

SC Members-Alternates Present

American Forest Resource Council (AFRC): Tom Partin; **Chelan County:** Mike Kaputa; **Colville Tribal Federal Corporation - Timber:** ABSENT; **Conservation Northwest (CNW):** Jen Syrowitz, Mike Liu; **The Nature Conservancy (TNC):** Lloyd McGee; **Okanogan Conservation District (OCD):** Mindy Untalan, Craig Nelson; **Okanogan County:** Chris Branch; **Trout Unlimited:** Crystal Elliot; **Vaagen Bros. Lumber Co:** Absent; **Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW):** Connie Iten; **Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR):** Chuck Hersey, Liz Smith, Tom Frantz; **The Wilderness Society (TWS):** Mike Anderson; **Yakama Nation:** Brandon Rogers

Other Meeting Participants

Cascadia Conservation District (CCD): Ryan Williams, Patrick Haggerty; **Chumstick Wildfire Coalition:** Corrine Hoffman; **Conservation Service (NRCS):** Chris Wright; **Lake Wenatchee Fire-Adapted Community:** Jim Passage; **Methow Conservancy:** Julie Grialou; **Senator Maria Cantwell's Staff:** Richard Evans; **Senator Patty Murray's Staff:** Raquel Ferrell Crowley; **Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB):** Nicole Jordan, Alicia Meier, Melody Kreimes, Nicole Jordan, Sarah Walker (Facilitator); **US Forest Service--OWNF:** Kristin Bail, Darren Goodding, Jeff Rivera, Chris Furr, Andy Heart, Paul Kelley, Sendi Kalcic

Welcome and Regular Business

Co-chair Chris Branch opened the meeting at 1:00 pm. Participants introduced themselves. Members reviewed the proposed agenda.

Members approved the January 6, 2021 Steering Committee meeting summary with corrections. The final meeting summary will be posted online at: <https://www.ncwfhc.org/meetings/>

OWNF - People, Process, Projects

Admin. Updates

The OWNF is still waiting on its budget from the region; no new funding is expected. The SO is navigating FTE caps, loss of relocation benefits to help recruit qualified applicants to fill positions. No CFLRP funding is expected this fiscal year. Andy Hart, new SO/ Natural Resources Planning Officer has successfully relocated to Wenatchee. The Cle Elum Ranger District is without a Ranger. Rob Allen (Fire Management) is detailing for 120 days. The OWNF is looking to fill his Fire Management position with a detail. There is no new Joint Chief's Approval information but this month OWNF is evaluating NEPA shelf stock to have a list of shovel ready projects once funding opportunity is available.

UWPP

The WRRD received 80 letters during public comment period, which ended mid-February. The NEPA Contractor is analyzing approximately 400 comments and updating the EA. OWNF next step is to review, draft comment-response table.

Draft decision target is end of May/June (then goes out for 45-day objection period). A final decision is planned for August 2021 (many moving pieces with environmental assessment and consultation and LSR workgroup to coordinate). Overall timeline has shifted out approximately 6 months; no project

implementation in 2021. The OWNF was asked to consider preparing two separate decisions—prepare an initial decision on the smaller 1400ac Meadow Creek subarea (no LSR complexities) for implementation in 2021, and another decision for remainder of work. This approach is like the Huckleberry project in the Little Naches. Multiple decisions would add more complexity and workload. The SO shared that the challenging OWNF staffing situation, not a lack of willingness, prevents a multi-decision approach.

WRRD is coordinating with Patrick Haggerty to discuss monitoring, potential workshop. The LSR workgroup and OWNF are meeting on Friday.

Next Steps:

1. Sarah to send out Doodle Poll for a UWPP NEPA and other considerations follow-up call.
2. Anjolene add Andy Hart to UWPP Economics subgroup

OWG Integration on Project Outreach

The OWG recently discussed evaluating public comments on projects for additional outreach to key stakeholders. Need to develop early opportunities for PWG to not miss out on getting groups such as Sierra Club, Audubon Society, etc. involved earlier in the process. The “where when why and what” is already in the roadmap scoping section and/or Pre-NEPA. Importance of adding the “who” to the road map as well to target communication, roles. OWG will follow up with PWG re: Outreach integration and coordinating early to ensure early community-stakeholder outreach is part of pre-NEPA portion of project collaboration framework and agreement, if appropriate.

