

Harney County Restoration Collaborative Meeting Summary Tuesday, May 1, 2018 Pine Room Restaurant, Burns OR

Action Items: Brenda share materials with group. Completed: Materials are up at highdesertpartnership.org

Attendance: James Johnston – OSU/BMFP, Tom Segal- ODFW, Jon Reponen-BLM, Mark Owens-Harney Co., George Heinz-HC citizen, Carter Crouch, Calla Hagle- Burns Paiute Tribe, Pam Hardy-WELC, Mark Blaine-Univ. OR, Kerry Kemp-TNC, Guy Sproul, Billie Jo George, Jim Sproul-Grant Co. citizen, Andy Hart, Lori Bailey, Melissa Ward, Mel Hall, Tim Boyce – ECRD, Roy Walker, Mike Stearly- Malheur NF, Brenda Smith – High Desert Partnership, Jack Southworth, facilitator

What are your worst fears about having more managed fire on the southern Malheur National Forest?

- The one that gets away (2)
- Resource depletion
- Political will and community will change the objectives of returning to a fire interval
- Knowing the good of fire on the landscape but the concern of catastrophic fire
- Something might go wrong
- Don't get enough of prescribe fire done (4)
- Public misunderstanding and disconnect of the big issues.
- Too risk adverse to try to innovate to meet ecological objectives
- Tim (Boyce) will take a job somewhere else
- Fire is unpredictable, and people focus on areas that don't meet prescription.
- I don't think benefit outweighs the risk. If we can subsidize fire why can't subsidize getting it out of the woods for biomass?
- The landscape is not ready for managed fire yet and then they blow up.
- From wildlife standpoint need hotter fires for landscape goals
- Irrate public in my face.
- Several stand replacing fires before returning fire and the public putting FS in a no-win situation.
- Not enough timber removed in a stand before fire introduced.

Fire and its role on the Southern Malheur National Forest - James Johnston presentation available on <http://highdesertpartnership.org/our-initiatives/harney-county-restoration-collaborative/meeting-notes.html>

James covered the following points:

- Trends in fire severity and fire extent in the western US and Malheur National Forest
- Background on fuel and fire behavior: What burns and what doesn't?
- Effects of restoration treatments on forest fuels: What is getting removed and what is not being removed?
- Data about fuel trajectories following thinning on the Malheur NF.

Comments:

Science in a vacuum isn't helpful unless you plug into land management objectives. Need to do a little bit of everything.

Definitions: Fire intensity= heat by flame, Severity= is more subjective meaning fire effects but usually trees killed

Q. Occurrence of the insect invasion linked to fire intensity? Yes, it is linked to hotter fire.
Comfort level of managed ignition – how easy is it to designate the forest ready for fire?
This is a social thing, what impacts hoping to see, what season to manage a fire,
I want to get the point across – part of a larger action, commercial thinning, noncommercial, grazing, we want it all. The fire is in addition to what we are doing on the forest already.
Fuel levels after a stand replacing fire, if we don't salvage all the wood making it worse, - would have reburn potential. if we salvage it all then and leave all the fine fuels, all the slash and it also an area that would burn again.

The 'How' of Manage Fire – Tim Boyce

Presentation available <http://highdesertpartnership.org/our-initiatives/harney-county-restoration-collaborative/meeting-notes.html>

What could be the best outcome from prescribed fire?

- Need to talk to the public more about it
- Seems like you have the tools to manage the fire.
- Reoccurring question that keeps popping up is the economic question and – would be interesting to see the map and modeling verification.
- For me to sell this on prescribed fire is to know what are the NO goes?, where we won't where allow fire.
- Concern question is that is the acreage enough? Not really at the scale needed. We didn't have an opportunity in 2017 because it was so hot. A. We are not going to be doing 1000 acres of this, because it is not at the landscape / hard to get a different story out there and looking forward to telling the story.
- What would you need to get bigger burn blocks?
- The models are new. Did Tim convince that there is still one that would get away?
- scale is tied to weather. That is really what keeps the size of managed fire small.
- This is occurring more and more management teams, but if we do get a start they will be using a lot of the same concepts and bring a fire off the ridge in a controlled way.
- It has to be the right fire in the right place at the right time. It won't be to pick the first fire.
- More moderate condition fires. Important for people to understand there is a lot thought and expertise and experience. Computer models are helpful but people with knowledge to pull this off. It is about managing risk. Fires can burn things we don't want but we make the choice that it is better than high risk.
- Can do preplanning and a burn plan. Within a burn plan there are very specific go or no go? Monitoring with live and dead fuel moisture and getting ready to burn.
- With prescribed fire specifically, that there is a burn plan and the decision-making process does go on for / need to have decision / revisit.

Introduction of Mark Blaine - Pam Hardy

Mark is a professor at the UO School of Journalism and is interested in helping HCRC with a video project about fire. He's already been working with the NW Fire Science Consortium, so he understands managed fire and a video about managed fire on the southern Malheur will fit well into work that he's doing with some of his grad students. Mark may want to interview some HCRC members to get their thoughts on managed fire as well

Update on DEQ smoke management rules- Sara Bush Roy Walker presented in Sara's absence.

DEQ smoke management rules. Smoke sensitive receptor areas are in John Day and Burns. 2.5 microns or less impact people's health. Change in the proposal to allow some smoke intrusions allowed. 2 levels – 24 hours max and if it goes over the max. Also, the one-hour max - usually happens early in the morning when the air is not moving. Public comment is invited. Light spikes of smoke are not impacting public health.

Q. How does this impact the municipalities, and do they need to deal with this? A. Not under ODF regulations. Even if someone is burning fields we document that as well. I represented the collaboratives on the revisions. Even though there is some movement and it is still very limiting. If you provide comments, DEQ, Oregon health authority,

Still look at prescribed fire to be something that comes out of a tail pipe and that is what they are trying to regulate. Haven't had the conversation yet with landscape scale. There are certain areas where smoke stagnates in these counties and the challenge is at the night. Because there is now a communication plan. There is a protocol where people go through and there is a communication plan to help notify and mitigate for the vulnerable population. Have to alert and notify the public in a way we never have done before.

Summary of non-commercial thinning on HCRC projects – Kerry Kemp

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Hazard tree CE update – Melissa Ward

Omnibus Bill – Pam Hardy provided information about changes with the Omnibus bill and how it can impact HCRC. Handout provided that included information about the fire funding fix, Hazardous Fuels CE, Good neighbor authority to include road maintenance and extending secure rural schools funding.