

Members Present

American Forest Resource Council: Tom Partin; **Boise-Cascade:** Bryan Reggear; **Cascadia CD:** absent; **Chelan County:** Comm. Keith Goehner, Comm. Kevin Overbay, Mike Kaputa; **Chelan-Douglas Land Trust:** Bob Bugert; **Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition:** Hilary Lundgren; **Colville Tribal Sort Yard (CTSY):** Bob Anderson; **Conservation Northwest:** Jen Watkins & George Wooten; **National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR):** Jim Bartelme; **Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCS):** absent; **Okanogan Conservation District:** Lorah Super, Craig Nelson; **The Nature Conservancy:** Lloyd McGee, Aaron Paul; **Trout Unlimited:** Crystal Elliot-Perez; **US Forest Service – OWNF:** Teri Tucker, Jason Kuiken, Kari Grover-Weir; **Vaagen Bros. Lumber Co:** Matt Scott; **Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife:** absent; **Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR):** Chuck Hersey, Matt Ugaldea; **WA Prescribed Fire Council:** Dale Swedberg, Kara Karboski; **The Wilderness Society:** Mike Anderson; **Yakama Nation:** Brandon Rogers.

Other Meeting Participants

Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (Facilitators): George Schneider, Melody Kreimes, and Pete Teigen; **Okanogan County:** Comm. Chris Branch, Char Schumacher; **Senator Brad Hawkins;** **WRC&D:** Ryan Anderson; **Idaho Dept. of Lands:** Jon Songster; **Panhandle NF (Idaho):** Matt Staudacher; **Sustainable Northwest:** Andrew Spaeth; **WA Dept. of Commerce:** Terry Lawhead; **Other:** Sam Israel (individual).

Regular Business

March 1, 2017 Quarterly Meeting summary was approved without dissent or issue.

Senator Hawkins spoke for a few minutes, noting that he appreciates NCWFHC's work and the improved relationships between DNR, USFS, and legislators, policy makers and locals. Forest health and public policy are trending in a positive direction with regard to funding and relationships. WA federal elected officials are also continuing to support these efforts.

Upper Wenatchee Pilot

WRC&D is fiscal sponsor of the project, and will sign the contracting agreement with OWNF/USFS. The project team has developed a draft workplan. This document and all others can be found on the [Project Workgroup's Google Drive site](#). When agreement is final the numbers of where funding/dollars go will be transparent. OWNF is the decision maker though the NCWFHC will have input throughout. A project core team will be formed to meet weekly to help guide the project. Terrestrial group was formed (wildlife, fire, fuels, FAC), aquatic subgroup also formed, a NEPA group will be formed. Project team met and developed shared goals, needs analysis on what's missing from data on these landscapes. All components are going to be critical to ensuring success for the project, including Outreach and Communication. NCWFHC should all share in the learning of the pros and cons of this process. The goal is to have it completed by Winter 2020 (signed DN).

Q&A:

- Do we have sufficient funding? Complete cost estimates in excess of \$1.045M. There are likely to be funding shortfalls that will require some additional fundraising from the collaborative, either grants or direct payments from members.
- Are we identifying potential sticking points or litigators? Yes.

- How do we ensure that the project stays on track? The group is trying to front load many components of the data gaps and needs and potential shortfalls.
- Are there NEPA contractors available to help keep the project on track? There are national groups and local talent/groups available. Regional Office has assisted with SOW and templates for moving to and through contracting NEPA. Current federal contracting requirements allows for 3rd party contractors to not necessarily use the lowest bid for contractors.
- LSR assessment process needs resolution at the Forest-wide level, and will it be done in time to be useful for this project? OWNF is currently reviewing the LSR draft revisions; the hope is to get those revisions out in the near future. OWNF will follow up with NCWFHC and the pilot project group to provide information about the LSR and updated revisions.

