

Mill Creek A to Z Project – Lessons Learned from Third- party NEPA Contracting

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Topic Overview

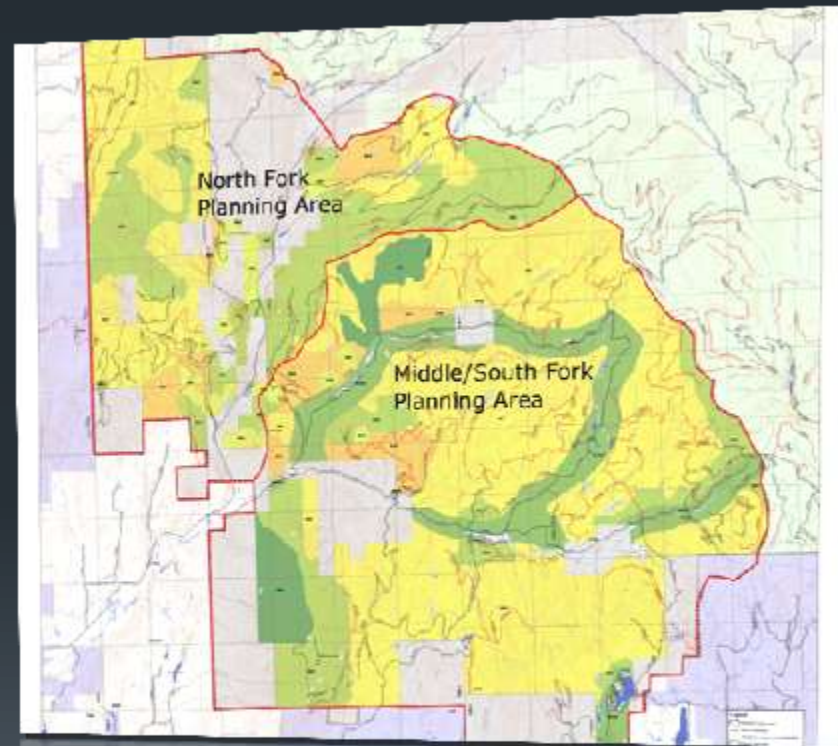
- Brief overview of Mill Creek A to Z Project
- Different approaches to Stewardship Contracting
 - “Traditional” approach
 - “Experimental” approach (A to Z)
- Key lessons learned with “Experimental” approach

Introduction to Mill Creek A to Z



Mill Creek A to Z Planning Areas

- Contract covers 50,000 ac
- For efficiency, we divided it into two independent projects



4/5/2016

Mill Creek A to Z Project

5



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Mill Creek A to Z Project



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Mill Creek A to Z Project

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Okanogan Complex Fire 2015



4/5/2016

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Mill Creek A to Z Project



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Mill Creek A to Z Project



A to Z Project Objectives

- Watershed scale restoration
 - Restore the natural disturbance regime to forest stands
 - Reduce sediment delivery to streams from forest roads
 - Improve aquatic and terrestrial habitat extent and quality

A to Z Proposed Actions

- Commercial timber harvest (goods)
- Precommercial thinning (services)
- Hazardous fuel reduction (services)
- Road reconstruction\maintenance (services)
- Road decommissioning (services)
- Lynx forage habitat restoration (services)
- Stream habitat restoration (services)
- Fish passage replacement (services)

Traditional Stewardship Contract

Project
Planning
(Agency)

