

SC Members-Alternates Present

American Forest Resource Council (AFRC): Tom Partin, Heath Heikkila; **Chelan County:** Bob Bugert, Mike Kaputa; **Colville Tribal Federal Corporation - Timber:** ABSENT; **Conservation Northwest (CNW):** Dave Werntz; **The Nature Conservancy (TNC):** Lloyd McGee; **Okanogan Conservation District (OCD):** Mindy Untalan, Lorah Super; **Okanogan County:** Chris Branch; **Trout Unlimited:** Crystal Elliot; **Vaagen Bros. Lumber Co:** Absent; **Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW):** Lynda Hoffman, Amanda Barg, Ben Majsterek; **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; **Hampton Lumber:** Anjolene Price; **Methow Valley Citizens Coalition (MVCC):** Sam Israel; **US Forest Service--OWNF:** Kristin Bail, Darren Goodding, Jeff Rivera, Paul Kelley, Meg Trebon, Chris Furr, Victoria Wilkins, Andy Heart, Paul Kelley, Sendi Kalcic, Deborah Kelly; **Senator Patty Murrays' Staff:** Raquel Ferrell Crowley; **Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB):** Nicole Jordan, Alicia Meier, Pete Teigen, Melody Kreimes, Sarah Walker (Facilitator); **Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC):** Paul Jewell.

Welcome and Regular Business

Co-chair Anderson opened the meeting. Participants introduced themselves. Supervisor Bail provided a special introduction for Andrew (Andy) Hart, the new OWNF-SO Natural Resources Planning Officer (permanent replacement for position formerly held by Teri Tucker). In addition to the SC Chair change, Sarah shared a December 2, 2020 draft summary correction. Members reviewed the proposed agenda.

Members approved the December 2, 2020 Steering Committee meeting summary with correction. The final meeting summary will be posted online at: <https://www.ncwfhc.org/meetings/>

OWNF Projects and Process

Overview of FY21 Omnibus Bill

The bill is large and still under interpretation. The FS-WO must determine which forests will receive FY21 funds and in what amount. With respect to CFLRP, FY21 funding will be allocated among top-tier projects. The size of bill has caused a delay in the decision. The SO will continue to update the NCWFHC.

Twisp Restoration Project

Recap of Comments Submitted on the Twisp Restoration Project Draft EA:

- UCSRB/Sarah Walker submitted NCWFHC comments by the December 18, 2020 deadline; some Members and others also commented. Although the Twisp is a large and complex restoration project, SC members approved the NCWFHC letter by consensus.
- The MVRD is in the process compiling and uploading comments that came in by mail after the e-deadline and expects to finish by Friday, January 8.
- Early in the week of January 11, the MVRD will begin reviewing the comments, identifying issues and grouping them according to themes/categories, which could take a few weeks.

PWG/Members acknowledged and expressed gratitude for OWNF-MVRD District Ranger and staff investments in multiple PWG and SC meetings and discussions leading up to and after release of the draft EA, prior to the end of the comment period. The OWNF (SO, MVRD) is committed to the Collaborative framework, open to more dialogue and willing to sustain its level of involvement.

To continue collaborative dialogue about NCWFHC comments, participants agreed the next OWNF-PWG Twisp meeting should focus on the following:

- A refresh of shared understanding of the Forest Restoration Strategy and zones of agreement for the Twisp Restoration Project. To prep ***participants will reacquaint themselves with the Forest Restoration Strategy.***
- Project elements that appear to be ‘beyond’ or out of alignment with the Restoration Strategy.
- Options for community outreach and engagement, including the potential for a field trip to see conditions on the ground. The OWNF-SO and MVRD will discuss any potential field trip next steps given the pandemic and is open to brainstorming alternative options.

Next Steps Twisp Restoration Project Discussion:

1. By January 25 Sarah will check in with Chris and Meg on status of MVRD review of draft EA comments and will Doodle the PWG-OWNF to schedule a follow-up call.

UWPP

Prior to Christmas 2020 Paul emailed a link to the UWPP Draft EA “sneak peek” online.

- The 30-day comment period will start on January 13, 2021 and include public notice in the Wenatchee World.
- The comment period will end February 12, 2021.
- A virtual public meeting is being planned for January 20, 2021, most likely Wednesday evening.

