

# Umatilla Forest Collaborative Group

## September 26, 2011 Meeting 2 Notes

### **I. Welcome and Introductions**

Scott Fairley, Governor's Office, provided opening comments for the group and commended them on a good start. Scott stated the Governor's interest in the development of these types of collaborative groups to benefit forests and communities.

### **II. Host Organization – North Fork John Day Watershed Council**

Elaine Eisenbraun introduced the NFJDWC to the group and stated that the NFJDWC had agreed to be the "home" for the UFCG and will be providing neutral convening, fiscal administration, and project support activities. The NFJDWC is a "voice for those who care about the land" and has partnered on projects in the Umatilla NF in the past. Elaine stated that the NFJDWC would be able and willing to take on projects outside of the NFJD watershed, and will involve/inform other watershed councils within the Forest Boundary.

Scott Aycock will continue as the group facilitator for the time being, but the group can always decide to change that at a later time.

Scott stated that responses to the pre-meeting survey indicated some degree of mistrust about whether the agencies would really keep this effort alive. Scott said that, unlike agency-driven collaborative process, this would be a stakeholder-driven process, and so the degree to which the group stays intact is entirely up to the group. Scott also stated that the Umatilla National Forest leadership has shown significant resolve to provide staff support to the effort.

### **III. Discuss Collaborative Opportunities**

#### **Contextual Data**

Kevin Martin, Umatilla Forest Supervisor, reviewed various Forest maps, including vegetation type, fire regime, the draft Forest Plan map, and the 5-year Action Plan map (planned projects).

The group discussed the reason for the huge precipitation gradient on the Forest, which is caused by cool, moist air that is funneled to the Forest through the Columbia Gorge. For this reason, the UNF has considerably more cool/moist forest types than others in Eastern OR and WA.

The group indicated that they would like to see the following additional data/maps:

- Forest type maps should be reprinted with a consistent legend
- Fire history – ignitions by type and large fires

- Climate change trends

(After the meeting, Tim Lillebo requested the following additional maps/data:

- *Old growth layer*
- *Fisheries – anadromous, bull trout, native fish*
- *Aspen layer*
- *Roadless areas: inventoried and uninventoried.*)

### **Menu of Collaborative Opportunities**

The group then discussed the “menu” of collaborative opportunities that were developed by staff after the July Listening Tour. The group was informed that they could pick from this list or develop new ideas.

1. The Kahler Project (Carrie Spradlin, Heppner District) Kahler is a 30-40K acre dry forest project. Features and dynamics: incorporates the Wheeler Point Fire; plantations; developed roads; 6 grazing allotments; recent Doug Fir/tussock moth mortality; expected bark beetle mortality increase; predominately General Forest land allocation; portions of the Lower JD and Kahler Creek WS. Has been heavily managed in the past and is probably the driest portion of the Forest.
2. The Umatilla Forest Plan: (Forest Supervisor Kevin Martin.) The Forest is currently working on drafts with multiple alternatives and recently completed internal review. The next step is to brief the Washington Office (WO) and then release the Draft FP in winter 2012. Supervisor Martin asked if the Group would like to see the draft before release and develop collaborative recommendations for it? The group could review an alternative and develop definitions, etc.
3. Develop a 5-Year Treatment Plan for the Heppner Ranger District: (Todd Bucholz, District Ranger). This project would be to help the Heppner District develop 5 years of vegetation management projects.

Participants asked if the Umatilla National Forest Plan would impact this effort? YES, to some extent. Participants then asked where the UNF is in developing watershed assessments. The UNF interdisciplinary team (ID team) has completed about 12 of 30 anticipated watershed assessments (10,000 – 100,000 acre watersheds). These assessment are not decision documents but are used instead to guide project planning.

