

February 22, 2012

6-8 PM

# MIDDLE APPLGATE PILOT THOMPSON INFORMATIONAL MEETING NOTES

Applegate School

**Meeting called by:** Applegate Partnership, Southern Oregon Small Diameter Collaborative, and Medford BLM.

**Facilitator:** Don Ferguson

**Presentors:** Jack Shipley (AP), George McKinley (SOSDC), John Gerritsma (BLM), Ed Reilly (BLM), Jason Reilly (BLM), and Nathan Goodwine (BLM).

## Agenda Items

Purpose: To share information about and engage you in the design and implementation of the Pilot Thompson Project.

Topic	Presenter
• Community Perspective, Multi-Party Groups, & Public Participation	McKinley/ Shipley/ Gerritsma
• Fuels Reduction & Grant Opportunities	Brett Fillis
• Secretary's Message & the Medford Pilot	John Gerritsma
• Pilot Overview & the Path Forward	Ed Reilly
• Late-Successional Emphasis Areas (LSEAs) Development	Jason Reilly
• Vegetative Condition and Restoration Needs Identification Process	Nate Goodwine
• General Q & A about the process	Group
• Break out to View Maps of Potential Treatment Areas	-----
• Convene for Discussion Regarding Potential Treatment Areas	Group

## Community Perspective, Multi-Party Groups, & Public Participation

- The intent of this project is to treat lands in a way that is ecologically appropriate.
- The success of the pilot is largely because of the role the community has played in the project planning, both past and current involvement efforts.
- There is a multi-party monitoring team established.
- A lot of what is going on now in the pilot (practices) are actions seen before; there are short- and long-term benefits.
- The pilot projects take a different approach to planning; managing for values (ecological approach) really changes how the project is laid out and implemented.
- There are non-agency members on the interdisciplinary planning team; Luke Ruediger (was also on the IDT for Pilot Joe), Tom Kurth (Thompson Creek resident), and George McKinley (SOSDC- now known as Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative).

## Fuels Reduction & Grant Opportunities

- Brett Fillis, of the Applegate Fire District, encouraged local residents to perform fire reduction maintenance on their private lands.
- In the last issue of the Applegator there was an article that there may be an opportunity to treat larger acreage on private lands; that funding was already allocated, but another effort is underway to secure funding.
- There is a new grant application being processed that would provide funding for approx. 300 acres in the mid-Applegate area to be treated (stay tuned).
- If you are interested, the fire department is available to come out to your house/property to assess your risk and provide solutions for reducing that risk.
- The National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) currently has funding available for residents in the Thompson Creek area, among other areas, to reduce hazardous fuels on their private property.
- Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) also has some funding available for treating smaller areas of private land (1-2 acres).

### **Secretary's Message & the Medford Pilot**

- The Secretary of the Interior visited southern Oregon yesterday; he visited the Pilot Joe project area (Phase 1 of the Middle Applegate Pilot Project). On his visit he was able to see active harvesting and meet with logger, Ed Hanscom.
- The Secretary's main message was that he was here to see the pilot, he liked what he saw, and he wants to see more.
- At the town hall meeting, he announced there will be a new resource management plan (RMP) planning effort for the 6 Western Oregon Districts beginning very soon, and the Pilot Joe shows promise in providing a balance between jobs and conservation. The Secretary was not specific on the influence of the pilots on the next round of RMP planning, but presumably the experiences of the pilot will have a role. He expanded the Pilot effort to 5 new projects over the next 12 to 18 months.

The following sections were covered as a PowerPoint presentation (posted to the web separately).

#### **Pilot Overview & the Path Forward**

#### **Late-Successional Emphasis Areas (LSEAs) Development**

#### **Vegetative Condition and Restoration Needs Identification Process**

### **General Q & A about the process and discussion regarding Potential Treatment Areas**

- Q: How would non-endangered species such as deer, grouse, and squirrels be impacted by this project?

A: The main focus of the LSEA development process is driven by our need to protect endangered species and their habitat. We do not usually discuss the effects to species

that are not at risk; however, the principles that drive this project are complimentary to creating/enhancing habitat for species such as deer, grouse, and squirrels.

- Q: Do private lands get accounted for in the calculation for setting aside a 1/3 of the landscape for LSEAs?

