



**Harney County Restoration Collaborative Meeting
March 18, 2015 - Pine Room, Burns OR
Meeting Highlights**

Highlights:

- Wolf Project is on track to be approved in July, Dove Project will be on track to be approved by July 2016.
- Research from James Johnston indicating that the historic fire return interval in the Malheur Forest is much more frequent than believed around 15-20 years.
- From the historic tree records dating back to the oldest tree (dated at 1288) shows a species composition change abruptly between 1890-1900.
- A comprehensive forest monitoring program has been initiated to track the restoration treatments and to use the data to conduct adaptive management. 2014 was the first year of data collection and funding is in place for a minimum of 10 years of monitoring.
- HCRC was interested in doing a “restoration project” as suggested by Roy Sutcliffe. Roy will work on the details for April meeting and coordinate with Brenda.
- Next Meeting – April 9, 2015 – 11:00 am will be Small Diameter Wood Contest Presentations, regular meeting beginning at noon for lunch.

Specific Notes:

Participants: Rod Klus (ODFW) Dan Adams (Langdon Group) Jim Campbell (Farmer), Brandon Six (Burns Paiute Tribe), Pam Hardy (Oregon Wild), Jon Reponen (BLM), Dan Bishop (DR Johnson Lumber), Fred Hellbusch (Wildlife) Dan Haak (HCHDW, SCCJP), Susan Jane Brown (BMFP, WELC), Zach Williams (Iron Triangle) Glen Johnston (BMFP), James Johnston (BMFP), Jennifer Ferriel, Christy Cheyne, Gunnar Carnwath, Lori Bailey, Anna McGovern, Melissa Ward, Roy Sutcliffe, Matt Cawlfeld, Joshua Giles, Eric Carlson, Dakota Barker, Barb Wales (USFS), Roy Schwenke (retired), Jack Southworth (Facilitator) Brenda Smith (High Desert Partnership)

Agenda Items:

Brenda Smith on High Desert Partnership and its role in Harney County

High Desert Partnership is the support organization for the Harney County Restoration Collaborative. In addition to providing lunch, meeting space and funds for Jack Southworth to facilitate the HCRC, we generally provide the backbone support so that the HCRC can continue to work toward project implementation. The mission of the High Desert Partnership is to enhance the ecological sustainability, economic well-being and social vitality of our communities by using a collaborative decision-making process with all interested stakeholders to solve challenging issues. In addition to the HCRC, the Partnership also convenes the Harney Basin Wetlands Initiative and is currently working on convening additional initiatives. We appreciate the work the HCRC does to improve not only the ecological sustainability of the forest but also economic and social benefits to Harney County.

Radar Hill OHV system – Dan Adams

Mr. Adams, Langdon Group, Salt Lake City, has been hired by Burns BLM to facilitate a Radar Hills OHV Management Area and the idea of a trail system in Harney County. He was in Burns to interview people about their perceptions of the area. If anyone would like to talk to him his email address is: dadams@langdongroupinc.com

Updates on Wolf and Dove – Christy Cheyne

The Wolf Project– preliminary EA closed March 6. 12 comment letters were received. There were not big comment issues and they expect to complete soon and have the final EA by first part of April with a decision in July. The alternative 3 has been chosen because of big game issues and connectivity in corridors. Alternative 3 has least amount of plan amendments. Recent decision out of Oregon district court there were a lot of claims and forest plan

amendments, this court decision said amendments can't be used to address region or forest wide problems. Alternative 3 was best at balancing amendments and feasibility. Wolf does have 2 forest plan amendments – #1 is to allocate replacement forest old growth, and #2 is over 21 inch in aspen groves. FS feels confident that if we get objected on these amendments, we can defend it. We are going to create snag and downed wood until forest plan standards are met. The 21 inch trees are actually quite young when they were cored, right around 100 years old.

Dove Project – should be done in May and begin scoping in August. Plans are to have preliminary EA out for comments in February 2016 and finalized in July 2016.

If anyone would like a map of the roads for the Dove project there are copies at the front desk Forest Service office, we can email copies and also on the FS website also.

Q. What additional info is needed on Dove Project for the collaborative? A. It would be good to have a specific evening meeting on the roads for Dove and make sure we include Grant Co. in the invite. ODFW wanted to look at our thinning areas and we took them out to another area.

Upper Camp Flat Project – starting to collect data this summer. Just beginning this project.

James Johnston on reconstructing historical, successional and disturbance dynamics and how it might affect restoration efforts in the future.

James is a Ph.D. candidate in forestry at OSU. James grew up in the Oregon Coast Range but also has lived and worked in Burns about 15 years ago.

