principles” portion of the group’s Operating/Business Manual. The guiding principles should reflect the group’s goal of focusing on forest ecosystem restoration, while integrating and advancing community economic development and social components into the work we do.

III. The role of a Project Planning Subcommittee

While this group has been using a subcommittee structure to work through project details, we had not previously sanctified or approved the subcommittee’s role and responsibilities. Karen discussed the idea that the subcommittee is a small working group that can have in-depth conversation and get some work done - go through the data, analyze where it fits with the project, and present the information to the larger group. The Subcommittee makes no executive decisions or side agreements – all info is presented to the larger group for decisions.

The full group agreed with consensus to the following:

- Keep the subcommittee group structure in place
- Have representation of diverse interests at the subcommittee, but keep it small and functional
- While all subcommittee meetings are open to the full group, we need to remember the purpose of the subcommittee meetings and keep them at a functional size
- The subcommittee is not an executive committee and has no decisionmaking authority
- Agendas and meeting minutes for the subcommittee will be presented to the full group

- Subcommittee members are: Irene Jerome, James Johnston, Jeff Fields, Charlie O’Rorke, Dan Bishop, Asante Riverwind/Karen Coulter, Tim Lillebo, Eric Wunz, Mike Billman, Mark Webb

IV. Overview of Project Process

Susan Jane Brown and Karen Steer presented an outline on large chart paper that they felt was a realistic picture of how the project would be moved forward through the USFS process – i.e. the project from the table to actual implementation. Please find this draft outline attached. A significant amount of discussion took place over the outline surrounding timelines, “too much information” and “information loops”, and risk analysis. The importance of an analysis of ‘No Action’ was also brought up, and was included in the outline. Some group members were concerned about the amount of time this project would take to implement. Others felt that once the group worked its way through the initial process that other projects would be assembled and completed much more rapidly – i.e. the stage would be set for expedition of future projects. It was also brought up that this project should eventually reach a stage where there won’t be much for the group to do, and during that phase a new project can be brought into the pipeline for the group to discuss.

The group reached consensus and agreed to go forward with the process as outlined, recognizing that adjustments would be necessary along the way.

V. Overview of Subcommittee Meeting on Jan. 11, 2007

Jeff Fields gave a brief summary of the subcommittee meeting held on Jan 11 in the Federal Building. The meeting started out to review the USFS info and relate that to what the subcommittee saw on the ground during their trip to the field in November. There was a lot of “wheel spinning” and false starts initially due to the number of people who were not on the subcommittee and needed to be brought up to speed, etc.

Eventually, the subcommittee discussed putting the information still needed with a list of general issues that the group saw during the field trip into a memo that would eventually be sent to the USFS after review and consensus by the complete collaborative group. James Johnston volunteered to put the draft letter together and would send out to others on subcommittee for input.

VI. USFS Presentation

Eric Wunz gave an overview through powerpoint, handouts and maps of the data available and the data gaps in the Dad’s Creek subwatershed. He made some brief points about opportunity in an old growth stand to treat the understory and preserve the old growth characteristics. He discussed that the “warm dry” plant association probably provided the most opportunity for treatment to move back toward a more “historical” type stand. He discussed “crown fire potential” based on computer modeling. He mentioned that slopes greater than 35% are not available for ground-based logging equipment (per Forest Plan guidelines) with the exception of some small areas. A

concern was brought up over the wildlife cover requirements, which appear to be out of date in the Forest Plan based on more current science. Brooks Smith commented that new science can be used to super cede Forest Plan standards, however it is very important to look at objectives – what are we trying to accomplish?

Eric also gave a brief slide presentation on different silvicultural treatment options that have been used to mitigate crown fire potential. The word “historical” for the USFS is considered to be conditions that were present between about 150 and 200 years ago.

VII. Review of Draft Criteria prepared by Subcommittee

James Johnston presented the draft letter that the subcommittee prepared that would eventually be sent forward to USFS after approval by full group. Group comments included:

- It is important to remember that the over-arching goal of the project is ‘restoration’ and not ‘production’.
- Include the goal of raw materials provided to local facilities and employment for a local workforce. This reinforces the importance of integrating economy and social components with the ecological ones.
- Rather than state the issues as neutral, emphasize that we want to ‘restore and enhance’. We don’t just want to address various impacts, we want to enhance the conditions.
- Concern over the term ‘historical’ and how we relate that to where we’re going rather than where we’ve been. We began to discuss why historical data might be important in designing the project. The comment was also made that we cannot go back to where we were, and that climate change has implications in this.
- Look at a range of funding options rather than requiring that the ‘cost-effective’ project have to break-even in terms of paying for itself. We began to discuss the issue of funding and reasons for and against seeking external funds to help pay for this project. It was agreed that we should further pursue this discussion at a later date.
- Include the conditions of the surrounding landscape. This information is relevant to the project.
- Include Stewardship Contracting as a goal.
- Assess historic biodiversity in the project
- At some point, we may need to provide weights to the goals

VIII. Next Steps

James Johnston will continue to refine the memo to the USFS, everyone is encouraged to call or email James with changes: phone: 541-484-2692; email: james@fsee.org
Comments must be submitted by Jan 31.

The subcommittee agreed to meet again in 2 weeks to review submitted comments and refine the memo – they will decide the exact date.

The date for the next full collaborative group meeting is set for February 21 (as agreed to in the November meeting). There seems to still be interest in changing the date of meetings; this will be discussed at the next meeting. Also part of the agenda, the group will review the revised memo to the USFS. A full agenda will be sent as the date approaches. Please send ideas and comments to Karen Steer.