

Members Present

Conservation Northwest: George Wooten, Jen Watkins; **Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest (OWNF):** Meg Trebon, Paul Nash, Erin Peterson, Darren Gooding; **Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB, Facilitators):** Pete Teigen; **Vaagen Brother's Lumber:** Matt Scott; **Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR):** Chuck Hersey, Sam Steinhouser; **Trout Unlimited:** Crystal Elliot; **Washington Department Fish & Wildlife:** Matt Ruggirello; **Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group:** Jason Lundgren; **American Association of Forest Service Retirees:** Jim Bartleme

After two-years of leadership, Jen Watkins term as Project Workgroup Chair had expired and she requested that another assume the Chair role. Crystal Elliot and Mike Kaputa both volunteered and it was discussed the perhaps Crystal could lead PWG efforts in Okanogan and Mike in Chelan Counties as a way to divide some of the workload. *Crystal Elliot and Mike Kaputa were approved as Project Workgroup Co-Chairs.*

Toroda-Tonata

The groups discussed the idea of a joint-planning effort between then OWNF and Colville National Forest with engagement from NCWFHC and Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition. The concept of a joint-planning effort has been discussed in various forums and there has been interest shown, so the idea is to have a meeting to discuss what this effort would look like, define the landscape and interested stakeholders, a schedule and timeline; and the role that the collaboratives can play. Given the forests operate under unique forest plans, there would probably be two environmental analysis though one Landscape Analysis. There was concern from a member that this could be perceived as pushing the forest a little too much, though both landscapes are on the planning horizon for their respective forests. OWNF Supervisor Mike William and CNF Supervisor Rodney Smolden have meeting scheduled for January to discuss this concept. Pete Teigen is planning on sending out a Doodle poll to get the first joint meeting date scheduled for after the two forest supervisors meet. Three primary questions for the meeting

Upper Wenatchee Pilot Project

Public scoping is happening in late January – early February. Given the importance and level of involvement of this project, members discussed meeting to further discuss scoping and decide about submitting a letter. Individual members could articulate their interests and goals in the project and share with the group to create a letter representing these interests.

Mt. Hull

The draft EA could be out as soon as mid-December or more likely the first of January. There will be a 30-day comment period, so interested PWG should be aware of that pending deadline and be prepared to meet to discuss. The Final NEPA should be out in May with a final decision in June or July. The OWNF indicated that there would likely not be a lot of surprises in the EA but did mention that there might be a little less timber harvest than initially thought. This is because of the National Scenic Trail and its relation to proposed treatment areas. There is a plan to use quite a bit of prescribed fire. Given the number of roads in the planning area and some of the issues OWNF has with easements, Good Neighbor Authority may be used in OWNF needs to access parcels via private roads. DNR could do the planning and set up easements with local landowners to help OWNF implement the project (9-Mile RD Cooperative owns a primary road)

Twisp

The North Zone ties to alternate project planning between the Tonasket and Methow Valley Ranger Districts each year as a maximize the IDT team meaning Twisp is the next project up on the planning docket. Thompson and Alder creeks have been added for analysis and help connect larger landscapes. It has been an area that NCWFHC members have been interested in for a couple of years and are eager to engage. Part of the watershed was impacted by the Crescent MTN fire but not sufficiently enough to warrant excluding those from analysis, LSR areas did burned. In addition to LSR there are roadless areas and steep terrain that make treatments extremely challenging so the total project area will likely be between 62,000 and 70,000 acres. The timeline for a signed decision will be later 2021 or possibly 2022.

Mad Roaring Mills

There was not anyone from the OWNF with intimate knowledge of this planning effort on the call but this is another high priority planning area on the Entiat Ranger District. NCWFHC needs to connect with the Entiat Ranger District to discuss collaborating on this project.

Action Items:

1. Pete will follow up with SC Chairs and Sarah about having the PWG Workplan revision (including Toroda-Tonata) on the January agenda.
2. UWPP- Meet to discuss the scoping letter and determine if the Collaborative should submit a comment letter.
3. Mt. Hull- PWG will stay tuned and be ready to meet to review and discuss the draft EA to determine submitting a letter on behalf of the Collaborative.
4. Pete will connect with James Simino and invite him to the next PWG meeting to discuss this project and begin defining how NCWFHC members can add value.

Mission

This Mission project area was impacted by Crescent MTN fire and there is post fire emergency consultation on the project as a whole. The services may agree with eh OWNF plan or may ask for more stringent requirements to mitigate fire impacts. New ARBO II treatments have been happening, including Trout Unlimited working to implement Beaver Dam Analogues with the District. There is potential for a 1-3 delay for thinning and burning activities in Buttermilk except where soil burn severity of moderate to severe which necessitates longer delays. These delays don't apply to the commercial units because the fire did not burn in the sale units, though the sale will be delayed allowing for some recovery. The Libby Stewardship Contract can move forward.

Monitoring

There are multiple ideas about monitoring and any number of things that can be tracked. The two primary ideas discussed were: 1. Results oriented monitoring (are the things that are suppose to be done, actually getting done) 2. Are the actions having their intended/desired outcomes (are restoration treatments changing the wildfire risk profile on the landscape, etc). The group discussed soliciting feedback from the broader Collaborative about what they are interested in tracking, then "binning" like items, working with OWNF to see what they currently monitor, then trying to figure where the gaps are to begin building a monitoring plan. Members thought that the focus should be on a few very items because of the high cost associated with monitoring and the relative lack of funding for monitoring efforts. There was also discussion of potentially using Mt. Hull to beta test the monitoring effort as that project is implemented in the coming years.

Action Items:

5. Pete will solicit feedback/input from NCWFHC members on what they are interested in tracking or monitoring on projects
6. Schedule a future PWG meeting to discuss items members are interested in tracking, including the OWNF to discuss the outputs they currently track.
7. Pete will follow-up with Paul Nash and/or other OWNF staff on whether retained receipts can be used for monitoring.