Good Neighbor Authority

Two invited guests from Idaho, where GNA activities are somewhat more advanced than in WA, provided a presentation on GNA. Speakers were Jon Songster (GNA Program Mgr., Idaho Dept. of Lands); and Matt Staudacher (Vegetation Staff Officer, Panhandle NF). Matt Ugaldea (WDNR) added some comments afterwards about the state of GNA in WA. Some of the highlights of their talk:

The intention of GNA in Idaho is to increase the use of contract NEPA, to increase the pace and scale of restoration. They are “building a bicycle as they ride it” and can do so because of their partnerships and relationships. Leadership and alignment matters, FS, IDL, legislature, industry, and collaboratives all work together.

Limits restoration in wilderness and doesn't allow for roadwork (decommissioning or improving, though maintenance is allowed). Dollars generated can be used anywhere on the forest, not specific projects. Have awarded five NEPA contractors with 3-year terms to allow for NEPA work anywhere in Idaho. IDL acts as an agent to sell the timber versus using CE. Funds can be used for a variety of restoration activities. Program income is held in trust with the state through the duration of a 10-year agreement, if not used it'll go back to the treasury. Restoration is coming at direct payment costs to the county, though there is an increase in forest product jobs. The GNA language is meant to be cross boundary, though currently they don't have any projects that are on both IDL and FS land. Long-term goal is to “add” to restoration, not simply maintaining the current FS workload or shift work around. Temporary hires help fill USFS gaps because of IDL's flexibility to bring on additional resources.

In Washington, we have a signed master GNA and are working on supplemental project agreements. There's one SPA on Gifford Pinchot NF and another on Colville NF. Currently looking for more projects particularly with recreation and aquatics. The goal is to be additive in assisting landscape level restoration. The USFS can support DNR or state land to help achieve enhanced successes (e.g., prescribed fire). How do funds from the program affect dollars that go back in rural education (from timber sale receipts)? SRS funds aren't tied to harvest. The current program will not affect trust lands.

Project Workgroup Activities Update

Jen noted two important lessons from PWG experience:

1. Collaboration is different on every projects
2. There are more projects moving into all phases of project life (pre-planning, planning, implementation, etc)

Tonasket Ranger District

- Annie- has signed decision. Boise Cascade bought the sale. The district has some additional needs for restoration work.
- Light - 8200 mech. treatment, 5700 fuels, will have a sale in FY2018.
- Mt. Hull - PWG is engaging with FS. TNC helped with landscape evaluation. FS expanding the discussion to other landowners and stakeholders.

Methow Valley Ranger District

- South Summit II - Boise bought the timber. FS has a lot of unauthorized roads and needs/wants help addressing them particularly near the Loup Loup Highway area.
- Mission - Prior to the Upper Wenatchee Pilot, this was the most involved project the collaborative had been involved with. Hope to have a signed decision early calendar year 2018. TU working with FS Fish Bios to look at aquatic work, specifically BDA and beaver projects. Crystal leading much of this work. FY2018 timber sale. FS has made a request to present to the full collaborative about implementation of this project, anticipated in early 2018.
- Twisp River - Currently involved in pre-planning because YN has certain funding through 2020. Starting some pre-NEPA survey work but is scheduled to start FY2018, when NCWFHC will become more involved.

Wenatchee River Ranger District

- Upper Peshastin- due to checkerboard ownership the project has stalled. Potential to use CE for some fuel treatment.

Entiat Ranger District

- Tillicum - Has a signed decision that NCWFHC has been involved in. Has a high aquatic component. Thinning 7000 acres and burning 7000 acres.
- Mad Roaring Mills - Looking at photo interp and QA/QC. For aquatics will be doing a whole watershed procedure similar to Tillicum. There is a grant to begin aquatic assessment work. NCWFHC will stay tuned in, and District Ranger will seek support as needed.

Chelan Ranger District

- 25 Mile - signed decision. Implementation needs. 4500 pre-commercial thinning and burning. John Marshall has been taking photos. Using Wyden Agreement to work with private landowners to burn.
- Lower North Shore - will begin pre-NEPA in FY2018 - photo interp and field validation.

General comments - members want to track board feet, not only acreage treated. Group is tracking a forest-wide aquatic strategy. Barriers Work Group has been folded into PWG though there was a lot of work done, this should be kept alive. 21,500 acres mechanical and 28,000 fuels that NCWFHC has engaged in. Steering Committee is looking at Legacy Roads and Trails program (important for the Tillicum project), and is considering sending a letter of support. Time for an update of the Strategic Prioritization?