The OWNF 5-year Plan Gantt chart shows a UWPP Decision Notice by end of first Quarter FY2021. The project timeframe is tightening. The OWNF is balancing this alongside the need to take adequate time up-front focusing on how to mesh the LSR, ESA, and NEPA process schedules, which is challenging.

TNC will share the results of its “Lessons Learned” survey of Pilot Projects (UWPP, Manatash Tantum & A-Z Mill Creek) as part of the Quarterly. A Doodle will also be distributed to the Core Team-PWG for a follow-up, UWPP-specific meeting. New EA time and page limits may change the way projects are done in the future and offset the value of any lessons learned.

Regarding UWPP outreach, participants discussed existing public meetings planned in the upper valley. Chelan County offered to share information about UWPP and support for ONWF Open House at one of its meetings upcoming on Friday, January 8, 2021. Mike/CCNRD help can support coordinated UWPP messaging through other meetings they are coordinating.

Deb Kelly/SO and Paul Kelley/WRRD are working on the OWNF communication plan. Footage North40 was tasked with collecting will help support the digital Story Map and be utilized on Social Media.

The Wenatchee World newspaper is easy to work with; however, event dates should be known to support in-depth story framing and release timing. Any outreach framework should include KOHO & KPQ radio and be coordinated with OWNF UWPP Open House planning and the communications plan.

Next Steps: UWPP Outreach

1. Patrick/OWG and Mike/CCNRD will support overall coordination between print and radio.
2. Nicole/UCSRB can support the OWG on a NCWFHC UWPP Press Release
3. Patrick/Mike and Members will coordinate with OWNF Deb Kelly-SO and Paul Kelley/-WRRD) re: Open House, new release content, timing, radio interviews, etc.

Comment Letter Development Process

A PWG Doodle poll is out for a meeting the week of January 18 to discuss a UWPP comment letter. Interested participants should Doodle by c.o.b. today.

Next Steps: UWPP Draft EA Comment Letter

1. January 7 Pete will select a PWG-UWPP call date and distribute a confirmation email.

NCWFHC -OWNF Collaborative Process

Supervisor's Letter of Commitment

Supervisor Bail reiterated her/the OWNF's commitment to continued collaboration within the NCWFHC framework. She was pleased to reissue the letter and is looking forward to ongoing partnership.

Discuss Draft Concept: Collaborative Engagement Framework

The OWNF is starting pre-NEPA planning on a few projects--Chumstick to LP, Mad-Roaring River, Fuels Break (see 5-year Gantt chart). Developing common language and understanding of key touch points are essential for collaboration. Lloyd walked participants through the key points of the draft Letter of Engagement concept. The OWNF could initiate a letter for these projects to set common language for work and list out opportunities for pre-NEPA collaboration. Example: Write the affected environment before we start scoping clock.

Given the above projects have already started, Members supported advancing the draft as a "Collaborative Engagement Agreement" concept. The document would describe and define common OWNF-NCWFHC language, touchpoints and known constraints along a continuum from pre-NEPA through implementation and, ideally, adaptive management. The OWNF is interested in understanding which partners want to be involved, desired role(s) and the support capacity of each entity, by project.

Next Steps: "Collaborative Engagement Agreement" draft concept development:

1. Prior to 2/3, TNC will update the draft to address OWNF track-changes and other comments:
 - broaden the definition of a project
 - describe linkages to, importance of Forest Restoration Strategy
 - establish placeholder for common language for work and list out opportunities for pre-NEPA collaboration (e.g., write the affected environment before we start scoping clock).

- establish placeholder for common language re: roles in ongoing citizen engagement (e.g., adaptive communication about project activity—tree marking, equipment in view)
 - add language acknowledging the OWNF is constrained by firm timelines
 - add language acknowledging the NCWFHC remains committed to supporting OWNF 5-year Plan restoration project timelines barring unique circumstances (e.g., request for Twisp comment period 20-day extension)
2. OWNF will think about standard language and defining engagement opportunities.
 3. Interested parties will review the *Darrington draft Letter of Agreement*/ contact: Anjolene Price; *NEPA 'Road Map'*; and *Adaptive Implementation Plan* for common language and definitions that might be useful in a potential OWNF-NCWFHC Collaborative Engagement Agreement.
 4. OWNF-SO/RDs will begin to contemplate the idea of EA/EIS template to help navigate new page limit and timeline restrictions.

