



Harney County Restoration Collaborative Meeting
April 9, 2015 - Pine Room, Burns OR
Meeting Highlights

Highlights:

- Small diameter wood products contest was successfully held. Winning team Clayton Bentz and Britton Bentz, Burns High School.
- Mark Mosely, USFS John Day provided information about “small sale” for timber and indicated there is demand for these types of sales.
- Jason McGovern, USFS Emigrant Creek, provided information about prescribed burns being planned this spring. Conditions have to be just right to burn and there are a number of complexities in determining the best time to burn.
- Roy Sutcliffe has identified a small aspen restoration stand to hold a HCRC work day. Tentative date will be June 22 or 23.
- Jack Southworth will be conducting several public meeting this summer for the Forest Revision Plan.

Specific Notes:

Participants: John Amoroso (OWEB), Rod Klus (ODFW), Jim Campbell (Farmer), Jeff Maben (Malheur Lumber Company), Pete Runnels (Harney Co.), John Reponen (BLM), Brandon Six, Ben Cate (Burns Paiute Tribe), Pam Hardy (Oregon Wild), Jon Reponen (BLM), Dan Bishop (DR Johnson Lumber), Fred Hellbusch (Wildlife), Zach Williams (Iron Triangle) Glen Johnston (BMFP), James Johnston (BMFP), Lori Bailey, Jason McGovern, Mike Mayernik, Melissa Ward, Roy Sutcliffe, Diane Browning, Mark Mosely (USFS), Jack Southworth (Facilitator) Brenda Smith (High Desert Partnership)

Guests: Britton Bentz, Clayton Bentz, Sam Williams, Warren Clayton Johnson, Sherri Johnson, Randi Johnson

Agenda Items:

Small Diameter Wood Products Contest:

Presentations were given by 2 teams of local high school students on ideas for marketable products made available using small diameter timber. Winning team was Lone Pine LLC – Clayton Bentz and Britton Bentz and second place team was WJ Wood Products – Sam Williams and Warren Clayton Johnson.

Mark Mosley -Update on the Small Diameter Timber position on the Malheur National Forest:

Mark has been in this new position for the Forest Service for small project sales approximately 8 months. The interest is in finding small sales for timber operators to bid upon. We like to encourage when project leaders do analysis – in mixed conifer that they always analyze for small diameter especially lodgepole. A couple of small sales are being conducted this year; one in the Prairie City area and an area for a snow park near Unity. Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative has a lot of special use permits in the forest and we are working with them in order to offer small sales. Near Seneca there will be a sale from South Fork fire area last year – somewhere between 30 & 50 acres. Several other projects have some lodgepole and it is good to analyze for small sale opportunities.

Lori Bailey indicated that all the projects they are working on they do analyze for small sale opportunities.

Another proposal for small sale opportunities is personal use. From the calls I receive there is interest from people who don't want to bid on a small sale but just a couple of logs every few years. We talk a lot about the small diameter pine – now we know there are a lot of opportunities if we put up a sale average 8 inches in DBH.

Q. Is Dove going to have juniper removal analyzed? **A. Lori Bailey** Probably there is a problem of no roads, steep ground arch sites. In Wolf we are doing removal but it probably won't get removed because of the other interests. Problematic with juniper, have to build roads. In Wolf they are harvesting over snow but there are costs to plow the road.

Q. Is anything being looked into for guys cutting the dead pine? No wood tags on this stuff around here for sale. A wood cutting sale? The problem with the dead wood is it is habitat. In the butterfly killed trees there were some sales for removal of hazard trees. We have had hazard trees small sales in the past. If the dead trees are not considered a hazard will be hard to do a small sale.

There is a MOU between FS and BLM – encourage utilization of juniper. Cost of removal of juniper is expensive more expensive than pine.

Zach Williams - If decks get left behind – let us know. People buying juniper logs they are paying more for juniper than we get for pine. There are not enough producers now for juniper to supply demand. Can't always count on getting logs. Juniper lumber should be certified for state procurement within the year. The competition for juniper is pressure treated lumber but juniper is greener. There would be people that would bid on the small diameter pine small sales.

Lori Bailey - We have campground areas that could be a small sale. Need to drive roads in Jane project for a small hazard tree sale. All the other roads would be good to do an inventory. The 17 Road needs a hazard tree removal sale.

Other general comments about small timber sales

- Fire crew will cut merchantable timber but the crew doesn't buck anything.
- The campgrounds could be a good situation for a personal use sale. Most is blue stained. Fire wood across state line? Some people in Nevada were looking for it – commercial firewood sale.
- Great opportunity around livestock water developments and fencelines. Allotment fences. Take a fence and take a sale out. Spring developments could be good to thin around the springs.
- **Q.** Lodgepole who buys these? **A.** Parma Post and Pole need 500 loads a year and if they had 1000 loads they could run 24/7. Several people have asked to be put on bidder's lists. Usually have to go to northern Idaho or farther. Just from phone calls it seems like demand is there.
- 8 inch diameter depends on the stand – what is yield? 30% of volume is small diameter and the average yield is 2000 board feet/ acre. Approx. 10 board feet in an 8 inch tree at DBH.
- Juniper on the forest is scattered.
- Great idea and glad we have someone working on small sales and good promotion for personal sales. Commercial firewood we are not taking good enough advantage of. They pay more than commercial firewood. They pay top dollar for firewood. I just need to get the right people for the commercial firewood.

Jeff Maben – Announcement – Malheur Lumber has a grant to study torrefaction. This is from an endowment for a feasibility study, with a number of regulations coming down with coal fired plants. The plan is to build 3 torrefaction plants in the US. There is a mandate to change from coal and torrefaction is cleaner than natural gas.

