**Summary Notes**

Harney County Restoration Collaborative

Tuesday February 5, 2019 11:00am – 3:00pm

Location: Pine Room Restaurant, Burns, OR

**Attendees:** Ben Cate, Jim Campbell, Shane Theall, Paul Weil, George Heinz, Patty Dorroh, Laneva Gilliam, Jon Reponen, Roy Walker, Craig Trulock, Calla Hagle, Melissa Ward, Aaron Gagnon, Matthew Cawlfield, Melanie Finch, Steve Rickman, Howard Richburg, Rich Fulton, Dan Maynard, Jim Sproul, Dave Traylor

**Action Items**

* Send out all 3 ZOA docs and get folks to reply with comments back to draft up a new ‘common grounds’ document to bring to the next meeting for review – *Ben Cate*
* Gather information about Idlewild trail work for Melanie – *Ben Cate*

**Introductions** around the room were combined with the usual thought-provoking question, which was:

What is the most important thing to get across to new Forest Supervisor about HCRC?

**Regarding Hiring of New Forest Supervisor**: Hopefully will be filling position in May

Q: What is the next step on forest plan revisions?

A: There is a review team that is analyzing the results from the previous objection meetings, then there will be a revision that comes out and a second round of meetings that will hope to resolve the objections that came up in the first round of meetings.

Will be pushing the next rounds of meetings back to April

Question: **What’s the status of the District Ranger position**?

A: We will have another detailer coming in that will hopefully stay until the position is filled.

**Report on Biomass Summit and local biomass heating systems** – *George Heinz*

*Biomass Summit Report out:*

* Redrock is a biomass processing plant in Lakeview that is creating an aviation fuel from juniper
* Boardman has a natural gas production plant.
* Oregon Torrefaction: they are planning to put in a system to heat & dry their fuel. They are producing biochar & pellets as well as producing some electricity (through turbines)

*Burns biomass heating district*

* We burn “Hog fuel” which is course fuel (not chipped)
* The fuel that you’re going to burn has to be clean (no bark, needles, leaf, etc.)
* If our carbon content is high enough in our ash, then we could potentially sell that ash for a profit as well. Graphine can also be sold. Soil amendment and decorative brick are other options being explored.
* The missing link is the resources to grind and prep the wood chips for the heating system (someone comes from Lagrande to chip our wood products – we don’t have the equipment here locally)
* There is currently a feasibility study to expand the biomass heating system in Burns (heating district) to other areas (Burns Ford, Old Hospital, Library).

Q: How many years does it take to pay this off?

A: Don’t know exactly, but by increasing the efficiency and the ability to do the work locally, it will significantly bring costs down.

Comment: It would be interesting if you had some figures (numbers) of how much you could save by using this type of heat - you might get more people on board in support.

Q: What is the BTU cost of this system vs. gas, oil, & electricity?  
A: Those are the questions that we are trying to answer right now.

Q: What are some of the main legislative topics that you referred to?

A: The main one is the taxes we’re paying as a heating district, but don’t know the specific bills, etc.

The School District and the County initiated this project: due to aging/inefficient boilers

**Update on January 9 smoke management decision** – *Pam Hardy*

Board of Forestry met to discuss whether to adopt new rules about smoke management around prescribed fire. Several collaboratives (ours, Deschutes, etc..) signed letters supporting new rules to allow more flexibility and get more prescribed fire on the ground.

They did adopt those new rules, but a lot of the language got watered down by the end of the process and a lot of it fell on the agencies discrepancy as to how it was interpreted.

* The state of Oregon has (had) an additional 1-hour standard on top of the 1-day average (federal) for air quality
* The changes included waiving the 1-hour standard for communities that want (would require a plan that would include how to inform the most sensitive demographics of smoke due the potential for an inversion.)
* Must be submitted by the County – to opt in/out

Q: Is this a one-time permit?

A: I think that it could be.

**Rich Fulton & Dan Maynard of Malheur Lumber: uses and future economic value of Ponderosa Pine of different diameters**

A presentation on Trees on the southern Malheur and what their used for.

Mill has been there since 1983 – primarily a Ponderosa Pine mill, used to be a large diameter mill, now down to smaller diameter.

* It costs roughly $300 / thousand board feet to bring a board into the mill
* The highest $ pine is $685/thousand
* Some lower value timber was somewhere around $250/thousand (at this price it does not pay itself out of the woods)
* In the past year we’ve been 80% PIPO, 17% doug fir, 3% white fir
* It is difficult to compete with Weyerhaeuser & other large timber co. that sell fir so we’re mostly into PIPO
* We struggle to make ends meet (or yield a profit) on the small diameter timber
* Average diameter of log coming to Malheur lumber is 9.8”
* If we had 4-5 loads of 15-25” logs it would solve our problems

Changes in demands and the market makes it difficult to predict the future demand. There have also been a lot of changes in the construction industry on what they use (premanufactured joists, etc.)

