



**Meeting Notes**  
**Harney County Restoration Collaborative**  
**Tuesday, April 25, 2017**  
**Harney County Community Center 484 N. Broadway Burns, OR**

**Participants:** Rod Klus, Jim Campbell, Leon Peilstick, Howard Richburg, Melissa Ward, Craig Heping, Kerry Kemp, Jack Southworth, Dana Skelly, Tim Boyce, Mike Stearly – public affairs officer on John Day, King Williams, Phil Jenkins, Jack Southworth -facilitator, Brenda Smith

*Discussion about 'fire-centric' restoration on the Rattlesnake Project*

Best Outcomes

- The best way to get a better outcome is to take pieces and burn on a schedule. Need multi-year treatment schedules and to stretch the prescription window.
- Use a new treatment that could be used elsewhere.
- Trusting fire people and getting it burned out that way it should be.
- Getting heterogeneity across the landscape.
- Use some mechanical treatment to protect areas concerned about before we use fire.
- Should do some mechanical treatment for fire lines.
- See conditional NEPA – if we have agreement across stakeholders then every project doesn't have to analyze for fire. It could go in at a higher level. Public perception is accepting, building social license.
- We have a new tool for landscape management. Like the variability that fire give us. Need to get some economic value out of it before we burn.
- Everything lines up with conditions when we burn. Show folks that there is some benefit to having some smoke in the air. A good example for future reference.
- Good project to try fire on because of the nature of limited economic value and poor ecological conditions. Best outcome is that we try this with some mechanical treatment. Maybe the only way is to start it at the top and let it go to the river. Get the resource back into a desired condition with minimal cost. Pre-fire condition – get thickets out and more open with lots of space between the trees. Not a one-time treatment.
- Public acceptance of what we are doing. It is a blunt force tool and it is indiscriminate. Have to accept what we end up with.
- End up with desired results, increase diversity with burned areas and unburned areas. I like the results of the Dairy Creek project. Fire is an efficient way to treat acres that realistically won't get treated any other way. Would like to see it happen in blocks.
- Have enough mechanical treatments done in a strategic manner to make compartments of 300 - 4,000 acre blocks to have something to work with. Need some preset lines and maybe we could let it burn at night. I can go up in August and watch it burn and still have it forested afterwards.

**Commented [MS1]:** Is this supposed to be 3,000 to 4,000?



- Define Fire-centric: Use fire as restoration as opposed to anything else. Question being asked is best outcome to restore Rattlesnake using fire over any other tool.
- Best outcome is it is primarily a low to medium intensity burn.
- Need to collect all the data we need before we start, then if a big fire starts after the prescribed burn, we can show that the fire can be stopped at the prescribed fire area.
- Fire is managed so that you can drive a team and wagon from Seneca to Burns
- We don't have to spend a bunch of money thinning mechanically. There is a chance we could kill big trees with fire only (worst fear).

#### What strategies can be employed to bring about best outcomes?

- It would be useful to do some pretreatment around some old growth trees. Time of treatment is critical to make it unlikely the fire would escape. And bring all my favorite fire people to work on it.
- Have 2 and 4 digit roads prepped. BLM has done it on the south. What are the dimensions of a fire break? 100-200 feet cleared out at the road. 100 feet on both sides. That is what we do on wildfires. Do it ahead of time to turn it into something.
- Conditions are everything for wildlife – fall might be better than spring. Why fall? Because it is a little bit hotter fire. We want some brush pockets. Don't want to do too much too fast.
- Would like to see mechanical treatments to protect big trees, aspens, and things like that.
- First thing they do on a wildfire they bring in feller bunchers to make a break. It would be good to do this strategically prior to a prescribed fire.
- Timing is critical. Rely on experts around the table and on the ground.
- Desired conditions and design criteria.
- Fire is a coarse tool. There are things you want that are not coarse outcomes. Need to define what we don't want in a measurable way then we can identify what we need to do. We know that we could not rake around every tree. But if we let folks know what is acceptable, then the range of options come out in a good way.
- We need to take a hard look at the map where loss is and make sure we don't send fire through there and then look at burn units.
- We are going to have to do some commercial work – maintain jobs.
- Need to be strategic about the burn blocks and use existing landscape features for them. This restoration process – ie mechanical followed by burning – takes a long time. This strategy will also take time to make sure we achieve the outcomes we want.
- We have stand exam data and LIDAR. If we could get this and pick out the large trees in the sea of trees and then we could work around them with the burn prescriptions.
- I go to the riparian areas. We need to thin the conifer areas but we must get the material out of the riparian areas or it will still damage them.
- This project looks like it is already bounded by projects and this is strategic – or looks strategic.
- We tend to build ugly fire breaks on a wildfire. If we do this for prescribed fire, could make breaks that don't have such a hard edge.
- Need to have a plan and it needs to be detailed for those special areas. When the perfect conditions happen for those special areas, then burn in them. Then come in later with the blunt force.