4. Landscape Assessment of the Heppner Ranger District. (Scott Aycock, OR Solutions). This would be an assessment of forest conditions at the landscape scale and development of consensus on identified issues and projects needed to address the issues. This type of approach has been developed/promoted by The Nature Conservancy, has guided collaborative efforts on the Malheur, Fremont-Winema, Deschutes, and Rogue-Siskiyou National Forests, and was the basis for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration grant program award to the Deschutes

National Forest.

The group raised concerns that this could just duplicate past assessments, and that the real conversation needs to be about treatment prescriptions/details.

5. The Young Stand Development Project. (Kevin Martin). This potential project would address forest treatments needed on a wide variety of clearcut/regen harvests conducted in cool/moist forest types in the 1950s-80s, averaging 30-40 acres/unit. There are significant larger trees in these units. These sites have the advantage of being able to show the medium-term outcome of this type of treatment, plus restoration projects on former clearcut/plantation sites provide greater potential for collaborative consensus on cool/moist forests than do “untouched” stands. The Siuslaw NF collaborative group has developed good consensus on restoration in similar stands. There is also potential in these stands for uneven aged management and they are not likely to require temporary road construction.
  
6. Heppner Aspen Stand Enhancement (Carrie Spradlin). This project would focus on aspen stand enhancement across the Heppner District, totaling some 4,000 acres. It would require some large conifer removal.

Scott then asked the group if there were any additional projects that the group should consider? David Mlldrexler, HCPC requested that the group consider a new Wilderness Designation. Audie Huber, CTWS, asked that the group try to utilize high resolution satellite imagery for any project that they choose.

**Select Collaborative Project(s)**

Scott added the Wilderness project to the list on the board, and then asked every respondent to suggest a project that they would like the group to take on, and to state why. (During the discussion, the Kahler project was combined with the 5 years of (dry forest) treatments on the Heppner District and the “moist forest” project was combined with the Young Stand Development project).

Potential Collaborative Project	Votes	Considerations/Reasons
Young Stand Development	23	The biggest stakeholder issue is cool/moist forest management – 6 Will produce byproducts; jobs – 3 Good consensus potential – 2 Long-term impact – 2 High restoration need – 1 Tangible project/outcome - 1
Kahler and/or 5 Years of Treatment on Heppner	17	Good potential for consensus – 6 Will produce byproducts; jobs – 5 Tangible, timely project and outcome – 3 Opportunity to reduce fire risk – 2 Landscape approach is appropriate – 1 Long-term impact – 1 High restoration need – 1

Potential Collaborative Project	Votes	Considerations/Reasons
Aspen Enhancement	9	High restoration need - 2
Heppner District Landscape Assessment*	8	Landscape approach is appropriate – 2 Allows wholistic analysis and impact – 1 Long-term impact - 1
New Wilderness Area Designation	3	
Umatilla Forest Plan	0	Participants generally thought that this was too complex to take on as a new group.

\*Note: One participant asked that the group consider doing a landscape assessment of the S. Fork Walla Walla watershed rather than the Heppner District.

In addition to the considerations/reasons listed in the table above, participants stated that:

- selected projects should focus on restoring underlying ecological resiliency and disturbance regimes;
- collaborative recommendations should consider and provide for *reliable* supply (at whatever scale or volume), and should incorporate preserving forest industry infrastructure as a goal;
- all projects should be analyzed as “wholistically” as possible (including, specifically, wildlife corridors and habitats);
- the landscape context of the project should be considered to the extent possible;
- projects should be analyzed considering future generations/sustainability;
- adjoining private forests and rangelands should be analyzed in projects; and
- grazing allotments should be included in project planning.

After some discussion, the group agreed to pursue both the Kahler/5 Years of treatments project and the Young Stand Development project. The group acknowledged that this would split the effort geographically, and expressed some concern at the ability of the group to take on 2 projects at once. Scott suggested that the group pursue each project in a “phased” fashion, with more work and quicker progress on the dry forest project and more background research for the cool/moist project.

### Next Steps

The group will meet on a weekday again. USFS staff will begin gathering data on Kahler and other projects.