

**Blue Mountains Forest Partners  
Full Group Meeting  
Thursday, March 20, 2008**

**Agenda**

*Our Mission: Enhance forest ecosystem health, economic opportunities and public safety  
in Grant County through collaboration.*

*Time: 4:30pm – 7pm*

*Place: The Federal Building in John Day – FS Juniper Room*

**Present:** Brooks Smith, Eric Wunz, Diane Browning, Mike Browning, Stan Benes, Roy Walker, Ryan Falk, Dave Traylor, Dan Bishop, Art Andrews, Curt Qual, Elaine Kohrman, Asante Riverwind, Karen Coulter, George Meredith, Charlie O’Rorke, James Johnston, Lisa Moscinski, Alden Boetsch, Tim Lillebo, Mike Billman, Mat Carter, Jeff Maben, Dan Hubbard, Renee Mabe, Cassius Cash, Kelly Weir, Bryan Nelson.

**Summary**

<b>Decisions and Next Steps</b>
Two recommendations on Dad’s Creek project submitted to FS
The FS will complete the Dad’s Creek EA, taking into consideration the information and proposals shared. The BMFP will have the opportunity to review and comment on the EA during the public comment period and were also encouraged to write or call FS staff with comments.
<b>Requests for Information</b>
Request for information from the FS on how many roads are on the landscape in the Dad’s Creek project area in total and what the overall ecological impact of them is.
Subgroup would like information from the FS on the existing basal area in the Dad’s Creek project area in order to compare it with suggested activity.
FS requests suggestions from the group on effective road closing techniques the group would like them to consider during the post Dad’s Creek project implementation stage.
FS requests that the Dad’s Creek Subcommittee share the ‘lessons learned’ from that experience with the group involved in the Damon project. Dad’s Creek Subcommittee agrees.
FS would like to know: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• who would like to participate in the Damon project (a list will be circulated via the BMFP listserv for people to sign up).</li><li>• If the PIL previously developed by the BMFP is still accurate</li></ul>

## **Minutes from January 24, 2008 meeting**

Minutes approved unanimously

### **Dad's Creek Subcommittee Presentation and Discussion**

The Dad's Creek Subcommittee met earlier this afternoon to continue to review the Dad's Creek project and develop a recommendation for the Forest Service (to be vetted first with the Full Group) on how the group would like the FS to proceed with the project.

The Subcommittee could not reach consensus in the time allotted on a single recommendation, but was able to develop two recommendations. According to the BMFP Operations Manual:

“If a time comes when absolute consensus cannot be reached and a project cannot move forward without it, then the language on absolute consensus will be revisited. One option, if consensus cannot be reached, is to follow “consensus minus 1” or “consensus minus 2” (page 9).

Therefore, the members of the Subcommittee decided to present both recommendations to the Full Group. The following is a summary of the information shared during the Subcommittee's meeting and their deliberations as presented to the Full Group:

#### *Temporary roads*

- FS presented roads summary information to the group to make a final recommendation on temporary roads and other issues.
- FS uses three different closed road definitions 1) Closed roads needing drainage structures, 2) Closed roads that are grown in, 3) Closed roads by Code Federal Regulations
- Summary table shows that there will be 1.4 miles net loss at the end of the project. We discussed several concerns over the impacts of temporary roads including 1) Hydrology, 2) Access (illegal OHV), 3) introduction and spread of invasive weeds, 4) soil compaction, and 5) Habitat fragmentation. As well as the issue of the .95 miles temp road accessing units 12, 18, and 10 proximity to the Dixie Butte inventoried roadless area. The other issue is the amount of closed roads being reopened in the project area ~68 miles (ryan has this info) and the rehabilitation strategy of for closing roads.
- Folks also brought up that roads are meant to be a tool to reach your objective and several folks mentioned the importance of treating these specific units.
- We developed two proposals and the subcommittee voted with the goal of reaching consensus.
- **Proposal 1** was to include all five temp road segments in the analysis. If the FS analyzes the impacts of all five temporary roads and we determine there are unacceptable impacts in terms of hydrological impacts, access (illegal OHV use), invasive weeds, soil compaction and habitat fragmentation that can't be mitigated then the group will recommend that the FS drop the road. We will have the opportunity to visit the roads in the field and recommend including all or some of the temp roads in the final proposal during the objection period of the project. We will also look at rehabilitation strategies other than block and slash for the temp

roads. If there are temp roads included in the final proposal we will have a monitoring piece to determine the environmental impacts and effectiveness of mitigation measures. Group voted 6-1 in favor

