

FFAC Implementation Working Group

Statewide Forest Collaboratives Sub-Committee DRAFT Status Update for the December 4, 2009 IWG Meeting

Purpose and Participants

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. The members of the Sub-Committee include the following: 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).

Proposed Additions: The Oregon Department of Energy has asked to join the subcommittee and to bring their resources to bear on this effort.

Activities to Date

The Sub-Committee is following the work plan in “Proposed Work Plan for Initiating Activities in Support of FFAC Recommendations Related to Local Collaboratives”, and is generally on track with the timeline in that document. The first Sub-Committee meeting, which was detailed in the last report, served to “tee” the group up for an all-day Work Session, held November 12th at PSU. The Work Session resulted in the identification of six “geographies of interest,” four local “collaboratives of interest”, and one further *proposed* collaborative that will be explored. These outcomes are detailed in the next sections.

Methodology for Selecting Collaboratives/Nov. 12 Work Session

The Sub-Committee utilized GIS data, the collaborative inventory and interview questions, and expert knowledge to help develop a draft list of geographies and collaboratives of interest. GIS data included:

- 1) biophysical conditions: e.g. fire regime/condition class, primary vegetation, fire history, insect and disease risk and mortality;
- 2) economic conditions: e.g. unemployment, presence of processing infrastructure, timber harvests, mill closures;
- 3) political conditions: e.g. land ownership, land allocations, expected losses of “payments to counties,” designated WUI areas, etc.;
- 4) partner priority areas: e.g. USFS terrestrial and aquatic priority watersheds; and
- 5) social conditions: e.g. collaborative boundaries and identified communities-at-risk.

The Sub-Committee also reviewed the interview results from the draft Collaboratives Inventory prepared by Oregon Solutions. The interview results provide a “snapshot” of each forest health/restoration collaborative across the state, including primary stakeholders, geography, date of inception, Forests and BLM units engaged, goals, activities, and some discussion of the collaboratives’ readiness and interest in engaging in landscape-scale restoration efforts.

Participation

Six of the seven sub-committee partners participated in the November 12 Work Session: Association of Oregon Counties, BLM, ODF, Oregon Solutions, Sustainable Northwest, and USFS. The Nature Conservancy was unable to participate and instead participated in an intensive debrief session with OS staff on November 23rd.

November 12 Work Session Outcomes

Partner Goals and “Criteria”

The group began by reviewing and refining a list of partner goals and criteria that each group brings to the table. The full list of shared and individual goals and criteria is included in the attached Appendix.

Geographies of Interest

After refining the shared and individual goals/criteria, and reviewing a series of GIS data prepared by ODF, the group selected the following “geographies of interest”:

- Deschutes County/Central Oregon
- Grant and Harney counties
- Klamath County/Western Lake County
- SW Oregon – roughly corresponding to the dry forest areas of Jackson and Josephine counties
- East side of the Mt. Hood National Forest
- Western OR from the northern boundary of SW Oregon up to and including the Siuslaw Basin

Collaboratives of Interest

After reviewing the collaborative inventory information, the group performed a “dot exercise” aimed at identifying collaboratives of particular interest. Each organization was given 5 dots and asked to place them on the collaboratives that they felt had the best opportunity for success, given the shared goals of the group. The following lists these collaboratives and the partner organizations that placed a “dot” next to them.

Established Collaboratives:

- Lakeview Stewardship Group (5: BLM, USFS, SNW, OS, ODF)
- COPWRR (5: BLM, OS, SNW, ODF, AOC)

“Middle-Aged” Collaboratives:

- Southern Oregon Small Diameter Collaborative (6: BLM, ODF, OS, USFS, SNW, AOC)

- A joint project of the Blue Mountains Forest Partners and the Harney County Restoration Collaborative (6: BLM, ODF, OS, USFS, SNW, AOC)

In addition, one “proposed” collaborative – the Baker County Landowner Cooperative – received 3 dots and the group agreed that it should receive some additional attention and research.

Next Steps

OS staff have completed debrief conversations with sub-committee partners to help prepare the group for their next meeting on December 15. At that meeting, the partners will discuss the ways in which each organization can better leverage each others’ investments in these communities, and will work to refine the list of four collaboratives down to two for more-immediate action. After that meeting, OS staff will begin the formal Oregon Solutions Assessment for each collaborative, which will help define *what* the project would be, *who* would be involved and what their roles would be, *when* the project would take place, and the potential for success in each area. The OS Assessment is a series of in-depth interviews with all partners that can contribute to project success, and forms the basis for a recommendation (or not) to the Governor’s Office for project designation.

