Draft Meeting Notes: Tuesday March 5, 2019

Location: Pine Room Restaurant, Burns, OR

**Attendees:** Jim Campbell, Ben Cate, Nathan Poage, Pam Hardy, Ryan Hussy, Cody McConnel, Roy Walker, Tim Boyce, Frank Heidi, Jack Southworth, Dave Traylor, Steve Rickman, Melissa Ward, Lori Bailey, Carter Crouch, Calla Hagle, Shane Theall, Matt Cawlfield, Paul Weil, Zach Williams

**Action Items:**

* Visit Idlewild interpretive trail site to establish sign locations – *Melanie, Ben, Calla, Melissa*
* Inquire about Burns Paiute Tribe Cultural / Natural Resource dept. presentations – *Calla*

**Presentations on Desired Appearance of Emigrant Creek Ranger District in 2039** – *Zach*

*Williams and Jim Campbell*

Jim Campbell’s presentation**:**

* I’m a big supporter of Historic Range of Variability: I’d like to see a forest that’s 10% unforested / early seral, 30% climax/late seral, and 60% somewhere in the middle.
* Never static, always going one way or another (towards or away from climax).
* Uneven aged-class (for wildlife & diversity). Fire scarred trees.
* As the canopy closes in you lose the brush and the grass understory. I think historically there weren’t as many shrubs, so if you go back to historical conditions, you might lose some wildlife (as there is less desirable vegetation)
* Also need to have some dense stands & some openings to increase diversity. The more diversity the better. (Generally, for everything)

Comments around shrub component: If we don’t open it up more there won’t be very many shrubs.

Comments about historic wildlife populations: I think that we have more wildlife now than historically, which makes it harder to keep shrubs. Cattle also could be responsible for shrub loss, not just wildlife. Clarification: Any type of herbivory.

*Riparian conditions*: healthy riparian, there are some areas (streams) that occur in unforested areas & there isn’t any large wood, this is likely OK in these areas. Could be a little narrower & deeper and have more riparian hardwoods, etc. (referring to picture)

We need more science on what the appropriate basal area is in different areas (site conditions)

One data source that could be brought into this is **LandFire.** It has a reconstruction of the time period (roughly 150 yrs. ago) and what the cover (vegetation) likely was at that time. It is called the *Biophysical settings* (in LandFire)

Comment on snags – there are snags, lots of them.

Zach Williams’ Presentation**:**

Preface: This is Pam Hardy’s presentation (pictures) with Zach’s narrative.

* 20 years from now we should have covered the entire ECRD by approving 30K+ acre project areas, plus burning 90% of those project areas (knowing fire won’t touch all of the 90% that is burned)
* We need to preface this with the fact that we’ve changed the forest sooo much in the past 100 years that it is hard to manage for HRV while also fulfilling our needs / values.

Conversion of more multi-strata

* Eventually I would hope that we can thin through the diameter range (if we take enough of the little trees, and eventually we’re going to end up with a lot of old / large trees)

It would be beneficial economically, but I think it will also beneficial ecologically to have the ability to take more of the large trees too. Also, there are fir trees that are left, and we should be able to take large fir trees if it makes sense ecologically.

We need more brush, we need more meadows, and a large restriction (one of the most impactful right now) is goshawk restriction.

Meadows and aspen are two of the most important things for me personally – I would like to see these two things aggressively managed for.

Dave Hannibal has a drone flight pre-harvest for the Elk-16 – It would be interesting to get a post flight too to see what it looks like completed.

I think that standards we set on this forest for riparian woody debris are unreasonable. I don’t think there was that much woody debris historically.

There are a lot of roads on this forest and we have a lot of road issues. Culverts, etc. Not necessarily for road closures, but I hope we can look at why the road was put there. Often it was for forest management.

We’re treating acres that need treating. Don’t want to line log and yard – can’t make money there. Mandatory removal from line logging is not sustainable anywhere any more.

Hope we have a sawmill and some level of investment beyond what is currently one sawmill.