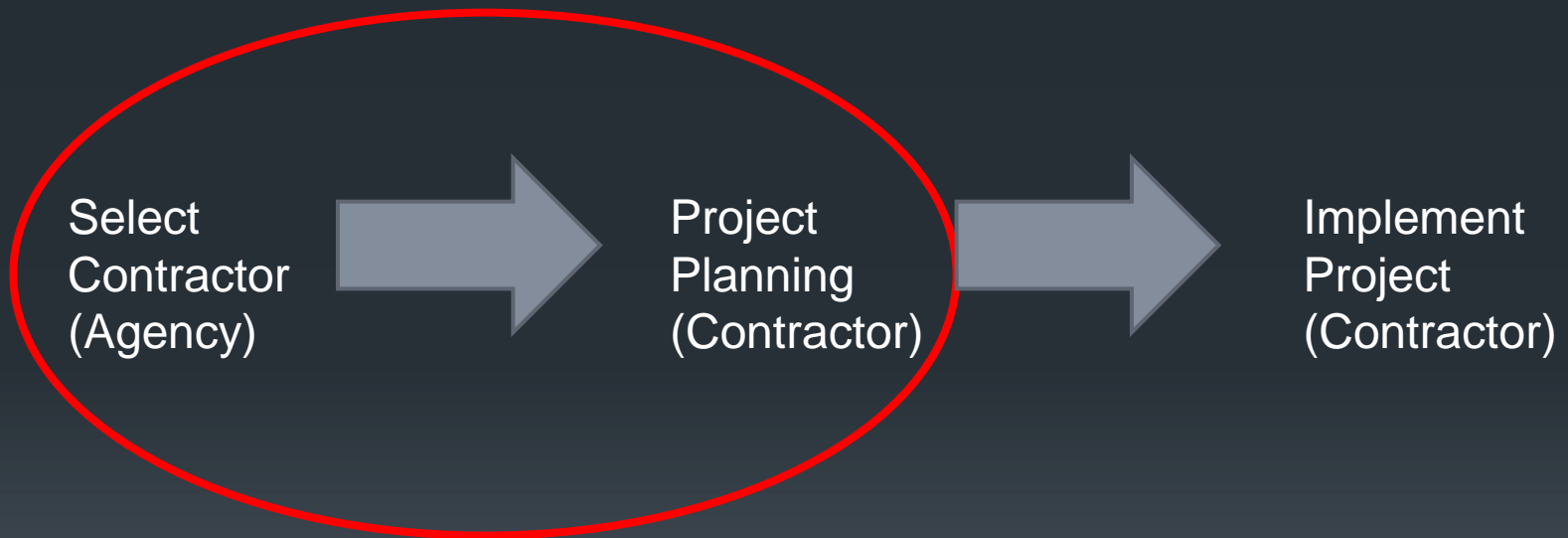


Select
Contractor
(Agency)



Implement
Project
(Contractor)

Experimental Stewardship Contract

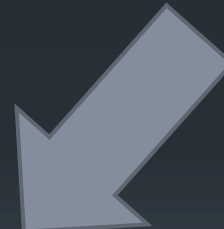


Planning Responsibilities

Agency
Provides
Planning
Direction



3rd Party
Subcontractor
Conducts the
Planning



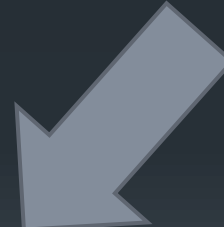
Contractor
Provides
Planning
Funding

Planning Components

Evaluate
Purpose
And Need



Identify
Opportunities
Constraints



Develop and
Analyze (NEPA)
Proposed Action
and Alternatives

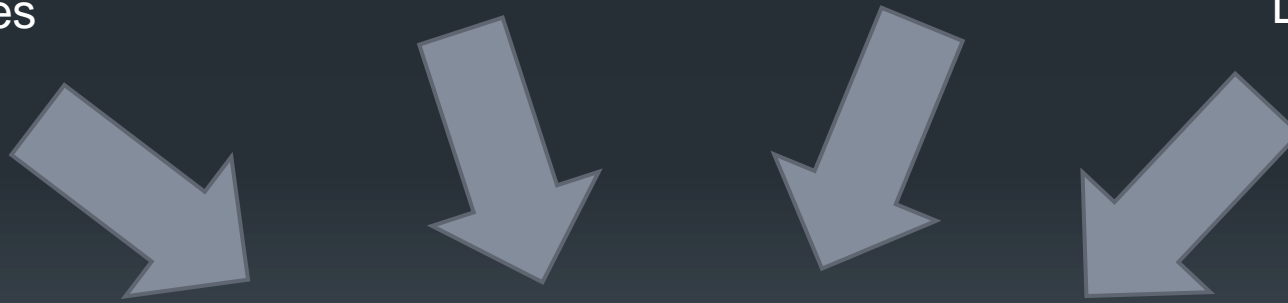
Planning Scope

Laws,
Regulations,
Policies

Contract
Attachment "A"

Forest Plan

Project
Initiation
Letter



3rd Party
Subcontractor
Workplan

Workplan Components

- Phase 1 – Proposal Development
 - Preliminary analyses*
 - Stakeholder collaboration*
 - Preliminary proposal*
 - Publish scoping packet*

* = Agency check-in

Workplan Components

- Phase 2 – Scoping/NEPA Analysis
 - Identify scoping issues*
 - Field investigations*
 - Preliminary analyses*
 - Stakeholder collaboration*
 - Refine proposed action*
 - Develop alternatives*

* = Agency check-in

Workplan Components

- Phase 3 –NEPA Analysis
 - Specialist reporting*
 - Environmental documents*

* = Agency check-in

Independent Planning?

