

FFAC Ad Hoc Implementation Working Group

Statewide Forest Collaboratives Sub-Committee DRAFT Status Update for the January 15, 2010 IWG Meeting

The purpose of the Statewide Forest Collaboratives Sub-Committee is to identify opportunities for implementing local collaborative landscape-scale assessments, to develop functional relationships between core partners that can assist local collaboratives, and to network collaborative groups working on these assessments.

Members:

Association of Oregon Counties – Gil Riddell;
BLM - Michael Haske (Steve Calish, alternate);
Oregon Department of Forestry - Kevin Birch;
Oregon Solutions - Scott Aycock and Pete Dalke;
Sustainable Northwest - Maia Enzer (Chad Davis and Cassandra Moseley, alternates);
The Nature Conservancy - Diane Vosick (Cathy McDonald, alternate);
USFS - Jose Linares (Tracy Beck and Margaret Petersen, alternates);
Oregon Department of Energy – Matt Krumenauer;.
National Forest Foundation – Kathleen Dowd-Gailey
Facilitation : Turner Odell - Oregon Consensus

Subcommittee Meetings

The Subcommittee has held two conference calls since the last IWG meeting: Dec. 15 and January 5. At the December 15 meeting, the group reviewed a number of “leads” (discussed below) for landscape-scale projects within the four “collaboratives of interest” approved at the December 4, 2009 IWG meeting. At the January 5 meeting, Scott Aycock provided additional information regarding the project ideas, and the group developed a consensus definition for the terms “landscape assessment” and “landscape scale”.

Collaboratives of Interest – Potential Landscape Scale Projects

After the full IWG approved the “collaboratives of interest” at the December 4 meeting, staff began investigating potential landscape-scale projects. Following are the project ideas and next steps.

Central Oregon Partnerships for Wildfire Risk Reduction (COPWRR)

COPWRR Coordinator Phil Chang has proposed a “Greater Sisters Area Landscape Project” that would encompass the Metolius and Whychus Basins within the Deschutes National Forest with significant engagement by the City of Sisters. This project would build on the Upper Deschutes Landscape Assessment recently completed by the Fire Learning Network, as well as other collaborative projects such as Glaze Meadows, the Metolius Stewardship Project, and the Sisters Area Fuels Reduction project. The project goals and outcomes would include a “Sisters-centric” version of the Upper Deschutes FLN Landscape Assessment (drilling down further on existing data and adding new data as needed) to drive

additional NEPA planning, support for “off the shelf” treatment implementation that reflects the revised assessment, landscape-scale monitoring, and associated local community economic development of byproducts led by the City of Sisters and the Small Business Attraction and Retention Team (SBART). Contextual factors of interest include the reintroduction of steelhead in the basin, Skyline Forest (a community forest proposed for a large tract of adjacent private land), significant areas of late-successional reserve and spotted owl habitat, the City of Sisters’ re-emerging interest in developing business opportunities from biomass, and the high profile of the Metolius Basin from a statewide and regional perspective.

Next Steps: Oregon Solutions, COPWRR, and TNC staff have introduced the concept to the Sisters District Ranger and the City Manager, both of whom have expressed serious interest. The group will meet in late January to explore the idea further, identify next steps, and then bring the concept to additional stakeholders. If there is sufficient interest, an Oregon Solutions assessment could be completed in February.

Lakeview Stewardship Group

The Subcommittee was investigating the possibility of a) updating the existing Long Range Strategic Plan as a “landscape assessment”, b) developing a landscape assessment in a geography outside of the Stewardship Unit, or c) “reconvening” the 2005 OS Project Team around the new (larger-scale) biomass power proposal by Iberdrola. However, none of these ideas appear promising as the LSG is already working with TNC and the Fire Learning Network to update and strengthen their existing landscape assessment for the Stewardship Unit. Furthermore, the LSG believes that existing agreements are sufficient to provide supply certainty for the new, larger-scale biomass power development proposal. In sum, there appears to be no opportunity for the FFAC IWG to add value at this point.

Next Steps: OS staff will continue to monitor the status of all LSG project efforts, and be available to discuss emerging resource needs and technical assistance requests with LSG and the Sub-Committee.

Southern Oregon Small Diameter Collaborative (SOSDC)

The Subcommittee is exploring two project concepts in the Rogue Basin:

- 1) To assist an informal consortium led by George McKinley (SOSDC), Rich Whitley (ret. BLM), Jack Shipley (Applegate Partnership), and Vicky Sturtevant (sociology professor at SOU) in their efforts to develop a locally-based community collaborative effort to develop an alternative to the Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR), which was administratively withdrawn earlier this year. This group, with the support and involvement of the Medford BLM, is developing a proposal letter that will be presented to the Department of the Interior in January, 2010.
- 2) To assist in the development of landscape-scale NEPA and establish a collaborative governance process to accelerate short- and mid-term implementation projects, with monitoring protocols for adaptive management purposes, flowing from the recently-completed Applegate FLN Landscape Assessment.

Next Steps: OS staff are working with the principals on both project concepts to identify exact needs and the scope of work for the two initiatives. Project 2 could be initiated as an FFAC IWG this fiscal year, while Project 1 may be on a significantly longer timeframe.

Blue Mountains Forest Partners (BMFP)/Harney County Restoration Collaborative (HCRC)

The Subcommittee and several of the BMFP project leaders are exploring the concept of piloting the restoration approach/prescriptions in the Jerry Franklin, Norm Johnson, et. al. report "The Case for Active Management of Dry Forest Types in Eastern Washington: Perpetuating and Creating Old Forest Structures and Functions" (11/2008) at a landscape scale on the Malheur National Forest. The project would define the purpose and opportunity to pilot the methods outlined in the paper, create a detailed implementation plan, and bring in the partners and tangible commitments necessary to success.

Implementation steps could include:

- piloting on private land, then small acreages of public land, then larger acreages of public land;
- developing strong outreach and communication efforts;
- developing the necessary monitoring/adaptive management protocols required to move forward;
- and, as a potential outcome - developing a supply projection for utilization projects such as the pellet mill.

Next Steps: BMFP leaders are vetting the concept with other members of the BMFP, as well as the HCRC group. They expect to deliver a revised project concept to the Subcommittee in time for its next meeting on February 4th. If the project continues to move forward, the OS project assessment could be completed in February.

Other Associated Activities

As part of the forest collaborative inventory process, Oregon Solutions and USFS-Region 6 held a Nov. 18, 2009 meeting of local USFS partnership coordinators and their primary local collaboration partners. The purpose of the meeting was to have the local partners tell their stories, to find out what the USFS can be doing better to assist local collaboratives, and to gauge the readiness and interest of collaboratives to tackle landscape-scale forest health issues. One of the issues identified by the attendees was the lack of guidance on forest restoration monitoring activities, as well as the high cost of implementing monitoring programs. In response, USFS Region 6 is working with partners to develop a PNW monitoring guide that will:

- Inventory monitoring activities in Oregon and Washington to learn what is currently being monitored and how it is working;
- Provide a template for monitoring for use by local collaboratives
- Provide guidance on how to do it "cheaper" with "good indicators" that are identified in partnership with organizations such as TNC and the Sierra Club
- Provide information on how to fund monitoring
- Be sanctioned by partners in the Northwest.