Torrefaction is going to happen, wouldn’t be here without 10 year stewardship or even CFLRP, it is a $20 million investment. 16 new employees, hired 12 employees in Seneca. Love/hate with stewardship contract, iron triangle has a lot of contracts, but I don’t know of a logger who wants work that isn’t working. There were winners / losers. But all commercial timber operators have work that I know of.

We need more fire, to keep grazing for good (fuels reduction), multi-use of the forests. Money involved in the counties has to make it work. Figure out a way.

Recreation is important and it will happen if we have a good healthy forest. Lots of opportunities, expensive.

Comments on presentations:

*Pam* – not that far off between Zach and I and hope that we have enough trees to thin through the full diameter range as well. Lots of opportunities here. James Johnston is the most peer reviewed science. His research is the best science we have by a lot.

*Cody* – Agree with what Zach said. Need a different way of doing things, it’s the untreated forest that is the problem – designated old growth stands and that scares me from a fire standpoint, that’s where the big fire will come from one of these days. No defensible space in these hard to reach spots that cover a huge piece of real estate.

*Roy* - benefit to locals and jobs, do we have the labor force for these jobs in 2039? Investment can only be made when profit is made. Need to have investment in the communities, HC has not had a big of benefit. Lack of workforce is a current issue. FS is paying attention

*Tim* - with all the work we are doing now it will allow the next person to get farther. 100 years in / 100 years out. Wish that we had picked off a few more trees in the first round of treatments. Regarding James Johnston’s science – grazing cattle doesn’t help reduce fuel loads, the fuel is in buildup of litter over years. With prescribed fire we need the grass to help carry a fire.

? hit the nail on the head.

*Jack* – Elk 16 – how far did that go out into the forest? One unit was 150 acres, right off the 16 road – easy to see. Aspen means there is moisture. When they cut, not once was a tree cut over 150 years old.

*Dave* - people in the room are not going to make the decisions, with climate change. We have to pull together to hear in this room, misinformed folks. Too much emotion, it’s not what people know but what they think they know. Urgent need to pull together to get the big projects done. We will lose against the nation.

Steve – sense of urgency needs to happen.

Carter – move quickly without big missteps.

Lori - It is going to take us time to get out of this. There will be losers, we can’t please everyone.

Melissa – would like to see the Aspen

Shane – I like visuals, financial document for fires average in forest has been essentially zero acres since Egley fire

*Matt* – shot at the dart board and get about 20% of it. If I was a district ranger and there is still 10,000 acres left on the project, we should return on it. What kind of impact have we made on HRV over the entire landscape?

Landscape is not the planning area boundary.

*Calla*- there are winners and losers. I’m in favor of fire, but we should protect sensitive fire species, find a balance.

*Jim* – would like to have notes on Pam’s presentation to compare / contrast. We seem to manage forests in silos and don’t dive into the deep things that make a forest a forest, I like that you brought economics back into conversation, the gov. can’t manage without some sort of input, like to see active management tools and get past right after treatments in perspective.

*Nathan* – has there been any systematic analysis of what is not managed? *Zach* – not that I know of. 20% of what is actively planned for commercial harvest is actually much less. *Nathan*: What would you like to see with these other areas?

*Zach* – Don’t think there is a deficit of large trees, how can we figure that out? Everywhere we go, we leave large trees and that is only 15-20% of the planning area. Not sure where this came from, but I think it was from the late 1980s. We did give tree height to Steve Beverlin. Would like to get beyond the 40-year science.

Did we get 10K acres burned last year? That’s only 5 years into the 100 years of our recovery process. When looking at a project area, say 20% is set for treatment and say 20% of that is too steep – we do have to look at the bigger picture. There will be some of the project that won’t be economically viable – need to consider.