Sawmill and Supply Study

Aaron Paul and Lloyd gave the group an update on a study that TNC is conducting. See PowerPoint presentation. Goal of work is to estimate wood supply that could be made available to existing and new sawmills and other plants. Sufficient supply may lead to more investment in new infrastructure. Release of the report will be determined in TNC internally at some future time and what that might look like. Some folks would like to engage more with TNC on this in Phase II.

Outreach Committee

A draft of a Mechanical Thinning Brochure was sent out ahead of the meeting. Comments received before and at the meeting included some that were more concerned with content than wordsmithing, so no approval vote was conducted. The committee will organize a call with Dave, Kevin, Matt, Tom, Hilary, Chuck, Brian Reggear and others to discuss and finalize. The collaborative indicated they would be okay with the SC being final approval body, hopefully at the July meeting.

Action Items:

1. The committee will organize a call with Dave, Kevin, Matt, Tom, Hilary, Chuck, Brian Reggear and others to discuss and finalize.
2. The SC will schedule an approval vote at the July meeting (George)

ESHB 2928 Prescribed Burn Recommendations

Kara Karboski (WPFC) presented. With experience gained over the past year, the WPFC has prepared draft recommendations that will be presented to the legislature. These were sent to the collaborative ahead of the meeting. Some comments were received and forwarded to Kara. Additional comments voiced at the meeting included:

- If a recommendation is to revise language in a statute or rule, provide an appendix with exact proposed language.
- Engage landowners who are adjacent to landscapes that were prescribed-burned to get their views.

Kara would like a letter outlining which pieces of the recommendations NCWFHC supports. Any additional comments need to be sent to George by June 12, 2017 for Steering Committee approval in July.

Action Items:

1. Any additional comments need to be sent to George by June 12, 2017.
2. Schedule this approval vote for Steering Committee at July meeting (George).

Federal Cost Sharing Agreement on Upper Wenatchee Pilot

Ryan with WRC&D, the fiscal sponsor for the Upper Wenatchee project, discussed guidelines and methods for tracking cost share time and expenses. The overall cost of the project dictates the amount of cost sharing required, and for U. Wenatchee it is approximately \$275,000. There is a 20% match requirement, and while in-kind is the easiest way, groups can also add additional funds and/or resources toward match. Non-federal NCWFHC employee time can be cost-shared (for non-federal funds). Volunteers can track their hours and apply their pay rate, which will be the hourly rate plus fringe rate. RC&D will work with PWG to get tracking forms on the PWG Google Drive site. Travel costs are eligible. Can't share match between this project and any other cost share project. Start date for tracking will be when the contract is signed by OWNF and RC&D. Ryan will get information to Jen until there is a PM on board.

Action Items:

1. Ryan will send Jen forms to be posted on Project Workgroup Google Drive site.
2. Ryan will further research the rules and requirements and forward to George.
3. George will work with Steering Committee to develop process for NCWFHC tracking. Jen will develop process for the Upper Wenatchee Project Team.

Upcoming Meeting Dates/Updates

Next NCWFHC Quarterly meeting is September 6, 2017 at the Twisp Grange; 10 am to 4 pm. Possible topics suggested:

- Metrics Task Force top 20 metrics to track and monitor progress
- ICO metrics on Annie and Light, led by Derek Churchill and Sam Israel
- SC's long range program of work
- Update on Sawmill and Supply Study Phase II from TNC (might be better in December)
 - Incorporating existing mill infrastructure and/or Canadian mills re: Commissioner Branch
- Upper Wenatchee Project update
- Joint Chiefs - led by OWNF - what are we doing next with this?
- Projects and how they relate to road systems on and off the forests. Okanogan County is drafting a road plan that will include forest roads and how to address infrastructure needs.
- Susan Pritchard to discuss the value of thinning and "the effect of suppression on fire severity" – suggested by George Wooten
- DNR 20-year Strategic Plan