- This is still an Agency project
 - Agency administers the land and makes the decision
- The planning framework is the same
 - Planning is bound by applicable regulations and policies
- The project sideboards are the same
 - Project objectives/outcomes consistent with the Forest Plan
- There are Agency “checks” through the process

Why experiment?

- Demand for planning >> Agency capacity
- Demand for more efficiencies in the process
- Demand for more stakeholder involvement

Lesson #1 – 3rd party planner can do this

- A to Z planning outcomes are comparable to recent Forest landscape planning efforts



Project Footprint Comparisons

A to Z Projects

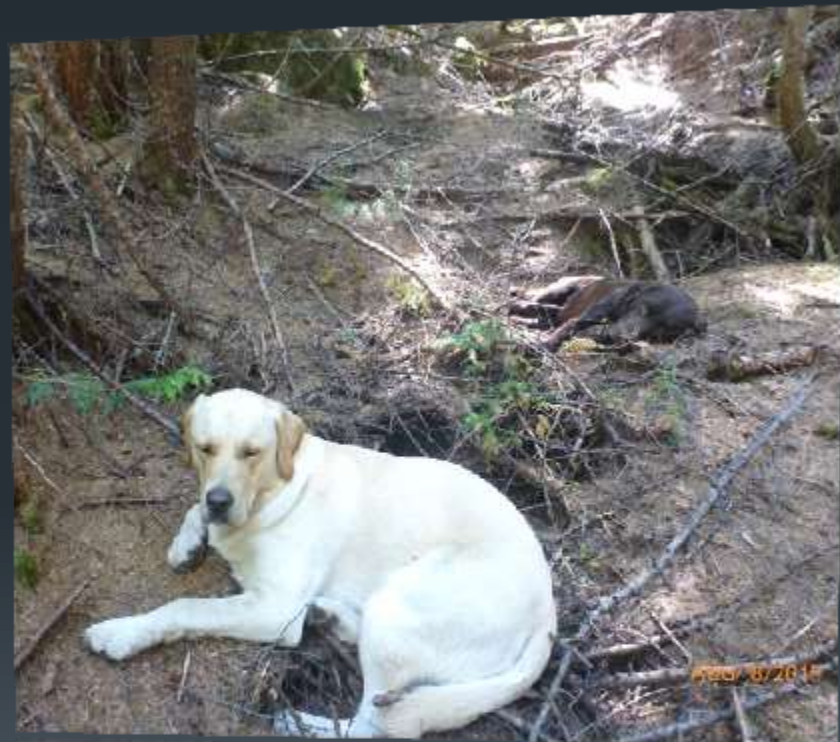
- North Fork - 5,033 ac (39%)
- M/S Fork – 13,126 ac (49%)

Recent CNF Projects

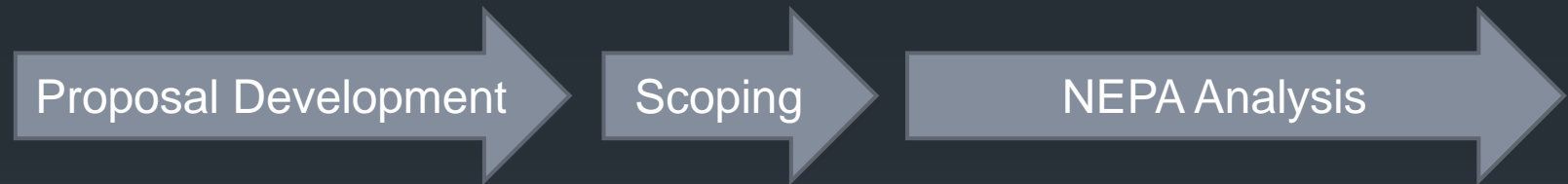
- Renshaw – 6,090 ac (46%)
- Deer Jasper – 17,240 ac (69%)
- East Wedge - 14,960 ac (39%)