Appendix A. Shared and Individual Goals/Criteria

A. Shared Goals/Criteria

The Partners:

- will only work in areas where we are invited by the local project proponents;
- are interested in areas where there is significant potential for success;
- are focused on areas where assistance will add real value (including building collaborative capacity, etc.);
- are interested in assisting a young, a middle-aged, and a mature collaborative;
- are focused on restoration of forest landscape-scale health, as defined by the community, with an emphasis on accelerating restoration of federally-managed lands;
- are focused on areas with high FS and BLM willingness/capacity to engage in collaboration;
- are focused on areas with committed local leadership
- define “successful collaboration” as processes that:
 - have an open, transparent decision-making process
 - allow everything to be on the table for discussion, understanding that existing laws/regulations, and sometimes budgetary constraints, will provide sideboards for collaborative decision-making
 - engage and maintain a diverse group of stakeholders/partners;

B. Additional Partner Goals/Criteria

TNC is interested:

- in areas that have greatest ecological need and high biodiversity;
- *in pursuing a “nested hierarchy” approach to landscape-scale restoration, wherein different values and variables are analyzed from the landscape scale, through sub-watersheds, to individual projects (this statement still needs to be reviewed).*

Sustainable Northwest is interested in areas:

- where the health of the forest is inextricably linked to the health of the community (local economy and social heritage);
- that can demonstrate local economic opportunity (i.e. local ownership and/or local equity stake) as evidenced by private sector investment interest, particularly in biomass utilization (e.g. pellets, other cogen, small wood manufacturing, etc.);
- that exhibit “broken social agreement”/lack of community consensus

- yet where there is an opportunity for long-term community capacity and engaged leaders;
- that exhibit poor economic conditions – e.g. sustained high poverty;
- for the DFIZ project – that exhibit shared interests of the other DFIZ Executive Team members;

Oregon Solutions is interested in areas:

- where there is a “driver” for project success – e.g. a private sector investment proposal;
- where the FS or BLM has the capacity to engage in landscape-scale planning and implementation;
- where the project engages the “triple-bottom line” .

The Oregon Department of Forestry is interested in areas:

- where active management will increase forest health (overarching interest);
- where it can play a supportive role to the USFS/BLM;
- where there is significant WUI wildfire threat to communities;
- where industrial infrastructure is threatened but could be maintained with additional assistance;
- where the local government/county invites us in
 - particularly those counties that are at risk of not providing services without federal payments to counties;

Association of Oregon Counties is interested in areas:

- that can demonstrate local economic opportunity (i.e. local ownership and/or local equity stake) as evidenced by private sector investment interest, particularly in biomass utilization (e.g. pellets, other cogen, small wood manufacturing, etc.);
- that exhibit poor economic conditions – e.g. high unemployment;
- where active management will increase forest health;
- where industrial infrastructure is threatened but could be maintained with additional assistance.

The USFS is interested:

- in the wealth and health of rural communities;
- in accelerating the restoration and stewardship of forest health;
- in areas where there is significant WUI wildfire threat to communities;
- in areas that have greatest ecological need and high biodiversity;
- in areas where there is local capacity (agency and local community) to support the collaborative effort and there is a likelihood of success;
- in areas where industrial infrastructure is threatened but could be maintained with additional assistance;
- in protecting water quality and quantity;

- in engaging youth and communities (both education and connection to employment);
- in addressing climate change issues.

The BLM:

- has varying interests and goals in different parts of the state –
 - on the west side: the O&C Act is predominant ,
 - on the east side (woodlands) the restoration objective becomes more overarching,
 - has key interest in SW Oregon due to the convergence of fire, the O&C Act, and the relationship and proximity of communities with the BLM land;
- is interested in biomass energy opportunities;
- is interested in maintaining and building the forestry infrastructure to carry out active management;
- prefers working with collaborative groups and avoiding litigation.

C. Other Considerations

- What do the collaborative groups actually need?
(According to the RVCC pre-meeting survey data:
 - Marketing/utilization/energy issues/business development –higher than it used to be.
 - Lower priority than in years past for collaboration assistance.)
- What are the partner group’s overlapping goals/objectives?
- Are we focusing on areas with significant low-elevation pine (includes lodgepole?) forests where there is greater potential for collaborative common ground?
- How can the private sector be more engaged with this work at the statewide level?