

FFAC Ad Hoc Implementation Working Group

Statewide Forest Collaboratives Subcommittee DRAFT Staff Report¹ for the March 5, 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, alternate);
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 one meeting since the last IWG meeting: February 4th, 2010. The group reviewed Scott Aycock's progress on identifying needs and opportunities for achieving landscape-scale outcomes with local collaborative groups (discussed further below), and also discussed the following:

- the Obama Administration budget and its' implications for forest restoration funding;
- the survey and manage lawsuit outcome;
- the Wyden Bill and opportunities to implement provisions within it even if it doesn't pass; and
- the multiparty monitoring guidebook project that resulted from the November 18, 2009 Collaborators' Meeting;

The Action Items included:

- continued investigation by Scott Aycock into all of the collaboratives around the State, and opportunities for the FFAC IWG to assist them;
- investigation into the availability of Plant Association Group (PAG) maps that have agreement among stakeholders;

¹ The Subcommittee elected to skip their last meeting, and therefore this report contains information that has not been discussed by that group, so it has been formatted as a "staff report" rather than a Subcommittee report.

- summarize and discuss the outcomes of the Nov. 18 Collaborator’s Meeting for discussion at the full FFAC IWG meeting.

Recurring Needs

In the course of investigating landscape-scale projects for FFAC IWG assistance across the state, staff have identified the following common needs that have been mentioned repeatedly among the collaboratives (in no particular order):

- Planning: Strategic planning/development of common vision for desired future forest conditions
- Prescription Design: After a group conducts the “TNC-style” landscape assessment/values mapping exercise, they still need to develop common ground active management prescriptions
- Collaborative “Standing”: Developing “standing” for collaborative groups. What does this mean? How will such standing hold up in appeals or lawsuits? A related concern is the degree of ongoing commitment to collaboration when local public land leadership is turned over.
- Science: Development of “shared science” Determining scientific validity. By what criteria?
- Collaborative Decision-Making: How, when, and why to use full consensus versus “critical mass of agreement ” among diverse stakeholders.
- Collaborative Capacity: Neutral facilitation, conflict resolution, mediation, etc. Collaboration trainings for all parties. Funding locally-based collaborative groups over the long haul.
- Adaptive Management: Developing and funding monitoring programs. Developing commitment from federal agency partners that they will incorporate monitoring findings into future action.
- Technical: Gathering good data; managing data

These needs may be the basis for productive dialogue among the FFAC IWG on how to strategically coordinate assistance among all of the partners around that table.

Collaboratives of Interest – Updates

Central Oregon Partnerships for Wildfire Risk Reduction (COPWRR)

The District Ranger has asked that we redirect our efforts from a Sisters-focused project to one that would encompass the entire Deschutes and/or Ochoco National Forests. This project would build on the Upper Deschutes Landscape Assessment recently completed by the Fire Learning Network, as well as other collaborative projects across the landscape, and would focus on tackling those areas that still require social license regarding prescriptions. As it now stands, the project objectives would include:

- a “drilling down” further on existing data and adding new data as needed for the existing landscape assessment,
- Plant Association Group-based prescription design in, potentially, the following types of stands:
 - Black bark pine
 - Mature pine with mistletoe
 - Dry mixed conifer

- support for “off the shelf” treatment implementation that reflects the revised assessment and use of these projects as learning tools for the collaborative,

Next Steps: Oregon Solutions, TNC, and COIC are meeting on March 4 to finalize a draft proposal, which will then be presented to the Deschutes and Ochoco Forest Supervisors. If they agree, an FFAC Action Plan will then be conducted to clearly identify local needs and the resources and activities that could be delivered by the FFAC IWG partners.

Lakeview Stewardship Group

As discussed in the last report, Jim Walls (LSG coordinator) has indicated that there is little need for FFAC assistance at this point, therefore staff are continuing to monitor local conditions and keep in close communication.

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

Southern Oregon Small Diameter Collaborative (SOSDC)

The Subcommittee continues to explore two project concepts in the Rogue Basin:

- 1) Community-Initiated Pilot Project to Advance Federal Forest Management Planning in the Rogue Basin: An informal consortium led by George McKinley (SOSDC), Rich Whitley (ret. BLM), and Jack Shipley (Applegate Partnership) has delivered a letter/proposal to the Departments of Agriculture and Interior to develop a locally-based community collaborative effort to develop an alternative to the Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR). If the proposal gains traction, the group has requested that the FFAC IWG step in and provide technical assistance on what could be a very wide variety of issues, including collaborative system development, monitoring and adaptive management, and market development.
- 2) Illinois Valley Collaborative Activities: Josephine County, the Wild Rivers District, and the Siskiyou Project have collaborated on several large-scale (e.g. 10,000 acres) forest restoration projects. The group is preparing an overview of their activities to date and a listing of ongoing needs that could be addressed by the FFAC IWG. In a meeting on February 24, the proponents focused on developing local markets for restoration byproducts and the need for broad community outreach/education on forest health issues.

Next Steps: Project 1 may be brought to the FFAC IWG for action consideration at a future date. The Illinois Valley proponents will be presenting an overview of activities to date with needs identified. If it appears to be a good fit, and the local partners request it, an FFAC Action Plan will then be developed by staff.

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

The Subcommittee and several of the BMFP project leaders are still exploring the concept of piloting the restoration approach/prescriptions in the Jerry Franklin, 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;
- develop monitoring/adaptive management protocols;
- develop a supply projection for utilization projects such as the new pellet mill and the existing local mills/cogen facilities.

Next Steps: BMFP leaders are vetting the concept with other members of the BMFP on March 3rd, and will contact staff after that time. If there is project potential, an FFAC Action Plan would commence shortly thereafter. Staff are also beginning to re-engage with the HCRC group, and plan to meet with project leaders in early March.

Additional Collaboration Explorations

Staff have also been exploring two new collaborative efforts that have emerged in the Umpqua Basin.

Roseburg Collaborative Forestry Pilot Project

This collaboration is being led and convened by the Roseburg District BLM. The overarching goal is to develop collaborative guidelines and common ground for the potential development of a new Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Roseburg District. District Manager Jay Carlson is leading this effort, and is taking the group through a process to design active management prescriptions for two sites – one dry, one moist – with an underlying emphasis on habitat development rather than volume production. The group also understands that volume goals are embedded in overarching legal constraints in the area – specifically through the O&C legislation. The collaborative is being led through a very aggressive timeline, with both sites’ design expected to be completed by late April.

Next Steps: Staff have met with and engaged a very productive dialogue with the District Manager, who believes that there may be a role for FFAC IWG assistance at the time when the site designs are completed and the group attempts to “roll them up” to provide collaborative guidance for a revision of the RMP (expected in Summer/Fall 2010). In the meantime, staff will attend collaborative meetings as time allows, and will provide some feedback.

South Umpqua NF Collaboration

The Umpqua NF Supervisor, Cliff Dils, is interested in exploring FFAC IWG assistance in developing and implementing a collaborative process for the southern (drier) portion of the Umpqua National Forest.

Cliff indicates that several projects have been held up due to a lack of social license for active management in that area – particularly in “natural” stands (i.e. not in plantations). Cliff believes that the FFAC IWG could provide a neutral table and structured facilitation, bring additional environmental groups to the table, and assist in the development of more local capacity and appetite for stewardship contracting as a project implementation tool.

Next Steps: Umpqua National Forest staff are providing and submitting a “concept paper” to the FFAC IWG by the March 5th. The concept paper will outline the issues and needs, and would be the basis for developing an FFAC Action Plan.