- **Proposal 2** was to omit the .95 temp road segment that accesses unit 12, 18, 10, include the three shorter temp road segments and shorten the .33 road segment so it is closer to a ¼ mile in length. Look at other ways to access units 12, 18, 10. Include analysis of impacts of temp roads. Group voted 2-5 in favor
- A suggestions was made to add to both proposals that the FS should examine the road system in the entire proposed project area to see if there are some opportunities to close some other roads that might help decrease the overall ecological impact (for example, roads that were supposed to be decommissioned years ago, but have not yet been).

The following points were raised during the Full Group discussion of the temporary road issue:

- Request for information from the FS on how many roads are on the landscape in this project area in total and what the overall ecological impact of them is.
- Suggestion that the FS consider using equipment that is lighter on the land to complete projects and that the FS and the BMFP look into ways to bring this kind of equipment to Grant County. Also suggestion to consider techniques like horse logging (may not appropriate for accessing units 10, 12 and 18 b/c of steepness of area).
- The FS requested suggestions from the group on effective road closing techniques the group would like them to consider during the post project implementation stage.

#### *Basal Area Discussion*

- Eric presented unit by unit draft basal area target as well as information on variability throughout the project area.
- Folks mentioned the importance of having other measures in the analysis such as fine fuels and ladder fuels that help frame the discussion in terms of ecological restoration.
- Folks were fairly comfortable with the proposal with the addition of meaningful discussions in the EA that address other types of measurement then basal area, language included about leaving the largest site class trees.
- Subgroup would like information from the FS on the existing basal area in order to compare it with suggested activity.

#### *Restoration Projects*

- Folks agreed to brainstorm possible restoration projects to be included as stewardship contracting, which we can prioritize and decided to include a couple as mandatory items and others as optional work dependent on funding. We can explore funding options through the commercial value extracted, appropriations, and grants.
- One of the rationales for selecting Dads' Creek as first project was to reduce some complexity and find some common ground – to include restoration activities in

HFRA project we have to have 100% consensus from the group. Group should prioritize restoration activities so that whatever receipts might exist can be used to get started – the rest would be complemented with grants, appropriated \$, volunteers.

- ID team identified several opportunities:
  - 2600369 road closure with gate, intent is to explore decommissioning options in the future by partnering with the Warm Springs Tribe, Fish and Wildlife, and private landowner.
  - 2600388 earth berm to reduce open road density in winter range
  - Old mine, possibly has been reactivated, but FS looking into the opportunity of cleaning this up
  - Restoration of small Aspen stand near unit 34
  - Maintenance of specific roads near Dad's creek to reduce sediment
  - Road considered for use in the project, but not being used, rd 233 with three stream crossings
- Subcommittee members suggested the following additional items:
  - Hardwood planting around riparian areas to address temperature issues in stream
  - Roads that were supposed to be decommissioned in 1997, but will be used for this project, 2600436 and 2600369
  - Determine effectiveness of closures
  - Culvert replacements
  - Livestock exclosures to rehabilitate riparian area
  - Reintroduction of native fish species
  - Invasive plant treatments without herbicide
  - Under planting in under stocked areas
  - Several folks mentioned prioritizing projects around temperature and sediment issues.

List gives the FS a good idea of group's recommendations and they will determine what to include in this EA and what will need to go through a different NEPA process

Following the Subgroup's presentation and the Full Group discussion, the full group voted on each of these proposals. Of 16 people voting, Proposal 1 received 14 'yes' votes and Proposal 2 received 2 'yes' votes.

Next step: The FS will complete the EA, taking into consideration the information and proposals shared. The BMFP will have the opportunity to review and comment on the EA during the public comment period and were also encouraged to write or call FS staff with comments.

#### **Adjoining private landowner outreach initiative**

Update on conversations with OSU extension on opportunities for BMFP to do some joint landowner outreach.

