

## HARNEY COUNTY RESTORATION COLLABORATIVE

### **Meeting Notes from 3-22-2016 Burns Community Center**

1:00 pm - Opening circle: Who are you, what do you do and you'll know it is really spring when

Meeting participants: Robert Lovelady, Fred Hellbusch, Herbert Gray, Jon Reponen, Phil Jenkins, Zach Williams, Kerry Kemp, Travis Swaim, Matthew Cawfield, Joshua Giles, Jason McGovern, Christy Ann Cheyne, Gene Scrivner, Steve Beverlin, Brandyn Six, Jim Campbell, Dawnetta Hauth, Tony Hauth, Peter Walker, Jeff Maben, Dave Hannibal, Mark Owens, Lindsey Cawfield, Lynda Fine, Mitzi Defenbaugh, King Williams, Larry B. Blasing, Shana C. Withee, Melissa Ward, Lori Bailey, Upekala Wijayratne, Jennifer Ferriel, Gunnar Carnwarth, Jordan VanSickle, Mark Webb, Tom Segal, Howard Richberg, Tom Schaefer, Rachel Beaubien, Gerard J. LaBrecque, Leon Pielstick

Facilitator: Jack Southworth Meeting Notes: Brenda Smith, High Desert Partnership

- **Phil Jenkins and Zach Williams of Iron Triangle will give a presentation about what they are liking and disliking about the harvesting portion of the restoration program so far. Items they will be addressing are: How do they like the prescriptions they are being asked to implement on the ground? How is the restoration contract working for Iron Triangle economically? How many people are being employed to work on the restoration contracts by Iron Triangle? Pictures of treatments they like and don't like the looks of, What would make the HCRC prescriptions better going forward: Economically, Ecologically, and Socially?**

**Zach and Phil provided a powerpoint presentation and 2 handouts: Commercial Thinning and "Timber Removal Specifications Malheur NF 10 yr. Stewardship Project" that is available on the HCRC page of**

**[www.highdesertpartnership.org](http://www.highdesertpartnership.org)**

#### **Points from Zach's Presentation:**

- *Most of the product from going to local market (Malheur Lumber).*
- *A lot wood but no available markets in Harney and Grant Counties.*
- *Fiber market has negative value.*
- *Markets are always challenging and always changing.*
- *Markets drive a lot of what we can do and can't do. Pine market is in the tank right now and we negotiate up to 2 years earlier than when we cut and are ready to sell.*
- *Malheur makes pellets but the amount of biomass easier to use residual from the mill.*
- *The pine market is terrible.*
- *Why is the pine market bad? – a lot of what is going on is that the salvage for all the fires this past year have flooded the market. Wood is coming in from New Zealand and Australia and is coming in cheaper. Housing market is good but there are more multi-family homes being built and they use cheaper materials.*
- *Burned wood was put into task orders – and we couldn't put the green wood in with the task orders also.*
- *The capacity for burnt wood nation wide. We have a lot of years to make up for.*
- Q. *How much of burnt up wood comes from wilderness areas - A. None.*
- *There is a shelf life of burnt wood – already seeing blue pine at the mill just 8 months later. Burnt wood needs to be used in less than a year.*
- *Chip mill would be helpful locally.*
- *Holding our breath for the torrefaction plant but don't really know the full potential of it being built.*
- *Need to process material closer to the source.*
- *There is a learning curve with our operators to cut the right trees with this type of prescription.*
- *There can be scrutiny because forest service doesn't mark the trees – there is a significant change in our organization and a cost savings with this type of prescription. We tend to go back more than overcut.*
- *15% of the area needs to be for wildlife – if we can work together*
- *We can't have everything we want in every acre. Can't make that happen. Everyone has a want and we get that.*

- *We talk a lot about HRV – historic range of variability*
- *Socially – Product is less than the value to get it out of the forest.*
- *Lot of money invested in equipment and needs to be continued volume year after year.*
- *We need a big investment in infrastructure to make this work.*
- *Our payroll has increased a lot.*
- *Finding good people is a big challenge*
- *People on a constant basis because of the investment that FS has made and the 10 year stewardship contract.*
- *Small diameter wood manufacturing we need someone to put into this.*