Twisp Restoration Project

Draft EA Comment Review Update

The MVRD, SO have finished comment analysis; now revising draft EA. Things that have changed between the Draft EA and final EA:

- ✓ Salvage removed from consideration
- ✓ WATV route will not be part of project
- ✓ Moving upper diameter limit from 29” down to 25”

PWG Meeting Outcomes, Next Steps to Discuss Key Comments

The MVRD and PWG had good discussion last week followed up with a smaller NCWFHC and PWG Co-Chairs’ meeting with OWNF staff this morning to chart out next steps to discuss remaining items in more detail. The plan is for the MVRD and PWG to come together for a few deep dive conversations to better define common interests and discuss areas where NCWFHC could not achieve consensus, such as:

- old and large tree discussion
- harvest and riparian reserve
- roadless area thinning

Methow Valley News Article on Twisp comments

The MVN article highlights the significant level of interest in the Twisp project. The NCWFHC will need to emphasize keeping community members well informed as the project changes and moves forward. Any follow-up about outward community messaging will be sequenced and built after next MVRD-PWG deep-dive discussions.

Next Steps:

1. SC, PWG Will Prepare for “Deep Dive” Discussions with MVRD to discuss areas of NCWFHC Comment Letter where there wasn’t consensus; ID top concerns.

NCWFHC-OWNF Collaborative Engagement

As part of improving shared understanding and NCWFHC-OWNF collaboration, the SC discussed a PWG/CNW proposal for an independent reevaluation of the OWNF Forest Restoration Strategy. The FRS underpins the NCWFHC’s efforts but was written over 10 years ago. The document is meant to be adaptive, updated with new information and learning. End results goal would be a 2022 version that would include a finalized aquatics piece. A suggestion was made to add a socioeconomics component.

Members supported the idea of independent review by a core group. DNR supports an update as well as the development of Landscape Evaluation tools-template support for the OWNF. Cameron Thomas/USFS (former OWNF) and Derek Churchill/ DNR were suggested for inclusion on a review team. The OWNF desires its Forest Ecologist to be involved from the beginning, especially concerning the LSR portion, so timing will be key. Staffing capacity issues are challenging the OWNF right now.

A FRS review-update could:

- ✓ Refresh terrestrial side
- ✓ Formalize aquatic strategy on par with terrestrial
- ✓ Justify the reason for landscape-level treatments done forest-wide, not project to project (helpful for working with LSR agencies)
- ✓ Bridge the gap between landscape need and site-specific needs
- ✓ Discuss how well we have been able to implement these strategies

The FRS also addresses the South zone of the OWNF. Therefore, any review-update will require coordination with the Tapash.

Members, OWNF were supportive of a “FRS refresh” but noted the scope of work should consider and incorporate crosswalks for ESA consultation, LSR workgroup and spotted owl discussions, in addition to FRS review-update. The FRS Refresh should be done in a way that brings in other pieces—evaluate how to satisfy all needs with refresh so don’t have to deal with consultation, LSR requirements separately.

1. PWG will incorporate feedback on proposal for FRS refresh/ build out, reshare with PWG-SC.
2. PWG coordinate with SC, SO on review team participants and timing for start of work so OWNF Ecologist can be included at start, particularly for LSR discussions.

Project-Level Engagement: Chumstick-to-LP

Recap of LE Meeting and Follow-up

Based on the initial meeting, the CWFSC is working with DNR to present the Chumstick-to-LP LE to local leaders, community. DNR intends to follow-up with a direct presentation to the OWNF and RD staff.

Given NCWFHC input on Chumstick-to-LP has been requested in March, a Chumstick-to-LP subgroup (Lloyd, Patrick, Corrinne, Sam) shared 2 draft Collaborative Engagement products developed for SC consideration:

1. A draft SC response to the OWNF SO, tiered to the reissued Supervisor's Letter of Support, that sets out a proposed Framework for NCWFHC-OWNF collaboration. The Framework is intended to define shared touchpoints for engagement and create common understanding, definitions about roles and responsibilities over the life of a project.
2. A draft project-level Agreement example (based on Chumstick-to-LP) that the SC would send to the OWNF in March for review-response—need to define process, who (PWG or SC send). The Agreement would specify desired level of collaboration, any early (pre-NEPA) and NEPA engagement touchpoints, PWG-OWG community Outreach interests and timing, and propose other adaptive management-monitoring partnerships, desired level of collaboration, etc.