Possible ideas:

- Invite landowners adjoining the Dad's Creek project area to meet with someone from the project team to talk about the project, the BMFP and their involvement in the project.
  - Group generally supportive of this idea.
  - James Johnston volunteers to help with this effort; others encouraged to participate as well.
- OSU interested identifying mid-sized private forest landowners who might be interested in building a network for peer-to-peer learning. OSU could set up some field trips and hold discussions about what they're doing, what's working, what resources are available to them, etc. The BMFP could be involved in the conversation by sharing information about what's going on on the public land in the area.
  - Suggestion offered that Bob (OSU extension) could contact ODF for help identifying landowners.

### **Operations Committee Update**

- Application for \$20,000 (for two years) of Title III funds for local BMFP coordinator position underway.
- Would like to raise \$6,000 over two years from BMFP participants.
- Have secured \$4,000 in foundation funding.
- Job description will be released once funding secured.

### **Update on Economics Forum**

- Outline for forum being developed
  - Idea is to start with a discussion of how a project's value is developed and then work through subtracting the costs (sessions on different kinds of logging; traditional methods, less traditional methods, different types of machinery).
  - Would like to use as much local expertise as possible for presentations.
  - Limitations of equipment and costs will be addressed by all presenters (considering the steep slopes and rocky soil in Grant County).
  - Brief overview of stewardship contracting vs. traditional timber sales and contracts.
  - Discussion of existing markets and markets we'd like to attract.
- Additional suggestions from full group included:
  - Getting in touch with Scott Melcher from Sweet Home for information on different types of equipment
  - Getting in touch with some people involved in the Matolious Multiparty Monitoring team

If you're interested in helping with the forum please contact Mike Billman ([mike.billman@centurytel.net](mailto:mike.billman@centurytel.net), 541-575-2054).

### **BMFP Open House**

- Could hold Open House this summer once the Dad's Creek project is under our belts – could do a field trip to the area as part of the event.

- Operations Committee is continuing to discuss/plan this.
- If you're interested in helping, please contact Diane Browning ([roadhistorian@centurytel.net](mailto:roadhistorian@centurytel.net), 541-542-2484).

### **Lakeview Visit:**

On March 3 and 4, Mike Billman, Mike Browning, Jeff Fields, and George Meredith traveled to Lakeview to join the Lakeview Stewardship Group in attending a briefing by the Fremont-Winema National Forest on the 10-year Stewardship Contract being offered for the Lakeview Unit and part of the Paisley Unit.

A full summary of the visit is included at the bottom of these notes.

### **Update on Damon Project**

- Elaine Kohrman, the Prairie City District Ranger, will be leading the Damon project. Brooks Smith, Eric Wunz, Ryan Falk, Dan Hubbard and Roy Walker will also be involved.
- The FS Damon team is currently gathering information and will try to meet with the Damon Subgroup in May.
- The proposed project timeline is to work with the BMFP Damon Subcommittee on proposed actions and alternatives through the summer, sign the decision in the fall and award the project in January.
- FS requests that the Dad's Creek Subcommittee share the 'lessons learned' from that experience with the group involved in the Damon project. Dad's Creek Subcommittee agrees.
- FS would like to know:
  - who would like to participate in the Damon project (a list will be circulated via the BMFP listserv for people to sign up).
  - If the PIL previously developed by the BMFP is still accurate
- The FS will send copies of the original recommendations back to the subgroup for review and confirmation.
- Suggestion offered to consider either not using HFRA authorities for this project, or to look at ways to include more restoration up front.

### **Stewardship Contracting:**

- FS is exploring some stewardship contracting possibilities. Ideas include:
  - A 10-year stewardship contract
  - Partnering with Wallowa Whitman NF
- Some interest from biomass industry in sighting a plant in Grant or Harney County.
- FS currently examining other national examples to see what elements of these models might work in this region.
- An Oregon Solutions project will be starting up soon in Harney County.
  - Oregon Solutions is a program through the Governor's office that helps convene and establish collaborative capacity in communities. They provide technical assistance in setting up processes.

- The FS is planning on rescheduling the stewardship contracting workshop for contractors sometime in the future.

### **Additional Comments**

Stan Benes was thanked for his involvement with the BMFP and his support for the collaborative effort.

Some group members expressed a preference for the 4:30 – 7:00 meeting time – easier to get to on time than the 4:00 meetings.

The next full group meeting will be Thursday, May 15.

### BMFP Delegate visit to Lakeview March 3 & 4 2008

On Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March we (Mike Billman, Mike Browning, Jeff Fields, and George Meredith) attended the briefing meeting set up by Fremont-Winema National Forest management to explain the 10-year Stewardship Contract being offered for the Lakeview Unit and part of the Paisley Unit.

