

SC Members-Alternates Present

American Forest Resource Council (AFRC): Tom Partin; **Chelan County:** Bob Bugert, Mike Kaputa, Doug England; **Colville Tribal Federal Corporation - Timber:** ABSENT; **Conservation Northwest (CNW):** Dave Werntz, Mike Liu; **The Nature Conservancy (TNC):** Lloyd McGee; **Okanogan Conservation District (OCD):** Mindy Untalan; **Okanogan County:** Chris Branch; **Trout Unlimited:** Crystal Elliot; **Vaagen Bros. Lumber Co:** ABSENT; **Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW):** Lynda Hoffman; **Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR):** Chuck Hersey; **The Wilderness Society (TWS):** Mike Anderson; **Yakama Nation:** Brandon Rogers

Other Meeting Participants

Cascadia Conservation District (CCD): Ryan Williams, Patrick Haggerty; **Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group (CCFEG):** Jason Lundgren; **Methow Valley Citizens Coalition (MVCC):** Jasmine Minbashian; **US Forest Service--OWNF:** Kristin Bail, Darren Gooding, Jeff Rivera, Paul Kelley, Meg Trebon; **Congresswoman Schriers' Staff:** Kelli Scott; **Senator Patty Murrays' Staff:** Raquel Ferrell Crowley; **Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB):** Nicole Jordan, Alicia Meier, Pete Teigen, Sarah Walker (Facilitator).

Welcome and Regular Business

Co-chair Mike Anderson opened the meeting. Sarah introduced participants and reviewed the proposed agenda and meeting objectives. A Mission litigation update was added to the agenda.

Members approved the October 7, 2020 Steering Committee meeting summary. The final meeting summary will be posted online at: <https://www.ncwfhc.org/meetings/>

Mission Litigation: Co-chair Anderson shared that Judge Mendoza upheld the legality of the Mission Restoration Project and granted summary judgement in favor of USFS. Favorable outcome for USFS process and shows the strength of the Collaborative. The plaintiff has 60 days to appeal.

OWNF Process, Proposals, Project Updates

New NEPA Regulations - Tools

Darren and Kristin provided an update on CEs for Collab. Resiliency Projects up to 2800 acres and new Determination of NEPA Adequacy tool; **see supporting OWNF presentation: New NEPA Regulations.** More information is coming from the Washington Office to help provide partners guidance. Participants please follow-up with Darren Gooding re: any additional questions.

Great American Outdoor Act: Overview of Proposed OWNF Projects in Tillicum, Mission, Other?

Kristin referenced the recent Region 6 request for comment email re: FY22 proposed GAOA projects, which includes OWNF projects in Tillicum and Mission. The R6 comment period was short and closed Monday. CNW and TWS submitted comments in support of FY22 projects for Mission and Tillicum based on the restoration and infrastructure benefits (along with engagement from the Collaborative during the NEPA analysis). It is unknown if other member comments that are submitted now would be received or put in the record. Congress has not yet appropriated funds for 2021 projects.

UWPP

The contractor is updating the Draft EA. Current OWNF-WWRD timeline and goal is to post online public access in mid-December, approximately 2 weeks prior to official start of 30-day comment period.

The official UWPP draft EA comment period will likely begin the end of December or early January 2021; details being resolved related to scheduled federal holidays.

Given the above, the planned 12/17/20 PWG call to discuss the UWPP draft EA will be postponed until after the online 'sneak-peek' is available.

Twisp Restoration Project Draft EA

OWNF-PWG Activities Since November Quarterly

PWG members agreed to request a 20-day comment period extension, which the OWNF-MVRD approved. Comments on the Twisp Restoration Project draft EA are now due Friday, December 18, 2020. The letter will highlight areas of agreement and recommendations for improvement/disagreement. To be beneficial to the OWNF, the intent behind the comment should be clear. Tomorrow, a follow-up meeting with DNR Landscape Evaluation staff, CNW Contractor, OWNF-MVRD staff, others is planned to dig in on alignment with the OWNF restoration strategy.

A PWG-approved comment letter should go to the Steering Committee on Wednesday, 12/16, to allow adequate time for consensus decision-making by the 12/18 deadline. The Yakama Nation will not be able to participate after Friday, 12/11 and may abstain.

Tools to Help (re)Define Collaboration

Reissue of Supervisor's Letter of Commitment

Members discussed and agreed accept Conservation Northwest's proposed edits.

Participants discussed the value of an "Initiation Letter" that the OWNF would develop and provide to the NCWFC at the start of their work on each project. This would trigger added collaboration to lay out roles-expectations up front for that project, discuss touch points from pre-NEPA through a draft EA. This could be beneficial given new NEPA regulations and condensed timelines once scoping starts.

The OWNF-SO provided feedback on the concept of a project 'initiation letter'

1. The NCWFHC-PWG will need to define 'Project' (i.e., which type of projects are of interest and what the term "project" means to the collaborative) --not every project will be of interest.
2. OWNF would need to ensure an 'initiation' letter is not perceived as an official scoping letter.
3. New NEPA regs present an opportunity for OWNF, NCWFHC to work together to understand the process, needs, and is open –on which project would the NCWFHC like to explore, test this?