The SC briefly reviewed edits to the 2 draft Framework documents, which were provided to the SC <24 hrs. prior. Most participants had not had adequate time to review the updated draft Collaboration Framework materials being presented for SC approval.

Members agreed to review and provide feedback on the 2 draft Framework items in a week. Project-level Chumstick-to-LP Agreement development efforts can move forward concurrent with work to finalize and obtain SC approval of overall proposed Framework.

Next Steps:

1. By Thursday, March 11, participants will send proposed edits on draft Framework to Sarah and Corrine (CWSC, Chumstick-to-LP subgroup member) who will compile-clean for partner consideration
2. Week of March 15, draft Framework will be sent to OWNF for review and feedback asap to Sarah, subgroup.
3. After March 15, Sarah will email revised Framework for SC Consideration/Approval
4. The Chumstick-to-LP subgroup will continue to focus on project-specific elements for Agreement while SC, OWNF work to finalize overarching Framework.

Blue Forest Conservation, Other Round-Table Updates

Chelan County was unable to provide an update on their work with Blue Forest Conservation to develop a Forest Resilience Bond. Trout Unlimited and Blue Forest have been discussing options for a \$25,000 cost-share on a Phase 1 FRB Feasibility Assessment for group implementation in the Methow. Avoidance costs, other ecosystem services are part of what goes to paying back the bond. CNW has a call with Blue Forest tomorrow.

1. Sarah will send previous Blue Forest, FRB SC mtg. info and YouTube link to Jen/ CNW.

HB 1168 DNR Wildfire & Forest Health Funding

The state has proposed a bill like the one introduced during the last session. WSAC had concerns about proposed revenue funding source(s). A SC letter of support would be timely. Sarah did not think the NCWFHC sent a letter last year but will confirm. CNW noted they may have concern over language around use of Categorical Exclusions.

1. Sarah will check back regarding a previous NCWFHC comment letter
2. Mike Anderson will engage with Commissioners Branch and Bugert regarding development of a draft NCWFHC letter of support.

DNR building Forest Partnerships Support

UCSRB holds a current grant with DNR to support NCWFHC/ SC/ PWG facilitation. The UCSRB is intending to apply for this funding again to continue its forest health coordination efforts.

Wrap-up

Meeting was adjourned at 3:39 pm.

The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 7, 2021 from 1:00pm-3:30pm

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for May 5.

Tasking Memo

DUE DATE	TASK	ASSIGNED TO
asap	Send links to Jen Syrowitz on Blue Forest Conservation	Sarah
asap	HB 1168 Follow up on any Previous Letter and on a potential letter of support	Sarah, Mike Anderson
As able	Try to reschedule Chelan County FRB update for April 7 SC Agenda	Sarah
As able	Send Crystal Elliot any questions or comments about Methow FRB	SC Members
As able	Doodle for Follow-up Discussion About "Creative NEPA" for UWPP, other projects?	Sarah
Thursday, 3/11	Email Feedback on Draft Collaborative Engagement Framework to Sarah, Corrine	SC members, PWG participants
By 3/15	Incorporate Feedback and Develop Revised Draft Framework	Corrine, Patrick, Sam, Lloyd, Others interested
Early Week of 3/15	Coordinate with Sarah to Distribute Revised Draft Framework to OWNF for Comments	Corrine
During Week of 3/15 or asap	Provide Comments on Draft Collaborative Framework Agreement for Chumstick-to-LP to Subgroup, SC	OWNF

After week of 3/15	Email Updated Framework with OWNF Comments, SC edits for SC Approval Consideration	Sarah
After week of 3/15 (asap) in March	Apply SC-Approved Framework to Create Proposed Draft Project-level Collaboration Agreement to OWNF	Chumstick-to-LP Subgroup
By April	Apply for DNR Building Forest Partnerships grant	UCSRB (Sarah/Pete/Melody)
By April 7 SC	Use 3/3 SC feedback to refine approach for refresh of Forest Restoration Strategy to include LSR, ESA consultation cross-walk considerations	Mike Liu
By Next PWG	OWG and PWG Coordination to Use Public Comments for Added Outreach on UWPP, Twisp?	Patrick Haggerty