Q. How many would this employ? **A.** The plant is a small footprint, probably about 20 people for 60,000 tons of biomass per year.

Jason McGovern – Update on plans for 2015 prescribed burning

Jason McGovern presented a map for where prescribed burns will occur this spring. We will be burning closer to town and more acreage will be burned. Mechanical treatments have to be done first. Approximately 6000 acres are slated for this spring. All burns will be in ponderosa pine and ready for implementation. It will probably take a week to burn the first area up. Some will be piles and not burning every acre within the red zones. Tricky about putting smoke in a town.

Q. Is there a 5 year plan on this burning? **A.** Yes.

Q. What about burning in grazing allotments? **A.** I have to count on the range specialists to tell me where to not burn for forage for an allotment. Sometimes the rancher and the range specialist might want us to hit the allotment hard for forage improvement.

Q. How big are burn blocks? **A.** Biggest is 6000 acres, but this is very variable.

Q. Is the trend going to smaller burns? **A.** John Day is in a hole – smoke follows drainages to where everyone lives but this is a reason for smaller burns. Our intent with the bigger burn blocks is that you can't just break it up into tiny units.

Q. You said there is a mix of broadcast and pile burning on the NEPA area? **A.** Anything with mechanical treatments will be pile burned. This may or may not be broadcast. If it doesn't warrant burning – north aspect with grand fir – fire regime is completely different and I am not going there with fire. I am the burn boss – I don't want to burn a north aspect. Need best chance of success. Ranchers are vocal component of this thing; town is vocal about smoke in town. With the lack of snowpack we don't want to think about setting off a bunch of landing piles and then in June and July they wake up. All my burn plans I talk to wildlife – the NEPA is done but if there is something I need to mitigate for and get everyone on board. From road to road will be broadcast. There is a lot of complexity with smoke management. BLM also wants to put smoke in the air so we have to do a lot of coordinating among agencies.

Q. Zach Williams – we get paid to grapple pile a lot of this material. Any chance of broadcasting fire with this instead of grapple piling? **A.** Fire is pretty in precise.

Q. What is the burning window this spring? **A.** It is too wet right now even without a snowpack. It is going to dry out and somewhere along the continuum we will go out and get it. They want certain about of large wood on the ground and need to find the best time to not burn everything up. We run the models.

Q. Any sage grouse concerns? **A. Rod Klus** Sage grouse isn't really on the forest maybe some summer range. During the summer sage grouse use a lot of other plants than just sagebrush. From nesting standpoint sagebrush is important. Forest service is doing such a small amount of burning. Historic sage grouse was much larger. **A. Jason-** We are usually coming in after a commercial or mechanized treatment, so sage-grouse are probably not in these areas. The money is going to BLM. We are in the trees. We are burning juniper piles in brood rearing habitat to discourage rodents that are a threat to sage grouse.

Q. Burning in allotments? **A.** If at all possible we don't burn in allotments.

Q. Do you plan fuel breaks? **A.** Any road system is a fuel break.

Conditions change. One of my hopes is now that we created better conditions in the forest is if a natural fire occurs we can let it burn to a road and don't extinguish right away otherwise we will be in this constant cycle of prescribed burns, this is very expensive. It will take a long time for everyone to get on board with this but we can hope. The price tag on these fires we prescribe they are super high. NEPA never expires unless conditions change. .



Info from Roy Sutcliffe and/or James Campbell regarding restoration of an aspen grove by HCRC

Roy has found out that we can set up an agreement with High Desert Partnership and those that come out to help will be volunteers for High Desert Partnership because they are a non-profit. Roy sent a sign-up sheet around to gauge interest. Tentative dates look to be June 22-23, 2015. All volunteers will sign-in with High Desert Partnership and we will build fence, cage small aspens and conduct monitoring. BBQ lunch will be served.

Review schedule and draft agendas for upcoming community meetings to revisit revised forest plan southern Malheur National Forest – Jack Southworth

Next HCRC meeting is May 19th; this will be a Wolf Project objection clarification meeting, to clear things up for people so they don't submit objections.

April 19- May 30th is objection time frame. Forest Service sends everyone with objections a letter to attend this meeting. If someone still objects after this meeting, the Forest Service has 45 days to resolve any objections, if the objection is still not resolved, then it goes to an objection review team meeting in Portland.

Additional meeting that will be important for HCRC members to be in attendance. Jack will facilitate these meetings.

- Forest Plan Revision Access meeting - Tuesday, June 16, 6-9 pm, location to be determined.
- Forest Plan Revision Rate of Restoration meeting – Tuesday, July 14, 6-9 pm, location to be determined.
- Forest Plan Revision Grazing meeting – Tuesday, August 18, 6-9 pm, location to be determined.
- June HCRC meeting to be combined with Access meeting
- July HCRC meeting tentatively scheduled a week after Forest Plan meeting on July 21

Jack asked the group for ideas for speakers that can provide educational information on the forest.

- What would have to come into place to get a small diameter tree processing plant? Mike Browning
- Someone from TNC – TNC is going to hire in John Day?
- Elk Habitat – Starkey people? - Thermal cover and stuff
- Trent Seager – Aspen
- Pam Hardy? What to speak on? - What would Oregon wild like to see in the Forest?
- A grazing plan – Allan savory to talk about grazing?
- Louisa Evers to talk about climate change. Places in the forest where there is not supposed to be trees?
- Suggestion made that the meetings are informative without guest speakers.

Upcoming HCRC Meeting Dates:

Tuesday, May 19

Tuesday, June 16 (may be combined with Access meeting in evening).

Tuesday, July 21