What affects the stands ability to produce quality timber most?

Site conditions (productivity), stand density, insect outbreaks, fires, etc…

Q: Why are we not doing laminated boards?

A: We do sell lower grade lumber to laminate manufacturers.

Q: What % of your material is sold as paneling?

A: We rarely do patterns.

**HCRC Common Ground document** – *Pam Hardy*

How we treat dry forests:

*Regarding late & old structure (LOS)*

Discussion

Where did these numbers come from? – need more research into the science behind the numbers.

5 and 10 trees per acre is arbitrary as is the 21” rule, maybe we don’t want to validify the arbitrary USFS 21” rule by having it in our common ground principles?

In the enhancing LOS by section:

* Treating excess Old Forest Multi-Strata (OFMS) stands
* Old Forest Single-Stratum lands are in deficit, and what used to be old forests single-stratum is now old-forest multi-stratum

Do we want to discuss species composition in the section as well?

**Regarding trees larger than 21”**

Maintain all remnant late & old structural live trees

Comment: We’ve also had the USFS & the Tribe working together to restore riparian hardwoods (maybe include this as a reason to cut 21” as well)

**Review of other forest collaborative Zones of Agreement documents:**

We explored the pros and cons of a few example documents from other collaboratives.

**Ochoco:**

Split up into topographic positions (one, two, three, four)

Comment: Which science are we going to use – you can likely find science to support anything you want.

Question: Will the new forest plan be a place to look to for the science?

Answer: The science only informs the Forest Plan and doesn’t make the plan. It also has other values, etc. We also need to include the values of the community in our plan, not just operate as if the forest stands on its own without consideration of social values, etc.

Comment: How specific do we need to be in our common ground doc? (Referencing the Ochoco document which was extremely specific – might not be worth our time/effort and may be extremely difficult to design project to fit the specificity of some of these documents)

**Deschutes Collaborative Forest Partners**

Briefly reviewed the DCFP Zones Of Agreement document.

**Blue Mountain Forest Partners**

Went through this document as a group

Evaluating competing scientific claims about forest successional & disturbance dynamics.

James Johnston’s work included ECRD (local research)

BMFP or new Forest Plan? misquoted James Johnston’s document – which he pointed out.

*Action Item*: Send out all 3 of these docs and get folks to send out comments back to Jack who will then try to draft up a new ‘common grounds’ document to bring to the next meeting.

**Comments of how we approach common ground documents**:

* I would hope that what we want on the forest wouldn’t change despite how we move forward with our common ground docs.
* I think that it’s a good idea to glean from other groups plans
* Have a more high level common ground document that is not to the stand level (less detail) and have supporting documents that can add that detail later
* I think the beauty of our current document is that it is simple and easy to read. Glean some of the science from these other docs and update ours but don’t go as deep into the weeds as some of these docs have.

**Presentations by Roy Walker and Pam Hardy –** what do you want the forest on ECRD to look like in 2039 (ecologically, economically, and socially)

**Roy Walker’s presentation:**

By my profession, I’ve got to promote the forest plan.

Goal 1: Promote ecological integrity:

* Air quality: we’re going to see smoke coming off the forest (whether prescribed or wild fire)
* I’m hoping to see a lot more white smoke and less black smoke
* Showed picture of historic firefighter and asked what’s wrong with this picture? – he’s putting out the fire.

Goal 2: Promote social well-being – Wildland Urban Interface

* In these areas, desired conditions may over-ride ecological based management, etc.
* Harney County defined ‘wildland-urban interface’ as the entire county
  + In my mind: A house in the woods hardly qualifies as “urban”

**Pam Hardy’s presentation:**

\*Preface these notes with: I did too much listening and not enough note-taking during this presentation.

* Simplified gist included desire for healthy fire resilient forest, supporting clean water, home for critters (wildlife), fish, recreation, generally (more) reflective of historical conditions such as larger trees with less overcrowding, supporting local economies through forest products, etc.
* We need to have some solid peer-reviewed science backing up our decision and ‘common ground’ around harvesting 21” + trees.

**Rattlesnake EA updates:**

Hoping to get it out by summer (june’ish) and EA will go out in conjunction with a 30-day review period.

Speakers for next meeting (vision for future forest): Zach Williams & Jim Campbell

**Update on Idlewild Fire Interpretive Trail:**

No new developments on this front, but:

Recreation detail is Melanie Finch: bring her up to speed on the trail work / research that has been done to date.

Final thoughts / Adjourn