**What questions HCRC members want to bring up?**

- *Dave Hannibal – We don't need a park out there, how do we make the money we have go farther? Do hand piles need to look pretty?– in the end it is about fuels reduction, density reductions.*
- *Robert Lovelady– It is kind of expensive to get these mills for small diameter wood. How does one get the commitment for material? A. Phil – we have the product, when it comes to small logs what is the value of the product after you work it up? We have the blueprints for a mill but it is \$16-20 million capital investment. The answer is we have a lot of product*
- *Mitzi Defenbaugh –Q. How much is EPA slowing you down? A. They aren't we are working as fast as we can. Q. What is small diameter? A. 3 inch to 6 inch top. Q. Why can't that be used for firewood? A. There is just too much – we had 15,000 tons in 3 months. It is just too much firewood.*
- *Larry Blasing – We are kind of in a social experiment going through timber sales and seeing if that is what we wanted to do? – We are under a sustained yield mandate – it doesn't look like we are going to meet that demand in the future? What is the product we produced and we are going in the right direction but things have been done that I don't totally agree with but don't want to throw a wrench in the process to interrupt our economies.*
- *Hats off to you guys for implementing these prescriptions and many desires to balance. Doing a good job.*
- *Good learning experience – these prescriptions can be complicated and something to think about. Phil – we have good people and proud of the work they do.*
- *Howard Richberg – It is good to see your perspective and leave more slash.*
- *Gerard LeBrecque – Q. What is your best out of the box idea on small diameter? A. Zach- I would say torrefaction plant. Q. Is that out of the box? A. Torrefaction is a thermos- chemical process – turns the wood into a brick of charcoal and goes to a coal fire plant – electricity is created. Is there a market? Oregon passed a law that can't use coal and get a piece of this market. There is no need for retrofitting of a coal plant. How much biomass to power Boardman? - 650,000 tons / month. This forest can produce 60,000 tons/ month*
- *Leon Pielstick – Q. What about the big trees falling down? A. Don't have the ability to cut big trees and we are open to lawsuit at any point.*
- *Missed name - 2-4 feet of slash for soil stabilization – with those heights an engine or hand crew could attack in an initial attack.*
- *Jon Reponen – With your experience with fire, what about the slash? A. If there were green trees it could cook them if a fire came through again. A. In this area, where we had the 2-4 feet of slash there is nothing alive it is all dead.*
- *Kerry Kemp- Does the prescription allow flexibility for clumps? A. Silviculturists are good and know that there is give and take on every acre. Every acre is different how we get that on paper I am not sure.*
- *Standards and guidelines are what limits us and this is what they follow – these guys have the expertise to know they*
- *Josh Giles – Some information about how the prescription is followed. There is always someone from the forest service that is going behind and checking. The amount of biomass currently being removed is a tiny, tiny fraction of the biomass out there. We have lots and lots of this material and we need a market.*
- *Jason McGovern - We can set up a field trip where there is still slash from Hines Lumber Co. years ago – they did not get rid of slash and it is still there. Bigger units are cheaper. First task order we threw in acres that didn't*

*need it. What we live with is a climate driven fire regime, right now if leaving more slash and more fuel on the ground is a solution to get through the acreage. Prescribed fire season is very small – I would like more margin for error and if more slash on the ground doesn't make me feel better about putting fire on the ground.*