A: No, about 1/3 of BLM lands in the project area get set aside as LSEAs.

- Comment: "I appreciate the approach BLM is taking to review the needs on the landscape."

- Q: Pilot Joe's success was largely due to the fact that no new roads were proposed; will there be roads proposed under the Pilot Thompson project? What about OHV issues?

A: The pilot ID team has made the decision that stands which are more than ¼ mile from a road are not a high priority for treatment, and therefore such stands are not a high priority for access via new road construction. The goal with the transportation system in the planning area is not to create more problems, but to deal with the existing ones. A multiparty transportation group has been established to increase transparency in road management decisions for the Pilot, and is seeking community ownership in the transportation system by providing collaborative opportunity to assess transportation system and needs.

- Q: How many acres are proposed for commercial treatment, the other 2/3 of the landscape?

A: No, referring back to the section of the presentation on "Vegetative Condition and Restoration Needs Identification Process," there are many screens and factors that play into whether an area needs to be treated. At this time, there is about 1850 acres identified that could benefit from commercial-type treatments; the entire planning area (by watershed) contains over 14,000 acres of BLM lands.

- Comment: Don't biomass the forest and send it to China. Concern over the possibility that high demand from China will cause us to have an aggressive program of cutting all small material in the forest.

Response: The cost for BLM to remove small diameter is 5x higher than the value of the product (trees).

- Comment: Norm & Jerry discuss in their report (p.31) potential shrub response to thinning treatments. Concern that forests in the Applegate will be too heavily thinned, triggering a large shrub response to the over opening of the canopy.

- Q: Is it possible for BLM to test the shrub response? Can you over thin a stand that can then become a problem in the future regarding fuel loading? How can we look at this issue?

A: yes, this will be considered and analyzed in the EA. In addition, the multiparty monitoring team could incorporate this question into their effort, if they haven't already.

- Q: Rather than burning all the slash on site, will there be firewood opportunities?

A: Yes.

- Q: Is Pilot Joe going to get an after treatment?

A: Yes. Logging slash and small diameter will be treated.

- Q: Why does slash always need to be burned?

A: It doesn't. The intent is to leave a certain amount of needed coarse woody debris and downed wood for habitat values, then depending on the amount of slash created and the fire risk is posing, it can be lopped and scattered or it needs to be hauled off site or burned. The intent is to review units post-harvesting to determine what type of non-commercial treatments can be utilized. This will be occurring with the Pilot Joe project very soon.

- Q: What is BLM intending to do in plantations?
- A: Norm and Jerry have provided direction on how to treat younger stands; no gaps would be created but skips would be incorporated into the prescription.
- There was a suggestion that photos of what we want the forest to look like at the end would be helpful; show pictures of completed treatments.
- Plant association driven prescriptions with consideration of understory/shrub response to the treatment. Consider not burning in places where high likelihood of shrubs will occur.

**Comment forms were provided for anyone who was not able to get their question or comment heard; they can be returned to Stephanie Kelleher, Ashland Resource Area Planning, 3040 Biddle Rd. Medford, OR 97504 or by email to [skellehe@blm.gov](mailto:skellehe@blm.gov).**

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## Project Timeline and Upcoming Events

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<b>September 30, 2011</b>	Begin Scoping (NEPA) for Pilot Thompson project (Phase 2 of Pilot)
<b>October 25</b>	Public Open House introducing the Pilot
<b>November 9</b>	Public field trip to view potential treatment areas
<b>February 22, 2012</b>	Public Meeting/Open House to present preliminary proposed treatment areas
February – March*	Field trips to view Pilot Joe (Phase 1 of Pilot) Harvesting Operations.
April 2 **	Proposed Action available for Public Review (2 <sup>nd</sup> Scoping)
June - August TBD **	Public field trips to proposed treatments areas and review of project tree marking
August ** response/review	Publish Environmental Assessment, available for public
December **	Advertise contracts to implement 2013 Pilot projects

\* View the handout, *Public Participation Calendar, 2011-2012 (UPDATED VERSION)*, for exact dates of field trips.

\*\* Tentative dates - subject to change (sign-up in back to stay informed of changes or go to the Pilot's website at <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/medford/forestrypilot>)