**Presentation on Stand Density Metrics** – *Nathan Poage*

My objective today is for you to be able to estimate basal area

* First want to talk about stand development
* Stand density diagram – showing how plots of trees change over time
* Basal area
* Quadratic mean diameter
* Quickly be able to estimate

Why we care about density metrics or volume/acre

* Tradeoffs when you have the same biomass – it could be a lot of little trees or a few big trees. This is a biological equation virtually the same for all plants. But maybe you need to consider other factors i.e. wildlife, etc.
* These are quantifiable relationships and they are growth models – what is the relationship we should be using.
* Management objectives will help decide the timber trajectory. Thin across the diameter class.
* I can’t answer – what should we do on a site. Need to know more about a site before can answer. need objectives for management, site conditions, etc.

Need a unit / area – trees per acre is a nice unit if all the trees the same size. But what about all different size trees, different species, different sites?

* 66 by 66 ft is 1/10th of an acre.
* 4.5 feet from ground is basal area of stump.
* 13.5 inch tree is about a square foot of basal area.

Quadratic mean diameter

* If you were going to measure basal area in the forest, put out a fixed area plot and measure every tree but there are much easier ways to do this.
* Various radial plot sampling – the same amount of biomass
* Use the thumb method for estimating basal area – everyone should be able to do this in the field after this is completed.

Nathan would prefer to do this in the field for people to experience the sampling process first hand in the future.

Discussion about future presentations on the topic:

Jack: do we want to go down this path? How much detail should we get in to with this group?

Like we want to know the basal area index of these images in the slideshow, you just tell us what the basal area is.

Nathan: get your common ground on what you want and we go from there and work backwards. Note: Jack is questioning whether this is too much detail & that the group may not need to think about but instead, leave it to someone who knows how to do these measurements like Nathan.

Jack has in his notes as a potential topic for a June/July field trip.

**Update on 2019 Prescribed fire plans** - *Tim Boyce*

Ryan and I will start cranking out burn plans in the month of March. In the spring the primary focus will be Marshall Devine and Silvies units, burning where we’ve been (veg treatments) and creating defensible space.

The research burns are up (to burn) again this spring with OSU. They were happy with us going early so we’ll see how that goes.

This year we pushed early on the fall stuff.

About 13,000 acres (roughly) will be ready for spring, close to town, this gives us options on where to go. We’ll be back out in George this fall, 3000 acres left to get in that area.

Q: Have you heard any health concerns raised? Tim hasn’t.

Q: Will smoke rules impact your operation?

A: Tim: No, he felt the support of forest management. Unless there is a smoke bomb we put into town, smoke won’t be a big limiting factor to doing burns.

Q: what is your limiting factor?

A: Tim: weather, fuel moisture must be right to stay within the desired effects we’re looking for. We’ve done a good job expanding these windows.

Q: Would it be accurate to sum up it’s about capacity and risk?

A: Tim: Yes, the potential is for it to all go wrong.

Smoke will always be a limiting factor but there is not as great of a concern (about smoke) as there once was.

For communications, Forest Service public affairs office sends out a release that goes to the BLM who does a release as well. There is also an interactive map.

**Update on Idlewild Prescribed Fire interpretive trail** – *Melanie Finch / Ben Cate*

Ben put in for the NEEF grant, asked for $4000, this could pay for all the signs, about 10 to 12 of them. We’ll be working on content for the signs soon. My question for you is around finishing the NEPA, is there any interest in the whole collaborative or a few folks to visit the site to ensure signs are located in the right areas?

Melanie, Ben, and possibly Calla and Melissa to visit site and determine signage location.

**Agenda items for next time and final thoughts**:

* Revisit common ground
* Dustin Johnson, improving yields of water off the forest, crown loading, inception rates,
* James Johnston . . . Pam: push on our own common ground and find out where our rub points are, Jack would like him here to hear common ground and then address rub points
* Pam would like to hear from the Burns Paiute tribe – Calla to ask, maybe in May
* June/July, maybe Rattlesnake EA . . . there will be a decision in June or July. There was delay due to the furlough and then gearing up and are still short some positions
* At May meeting, brief on prescriptions from Matt & Melissa
* At May meeting, possible presentation from the cultural and natural resources departments of the tribe. Calla is to put in the request and will report back what is possible.

**Adjourn**