- *This is the first forest project that we have successfully got out big projects – employees are pretty incredible.*
- *Chips are used for torrefaction – it travels well, doesn't take on moisture. Raw biomass has a shelf life.*
- *Process in the works for a feasibility analysis with Malheur Lumber. Governors office has a federal biomass working group.*
- *Steve Beverlin - 10 year contract has provided for 48 additional employees. This contract wasn't the best but what we got. When we evaluated proposals – significance of benefit to communities was more important than the price determined for the timber.*
- *Learning forest and learning environment – high and broad risk. Malheur has the highest timber target of all the national forests. We have to burn - treated acre without burning is about the same risk for wildfire.*
- *Jim Campbell – Some observations, too much slash - for cows and forest service. I am not a big fan of that much slash. I also am concerned that Wolfy trees will all be left – we still have a genetic superior tree program – isn't that a step back. A. Wolfy trees are left for wildlife, the genetic tree program is only selecting for trees genetically superior in form. A wolfy tree may have superior resistance to disease for example. Mother nature as a geneticist is better than us. Q. How do you administer for cavities? A. It is hard – prescription is guidelines for operators. We can't go back and glue back on trees. Q. How do you administer compliance? A. We go out and do plots.*
- *Easier to make everyone happy on a sub watershed than it is on every acres?*
- *Jack Southworth – Q. Why did you not sell on futures contract? A. Good question.*
- *We worked with Judge Grasty to put an employment contract out for Harney County– we tried for about 15 months and we did not get anyone to apply. Now, we do have a foreman that lives in Harney Co. We do wish more was going on in Harney County and constantly reaching out for employees.*
- *Nothing goes south – it would be going the wrong direction.*
- *The steward ship contract is used to get our projects through in record time and it is an amazing powerful tool.*

2:45 pm - Travis Swaim, Kerry Kemp, Lori Bailey and Josh Giles will present what they came up with as a consensus statement in regard to the conditions that would allow the cutting of trees greater than 21" in dbh. In addition we will continue to work some more on our Common Ground Principles.

Red flags went up at our last meeting on the Old Growth principles, so Jack appointed Travis, Kerry, Lori and Josh to work through the issues. Changes, suggestions and notes were made on the document during the meeting and returned to the committee to continue to refine.

Dedicated old growth is defined as a stand of 400 acres – 15 trees or more 25" or larger.

We can cut timber in old growth stands but only to improve the stand – but it is very limited. Forest plan requires to dedicate areas in the forest. Late Old Structure came with the screens – these are basically future old growth.

Regarding old trees – if we get a new plan then we may have to revise – we can't have a reason to cut trees in an old growth stand.

Jim Campbell Q. Are these goals and statements for this forest plan or are they for our collaborative group?

- We have to follow the plan? Do our agreements have to be with the forest plan? This probably needs to be decided upon by the collaborative.

**Date of next meeting: April 19<sup>th</sup> Time to be determined. Subject of April Meeting: Review Dove Draft EA.**

**General closing comments about the meeting:**

Great meeting

- Good to learn from Zach's presentation

- Useful – enjoyed seeing what operators are seeing and acres treated. Forest service and contractors working together.
- Great presentation.
- Great meeting seeing collaboration.
- Always a good discussion – main concern is that thrust of it pushes management away.
- Respectful dialogue.
- Great job – I do wish you would wish stick with Harney Co. and finding jobs. One of the things proposed on comment periods and times – the government needs to allow a yes or no and shouldn't have to be a biologist to make a comment. Needs to be made easier.
- Very informative.
- Is this to meet a standard or forest plan – we have to treat within the law.
- Need to work at it from the best for the forest and best for us and let FS figure out how to work within their limit
- Good meeting
- Appreciated
- Would like to see Jason's field trips – eager to get on the ground.
- Good to know what industry thinks.
- Cool opportunity to be talking about this.
- Explore an evening meeting.
- Meeting is great and process is important.
- Evening meeting.
- Observer and the word is out and people know about how the magic is done.
- Industry feedback loop was good and we deal with issues well.
- I am here for marital support. Do you have a better marriage now?
- We need to figure out the difference between an old tree and a big tree.
- Norman and Jerry will be out for BMFP in June.
- Could we have a meeting in Seneca?
- Getting information out for meetings – 24 hour notice on meeting change is not enough time and the newspaper doesn't get out in the south county until Friday. Grasty has mentioned about getting a call system going in south county. Priorities of making what is important.