- Tim summarized the next steps. New fear – this will take as long as the other projects
- Don't object to anything I have heard. It just seems easy and it makes good sense. There might be some commercial value get. If we are going to get to the burning part a little sooner in this project, want to find the balance. Don't have to treat every burn line. If we wait for mechanical treatment it will be the same as all our other projects we are behind on.
- On the other hand, we have a bunch of mechanical treatments that are already completed and still waiting on fire that we should be burning.
- If you want to have an accelerated fire plan might have to be willing to trade off on some of those special areas. Might need the conditional NEPA and will have their own predesigned criteria.
- Part of the discussion is getting the project through the prescribed fire quicker. What is really holding up the prescribed fire? Is it lack of mechanical? Smoke? Burn days?
  - About 20,000 acres are ready to burn. There are some seasonal constraints and some of this needs a burn plan.
  - There are smoke constraints and other constraints. The commercial treatments – there is no wiggle room on that. Everything must be completed before we can go in on commercial area before it is released. Is that holding back from burning? I cannot do anything until timber is released.
  - We are tracking every day from May 1 to July 15 to categorize if it was a burn day and if we burn or not. This is to see if it is perceived constraints or actual constraints.
  - Might be a planning blind spot. What if we have planning areas based on burning and restoration and keep the timber areas separate. Maybe we could put fire before timber guys.
  - Hoping everything goes well on the Rattlesnake.
  - NEPA – the alternatives are meant to examine different ways to get your desired outcome. It would be interesting to analyze a fire alternative in Rattlesnake. Could we accomplish the fire only treatment? Let's give this serious consideration. It would be good to see.
  - We need to know what it will look like.
  - There would be at least one trail in the project to show it for field trips.
  - Fire could creep along on the ground.
  - It is going to be thin. Either from natural or from prescribed fire.
  - Area that future collaborative will use for positive example.
  - Landscape scale restoration with everything functioning. It was a more open area. Multi use piece of ground.
  - Whatever the weather will be we have more license for doing more.
  - Messily beautifully diverse – why did that stand burn and see open areas and see thickets? It isn't one and done and fire will continue to be a part of this landscape
  - Much more open area. Don't want to see diseased/beetle kill and by opening it up we are making it much more resilient to these stresses.
- Jack – when do we get next scoping? Late July
- If we went out in May or June could we still give more input to you? When will you report back to you? Visit in May and report in June.
- How about a google fly on this area? To see the attributes and topography. We could see more of it. Travis – we have that mostly put together.



*Kerry Kemp on Integrated Implementation Planning for MNF*

- This all started with a conversation with Dana – what if we start prioritizing differently? What if we thought about fire centric – as in how to get the – help us plan contracts.
- Need to also track our other goals that we are trying to accomplish. We need an efficient way to track all the goals and the cumulative effects. Need to make more than an educated guess.
- Trying to overcome communication barriers between the different shops. Currently not that consistent.
- Planned activities and implemented activities don't exactly line up because planning offers options for how things can be implemented.
- The database tool isn't intended to be a management tool but it is a budgeting and accomplishment tool.
- For Marshal Devine - Planned to treat 60% of acres. If we track what has been done, then what we have treated is 61% of planned. If we look at treated vs. forested acres it is 30%
- There are always changes from planning to implementation. The next phase is what we go out and line up in the treatments.
- Good for tracking on a landscape scale. How do implementation priorities impact your restoration goals?
- Prioritize burn blocks by values – weight wildlife, wue, aspen, commercial are all higher values so we would give them a priority for burning.

*Kerry on rules and plants for Tomato Derby*

Commented [MS2]: Did this happen?

*Discuss Common Ground Document*

Commented [MS3]: Did this happen?

*Date of next meeting*

Next meeting is Wednesday June 28 on the Rattlesnake project

*Final thoughts: How do you feel about today's meeting?*

Productive

Out of project specific

Looking at a fire project will be different and exciting

Fire analysis would be helpful

Glad we had the

How can we do other work and get it done.

Can model it. Tim for coming up with the idea for a fire centric project.

Trying to contain my excitement.