

# Harney County Restoration Collaborative

## Project Executive Summary

DRAFT 2

June 10, 2008

INCORPORATION REVISIONS FROM THE MAY 5 MEETING

### I. **DRAFT Problem Statement DEFERRED FOR LATER CONSIDERATION**

In the western United States, more than 90 million acres of western dry forests are at moderate to high risk of severe drought stress, insect and disease epidemics and uncharacteristically severe fires due to excessive levels of small diameter biomass from forest floor to canopy. The absence of utilization options for small diameter trees makes its removal prohibitively costly, and therefore, this material is usually left on the site where it perpetuates unhealthy forest conditions.

Harney County is a microcosm of this dynamic, with overstocked forests threatening forest health, wildlife habitat, and local communities.

#### **POTENTIAL REPLACEMENT (BASED ON THE DISCUSSION):**

HARNEY COUNTY IS FACING AN ECOLOGICAL HEALTH CRISIS IN ITS FORESTS AND WOODLANDS. THIS CRISIS THREATENS FOREST HEALTH, WILDLIFE HABITAT, AND HUMAN COMMUNITIES. AT THIS POINT, THERE IS NO CONSENSUS, OR "SHARED PLAN," ON THE MEANS TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES.

### II. **DRAFT Purpose**

THE PURPOSE OF the Harney County Restoration-Based Resource Project is ~~a community-based, multi-stakeholder effort to develop agreement on ecologically-sustainable and economically-viable local restoration activities in order~~ to achieve an integrated solution to the multi-faceted forest AND COMMUNITY health problem FACING HARNEY COUNTY.

### III. **DRAFT Goals (or "~~Desired Future Conditions~~", "Vision Statement", etc.)**

Project objectives are oriented toward the realization of the following goals<sup>1</sup>:

- Return of natural ecosystem processes, thereby:
  - Reducing threats TO FOREST HEALTH, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES AND RECOVERY LIST SPECIES OF INTEREST, AND HUMAN COMMUNITIES from uncharacteristically severe fire;
  - Recovering watershed health;
  - Reducing future costs of fire suppression;
  - ENHANCING CARBON SEQUESTRATION
- Enhanced and improved COMMUNITY economic resiliency, INCLUDING

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<sup>1</sup> "Goals" are defined here as desired future states of being.

- viability of regional forest products businesses;
  - INCLUDING OPPORTUNITY TO ESTABLISH AND EXPAND NEW AND EXISTING BUSINESSES
- VIABILITY OF RESTORATION-BASED BUSINESSES OF ALL TYPES;
- Improved efficiency and efficacy of state and federal agencies to carry out their missions (e.g. ecosystem restoration, community economic development, etc.);
- Enhanced social capacity to solve problems in ways that build and sustain desired environmental, economic and community conditions.

*(Adapted from Lakeview Oregon Solutions project)*

#### **IV. DRAFT Geographic Scope**

The ~~long-term~~ INITIAL geographic scope of this project is the forested portion of northern Harney County within the Malheur National Forest. Due to the short timeframe for the project and the need to ground the discussion in a specific area, the Core Team will focus the process on the proposed Emigrant East NEPA area, which lies in the eastern portion of the Emigrant Creek Ranger District.

Project outcomes are expected to be relevant to the entire southern Blue Mountains, and other areas in Eastern Oregon.

#### **V. DRAFT Given Statements DEFERRED FOR LATER CONSIDERATION**

- An overarching goal is to achieve healthy forest ecosystems at the landscape scale – project objectives are seen as a means to this end.
- The project Core Team agrees that the social, economic and environmental needs of the Harney County community are closely tied to healthy forests and that securing the health of our county's forests requires healthy communities.
- The project Core Team agrees that the scale and scope of forest restoration needs in the project area are beyond the scale of federal budgets to handle through service contracts alone. Therefore:
  - markets for restoration by-products will be essential to defraying the cost of treatments; and
  - private industry investment is required to help retain and improve these markets.

#### **VI. DRAFT Project Objectives**

The Core Team will work to accomplish the following strategic objectives, which are seen as important tools to achieving the overarching, long-term goals:

1. Identify Emigrant East NEPA “Zones of Agreement” COMMON GROUND and Restoration Principles: Identify “zones of agreement” COMMON GROUND within the Emigrant East planning area:
  - Create agreements on desired future conditions for an area(s).
  - Agree on the practices to get there.
  - Agree on the geography(ies) to apply the practices to.

These can be developed through the following proposed process:

- IDENTIFY THOSE AREAS THAT WE MOST WANT AND NEED TO PROTECT WITH TREATMENTS

- Develop first draft of desired future conditions and agreement on practices to get there in meetings.
  - Test these “zones of agreement” in data-rich areas:
    - a technical committee would then model management based on first draft; produces maps and tables for Core Team;
    - Core Team conducts site visits in these areas
    - Stakeholder group refines zones of agreement based on technical committee products and field tours and more maps/tables are produced (iterative process)
  - From the above, develop a first-draft “Restoration Principles” document for the Emigrant East NEPA (which this group or others could look to further ground-test in other geographies in the future), including:
    - broad “guidelines” statements
    - agreement on management objectives in specific areas.
2. Landscape-Scale Assessment Coarse Analysis and Roadmap:
- Use the same types of analyses performed within Emigrant East across a wider landscape – coarse analysis at this point.
    - TNC can lead and do the heavy lifting, but will require partner buy-in and data.
    - Develop some early products
    - Develop a “roadmap”/implementation plan to completing the landscape-scale assessment and how it will be used by partners.
3. Sustainable Supply Potential:
- Using the Zones of Agreement and resulting technical analysis, develop first estimates of:
    - volume of sustainable supply per year x number of years from Emigrant East area
    - implications for broader landscape(s)

**Proposed number of meetings: 5-7 Core Team meetings, plus ad-hoc and Technical Team meetings, as needed.**

**Time frame: May – December 2008.**