There were approx 50 people in attendance, comprising of local forest industry contractors, NFS staff, observers and conservation organization representatives.

Karen Shimamoto introduced the attendees and briefly introduced the subject matter of the meeting. She referred to the Stewardship Contract as a new tool that allowed them to address long term restoration and forest management in the Lakeview "Sustained Yield Unit". She referred to it as an Integrated Resource Contract that allowed them to use revenues generated for restoration work. She explained that the project had been in the works for three years, with contract drafting and approvals up through the NFS hierarchy taking the past year.

She emphasized that this approach built on 8-10 years of local collaboration efforts with the Lakeview Stewardship Group, and that such collaboration was an essential part of the project development process.

The more detailed briefing on the Stewardship Contract itself and the processes related thereto was presented by Vickie Veeder, the contracting officer. She introduced other NFS staff who will have a continuing role in contract assessment and execution, in particular Mark LaCroix, who will be the local contracting officer for the project.

She explained that the FS had decided on Stewardship Contracting to enable use of a blend of tools: harvesting, service roads, restoration etc. The initial Stewardship Contract is a generalized contract that defines scope of work, examples of technologies and methodologies but not specifics of project elements. The goal of the initial contract is to select a single qualified contractor, the Prime Contractor who would be accountable for

administration of the overall project, record keeping and management of subcontractors, who would have to be approved by the NFS. The Prime Contractor must be located within the boundaries of the Sustained Yield unit i.e. within 33 miles of Lakeview Courthouse. The Prime Contractor must undertake at least 25% of the work. All contractors are to be local unless a technology is required that is not represented in local resources. The Prime contractor will have the exclusive right to negotiate Task Orders relating to the target unit over the 10 year term of the Stewardship Contract.

The competitive bidding process was explained. Proposals were to be submitted by April 18<sup>th</sup>. They will be reviewed for accuracy and completeness with follow up discussion with potential contractors. This is not a sealed bid process; indeed the pricing submissions are indicative and not binding. It is a negotiated contract. There will be a rating and ranking performed, followed by feedback discussions. They've allowed 15-30 days for the feedback process. It is an IDIQ, an umbrella award based on estimates only.

The actual work will be controlled and released through Task Orders. The Task Orders will be negotiated individually and will contain the specific commitments from the contractor and the specifics of job content, methodology, pricing, scheduling etc.

They anticipate a June 1 2008 start date.

There are minimal guarantees in the contract. A minimum commitment of \$100,000 and cap of \$25million are referenced. Over the term of the Stewardship Contract it is aimed to be a "zero-sum", i.e. revenues are recycled within the contract Task Orders to pay for service work. One of the implications of this is that all the revenue generated is re-cycled into the project; hence there will be no county funding of 25% of the revenues as occurs with more conventional contracts such as standard timber sales. One could argue that in the case of Stewardship Contracts virtually 100% of the revenue generated goes back into the local community as "service work", however we need to understand this further to be clear how much goes where, and whether this is really a good deal for the economics of the county, or for the NFS!! The point was also made that receipts from today's timber sales are relatively small compared to years ago as a result of harvesting smaller timber of less value and increased operating costs largely due to fuel increases. Consequently even under traditional timber sale contracts returning 25% of receipts to counties, these sums of money are negligible particularly compared to the returns counties had become accustomed to years ago.

In the Q&A session questions were raised about the benefit of "bundling". It was attributed to achieving continuity and covering a multiple of roles necessary to assure appropriate overall forest management with better interaction between elements of the contract. There was quite a bit of discussion about the lack of competition at the Task Order level. It was pointed out that the NFS do not believe there is sufficient competitive capability locally to make multiple awards. Indeed the view was expressed that they may not succeed in establishing the Stewardship Contract due to lack of a broad enough local infrastructure. The NFS staff suggested that a multiple "prime" award would be a more appropriate norm, but would not work in the Lakeview circumstances.

Clearly this is a learning process for the local NFS; in essence a pilot program with the goal of paying for itself over time and achieving the overall goal of treating the forest in the best way in the broad terms as envisaged by the collaborative group.

Overall this was very informative for the BMFP participants. It certainly gave us some perspective with which to gauge our own local Stewardship initiatives.