The OWNF-SO and SC members were open to and agreed to explore the concept further.

TNC offered to help advance the letter of intent concept with the PWG-SC.

Zones of Agreement

Participants considered other available tools to help better define collaboration and roles-responsibilities, from planning through adaptive management; *see Adaptive Implementation Plan example* from the Rocky Mountain Research Station in Colorado. This offers an example 'framework' for what collaborative, long-term engagement on projects (10 years) could look like.

Participants agreed the PWG should discuss the possibility of developing/piloting something similar, to help define involvement, outreach and adaptive management (e.g., monitoring) on projects moving forward. It will be important to define how any timelines-steps will link to NEPA expectations.

Follow-up: Nason Project Development

Chelan County and Yakama Nation shared updates about their ongoing work and interests in the Nason Project area. The Nason area is complimentary to UWPP but not currently a part of the 5-year plan or the focus of potential long-term stewardship contract discussion (i.e., Chumstick to LP areas).

Chelan County

The county is interested in securing funding to establish the Nason Ridge Community Forest. The area offers good forest health and cross-boundary treatment opportunities. Recent work involved a detailed analysis of the road network and sediment input in to Nason Creek to identify aquatics restoration benefits. Some road decommissioning occurred this past summer.

Yakama Nation Interests

Yakama Nation has had an ongoing interest in Nason since 2008, especially with aquatics. The YN has implemented one project approximately every 3 years. Currently, one project is underway, and one is on the way. The Yakama Nation is using its 638 authority on one project and is interested in continuing to apply this tool in Nason.

The County and Yakama Nation reiterated the restoration needs in Nason. Overall, the Nason project area is not highly desirable from a commercial timber/industry perspective so the best path is for partners to bring resources to the project. All participants agreed member support remains the key to advancing Nason NEPA and restoration in a way that is additive to the OWNF 5-year plan.

Other Perspectives

- New CEs adopted by the FS could fit in to equation to accomplish aquatic work on Nason Creek.
- A lower permitting threshold on certain projects could help move Nason projects forward.
- Possible Count/GNA and Tribal 638 to lead on implementation and take burden off of the OWNF
- Revisit DNR landscape evaluation for Nason Creek; utilized by Economic Subgroup.
- Other private funding sources-investments could be brought in if projects are 'split' out

Members supported convening a January call among Yakama Nation, Chelan County and DNR staff, and others to review the DNR Landscape Evaluation for Nason.

Wrap-up

1/6/21 SC Mtg. Recommendation:

Members agreed to invite Paul Jewel/WASC to give a 15- to 20-minute update coming into the state legislative session and on issues with congress (SRS/PILT). Members suggested also inviting Keith Hikula, AFRC congressional contact.

Future Outreach Strategy Development

Participants reflected on recent OWG, SC and Quarterly discussions re: outreach priorities and funding. Co-chair Anderson suggested exploring a revamp of the OWG workplan to support funding, help share resources around key outreach priorities.

The OWG met last week and this is consistent with their discussion. A follow-up OWG discussion is planned for week of 12/7 to put together a wish list (2021 Workplan)

Pete noted a [current Icicle Fund grant opportunity](#) that UCSRB could apply for to seek additional resources. Would need Collaborative approval to apply; closes January 15, 2021.

Other

The OWNF SO filled two new positions: Andy Hart (Natural Resource Staff Officer) and Pete Weir (Silviculturist)

Adjourn

Co-chair Branch adjourned the meeting at 3:05 pm.

The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 6, 2021, from 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm. Please note final confirmed duration/end time may be shorter.

Tasking Memo

DUE DATE	TASK	ASSIGNED TO
Ongoing	Follow-up with Victoria on OWNF Alpine Lakes wilderness outreach strategy progress/development	Mike Kaputa/CCNRD, Sarah Walker/UCSRB
Ongoing	Develop OWG “wish list” and rough funding strategy for future discussion with SC	Patrick Haggerty, OWG Co-Chair; OWG participants
Week of 12/7	Doodle for Nason call in January	Walker
Week of 12/7	Email Paul Jewel, WASC and Heith Haikele/AFRC re: January Steering Committee meeting presentation	Walker
Ongoing until Wednesday, 12/15	PWG review of Twisp Restoration Project; draft EA comment letter development	Pete Teigen/UCSRB; Mike Liu/CNW; Crystal Elliot/TU
Wednesday, 12/15	Email PWG-approved Twisp Restoration Project comment letter to SC for consensus decision	Walker

Friday, 12/18	Email NCWFHC comment letter on draft Twisp EA to MVRD	Walker
Mid-December	Provide online access to UWPP draft EA	Darren Gooding/OWNF
Mid-December	Set PWG meeting discuss UWPP draft EA comment letter	Pete Teigen/UCSRB
End of December or early January	Start 30-day comment period on UWPP draft EA	OWNF-SO, WWRD
Next possible PWG meeting	Review, discuss Adaptive Implementation Plan example and concepts for potential application on OWNF projects	Mike Liu and Crystal Elliot, PWG Co-chairs
Next possible PWG meeting, potential SC mtg.	Define what 'Project' means for purposes of potential OWNF project initiation letter to help improve up-front collaboration	Mike Liu and Crystal Elliot, PWG Co-chairs