His research interest has been to explore variability in the forest – variability in species composition and forest structure. The trees in our forests are long lived forest species. However, there are a lot of young trees on the forest because most of the older structure has been removed after 80-90 years of intensive management. From sampling old growth trees in the Malheur forest, James has been able to determine that the mean fire return interval is relatively common on the Malheur – burned on average of 15-20 years and there was a lot of fire historically. We now have gone more than a hundred years without fire where the previous longest prior fire interval was 33 years. Fire abruptly halted in all these sites in about 1898. There are number of theories to why this occurred, including sending Native Americans to reservations, removing fine fuels with livestock grazing, and/ or possible effective fire control.

It appears that in the late 1200s there was a powerful drought, leading to the conclusion that drought structures composition in the forest. From a management perspective, we might have to rethink fire intolerance or patchiness of the forest and low intensity surface fires under mild conditions. HCRC group might find the upcoming webinar listed below to be useful and to provide feedback.

Blues Coalition Webinar: Blue Mountains Forest Resiliency Project

Monday, March 30th from 2:00 - 4:00 PM

Webinar Link: www.livemeeting.com/cc/usda/join?id=JG583J&role=attend Enter Meeting ID: JG583J

James Johnston on Monitoring on Malheur National Forest 2014 and Adaptive Management framework using monitoring info

Southern Blues Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) Launched in 2014 – done at south end of the forest. Most of the design of the monitoring program has been developed by Gunnar Carnwath. At this point in the project measurements have only been taken prior to treatment, none have yet been taken after treatments. In the southern Malheur primary monitoring is for fuel and forest vegetation monitoring, however we have a broad range of other monitoring for treatment effects. Included in the monitoring are forest vegetation structure, function and composition.

There is also a discussion on if quantify spatial pattern in trees is needed. Working in all the forests it would be helpful to know this information. It would be good to prioritize the questions and if there is enough flexibility in the budget to take this on it would be good to do. The CFLRP monitoring committee should be making these decisions.

Trying to go from damaging fires to more surface fires that are less damaging.

Q. How long after remeasuring? A. Some monitoring will be just a year after treatments, others 2-3 years after treatment and then 8 years after treatment. One of the impacts is the time of effects. Time since treatment will be a strong determinant of the monitoring data.

Q. Accounting for herbivory? A. No we are not.

Marshall Devine project area is a very uniform stand, very intensive managed, and re-planted in 20-30 years. There are historical indications that this area was not forested, pictures from the 1940s shows they were planted. There a lot of land in the south that were not forested, excluded fire, planted, and a

Q. Are there any opportunities for hiring local high school students? A. 2015 monitoring will be led by a team from OSU. Camping and housing in town and currently hiring.

There is a monitoring plan to review and a complete field manual for how the data is collected. Everything done in the field is accessible to everyone. We hope to have an open transparent monitoring program. What do we do with all this data? Use for an adaptive management framework. We consider this the information gathering phase. What has worked and what hasn't worked? We expect products to include technical white papers reporting on the vegetation changes in treated areas that can be integrated into new zones of agreements and forest management. The monitoring data can be cited by and used for NEPA planning and accessible enough to inform BMFP and HCRC

Questions comments from HCRC group?

- Not seen as in depth plots before – very complex research, good information.
- Good to have the hard monitoring numbers for HCRC to paint the picture of what we have and how it is changing.
- Marshall Devine has been divided into 2 sales. We have plots in both.
- Monitoring will be meeting the prescriptions.
- Monitoring has come a long way, it used to be people said it is never going to work and people had never done any monitoring and now we are monitoring.
- Forest ecology is extremely variable no one size fits all. Management implication is to think about the place where you are working/ restoring.
- Monitoring will take a lot of years. Great gold standard monitoring program. How replicable would this be? Q. How efficient do you think we will be this next year? A. We hope to double the productivity.

Roy Sutcliffe on Harney County Restoration Collaborative actually getting off of its lazy duff, going out on the ground, getting its hands dirty and restoring something, namely a degraded Aspen stand of Roy's choosing.

I proposed to Jack for the HCRC group to go out have a work day to restore an aspen stand. We could build some fence, chainsaw work, atv group, photo point monitoring and do the monitoring and have a potluck more social but a good way to get out to the forest.

Q. Where is the aspen stand? A. Haven't yet decided but it should be in an area we have planned. Contact Trent Seger who is doing his Ph.D. on aspen, he could help with the monitoring protocol.

Wrap-Up

April 9th – next meeting

Small Diameter wood contest

Introduction to Upper Camp Creek Flat

Road information for Dove Project- we should have an evening meeting for the roads.