Review DNR Products, LE Summaries

Chuck provided an overview of DNR's Forest Health Assessment and Treatment Framework 2020 report to the Legislature on implementation of the Forest Health Strategy (RCW 76.06.200) https://dnr.wa.gov/publications/rp_2020_fh_report.pdf. The Landscape Evaluation summaries (see links) are a detailed project-specific resource. Upcoming 2022-2024 biennium DNR Landscape Evaluations: Chewuch in the Methow subbasin and Chelan.

Next Steps:

1. Chuck will prepare a summary focused on the NCWFHC area to support Collaborative outreach.
2. Chuck and Sarah will coordinate to schedule LE review meetings for Nason (target late January) and Chumstick-to-LP (post-February Quarterly) to advance these projects.

Congressional and State Legislative Updates

SRS-PILT, Forest Health, Other

Paul Jewell/WSAC and Heath Heikkila/AFRC shared information about federal SRS (Secure Rural Schools) and PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) programs (consolidated \$900 billion package for FY21). The DNR is reintroducing its legislative proposal re: wildland fire prevention on state lands. This version of the proposal is different because it does not call for a dedicated funding source.

Discussion, Q&A

Given the new Democratic administration and Senate, now is the time for aggressive outreach as there may be more traction on forest health. It is unknown whether recent changes in NEPA, EA and EIS page and timeline limits, tools and will remain in place; Lawson Fite/AFRC could provide more detail (*see summary in December 2020 AFRC Newsletter*). The USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment and Secretary of Agriculture will be new, but the Chief of the USFS may remain unchanged. Focus remains on increasing the pace and scale of forest restoration, reducing catastrophic wildfires, and addressing prescribed fire and preparedness needs.

Roundtable and Wrap-up

Members identified the following February Quarterly meeting topics:

- TNC lessons learned from three Pilot Projects
- Reorient to current OWNF 5-year plan
- Project updates including UWPP, Twisp, Nason, Mad-Roaring (kick-off)
- Upcoming, including Chumstick to LP and more information on Methow Fuels Break projects)
- Draft Collaborative Agreement concept discussion
- Possible update on appropriation determinations.

The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 3, from 1:00 pm -3:30 pm.

Tasking Memo

DUE DATE	TASK	ASSIGNED TO
asap	Coordinate to set up Nason (late January) and Chumtick-to-LP (February) LE review meetings	Chuck Hersey/WDNR and Sarah Walker/UCSRB
asap	Prepare a NCWFHC area summary of DNR Planning Areas for outreach purposes	Chuck
January 7	Select a PWG-UWPP call date and distribute a confirmation email.	Pete Teigen/UCSRB
January 13	Release UWPP Draft EA and 30-day Public Comment Notice	OWNF-WRRD
Pre- January 20	Coordinate re: UWPP messaging to community, newspaper and radio outreach, 1/20/21 Open House	Deb Kelly/OWNF-SO, Paul Kelley/OWNF-WRRD, Patrick Haggerty/CCD, Mike Kaputa/CCNRD, Nicole Joran/UCSRB
By January 25	Check in with Chris and Meg on status of MVRD review of draft EA comments	Sarah
After January 25	Doodle the PWG-OWNF and schedule a follow-up Twisp call for after February Quarterly	Sarah
By January 27	Revise draft "Collaborative Engagement Agreement" per OWNF-SO and Member input and member comments and email to Sarah for distribution	Lloyd McGee/TNC
January 27	Distribute NCWFHC Quarterly meeting packet, with draft "Collaborative Engagement Agreement"	Sarah
After February 3	Convene PWG Twisp follow-up call; Convene PWG UWPP follow-up call	Sarah, PWG
Early-to-Mid Feb	Develop and approve UWPP Draft EA comments	PWG
By February 12	Approve NCWFHC UWPP Draft EA Comments	SC
February 12	Submit NCWFHC comment letter on UWPP Draft EA	Sarah