Lesson #2 – 3rd party planner can be efficient

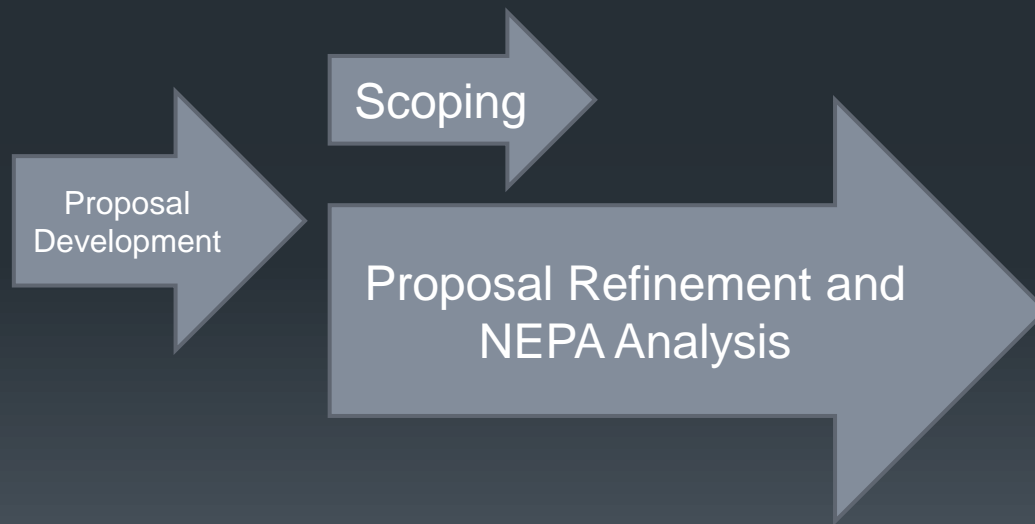
- Workplan flexibility allowed us to “collapse” the planning process into shorter timeframe
- More flexibility in workforce resources and deployment



Traditional Timeframes



Experimental Timeframes



3rd Party Contractor Resources

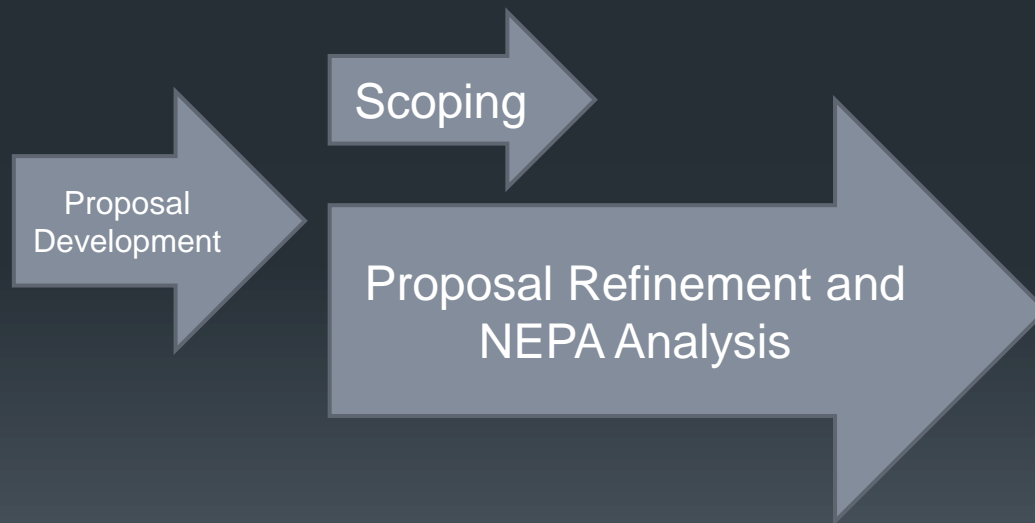
- Cramer Fish Sciences (Project Management, Fisheries)
- Northwest Management Inc. (Silviculture, Harvest Systems)
- Western Watershed Analysts (Hydrology, Soils Roads)
- WESTECH Environmental (Wildlife, Vegetation)
- Eastern Washington University (Cultural Resources)
- Williamson Consulting (Local Field Crew Resource)

Lesson #3 – 3rd party planner can be *inefficient*

- The agency has invaluable institutional knowledge
- 3rd party contractors had to adjust to the federal paradigm
- Agency had to adjust to the small business paradigm



Experimental Timeframes



Lesson #4 – Stakeholders need more reassurance

- General feedback was that stakeholder input increased and trust has been gained
 - But, multiple concerns persist
 - A to Z of what?
 - Who's in charge?
 - Conflict of interest?
- leading to increased scrutiny



Lesson #5 – Third time's a charm?

- MSF has been more efficient:
 - Relationships have been developed
 - Paradigms have been aligned
 - Standards have been identified
 - Processes have been tuned
 - Templates have been built
 - Roles have been refined
- However, scrutiny will remain



Questions?

