

Pilot Thompson IDT Meeting  
January 24, 2012

**Attendees:** Stephanie Kelleher, John Gerritsma, Mike Appling, Greg Chandler, Nate Goodwine, Armand Rebischke, Kristi Mastrofini, Jen Smith, Jason Reilly, Mike Derrig, Tom Kurth, Blair Moody, Dennis Byrd, Luke Ruediger, George McKinley, Craig Brown, John McNeel, Chamise Kramer (notetaker)

### **Review of Timeline**

- Stephanie discussed that the new timeline was created based on having a September wildlife consultation timeline (with a BO date in December 2012). It's tentative, in the event that consultation can't be pushed back from the current June consultation date.
- Preliminary units are needed to get botany survey requests in by Armand's mid-February deadline.  
\*Armand mentioned that he will need to consult if entering areas that would still need 2<sup>nd</sup> year surveys. Will keep Stephanie informed.
- Fisheries are hoping to consult on July 1<sup>st</sup>, if needed.
- Specialist input is due July 1<sup>st</sup> (Hydro/Fish June 1<sup>st</sup> to meet consultation, if needed)
- The public input dates are estimates, could change based on the shifting of other deadlines, but a 2<sup>nd</sup> scoping period is projected to occur in March and will include at least one public meeting. More field trips would occur during the EA review period this summer.

### **LSEAs**

- Jason Reilly presented a PowerPoint slide show on how he developed the LSEAs. Stephanie will make sure it is available both online and to specialists (and will likely be presented during an upcoming public meeting).
- John G. presented the following two talking points:
  1. What kind of treatment opportunities exist in the LSEAs (if needed, and what would enhancement look like?)
  2. Are there opportunities in riparian reserves to enhance/treat areas?

### **DISCUSSION**

- Jason R. emphasized it is unlikely that there is a need to treat within LSEA's, because of their design:
  - a) Pockets of density are isolated and don't lend themselves to treatment.
  - b) How they're designed (for the benefit of NSO) makes the idea of entering for treatment-purposes less desirable, based on legal limitations, timelines of necessary surveys, fire danger, etc.
  - c) Norm and Jerry, thus far, lack a prescription to treat within the LSEAs.
- Luke R. pointed out that proposing action within LSEA's would likely be difficult for the public to agree with based on the current prescription and the methodology that has been presented to them thus far.

- If treatment in the LSEAs is something that would maybe be pursued in the future, this is a great opportunity and reason to do long-term monitoring.
- Nate G. also presented on how/where units were decided upon. Will make map available for IDT to review and provide further input (due prior to Feb. 1 – see below).

### SURVEYS

- Areas for surveys need to be narrowed down by **Feb 1<sup>st</sup>** to allow for contract time. There may be a little (i.e. a couple of weeks - **latest Feb.17<sup>th</sup>**) wiggle room on this to firm up a good unit proposal, but you need to communicate with Armand.
  - a) Greg C. expressed concern that we should also narrow down the potential areas of survey to what is needed to keep cost down (i.e. don't survey more than necessary).
  - b) Botany surveys cost around \$8.00(ish)/acre for 1<sup>st</sup> year, \$4-5(ish)/acre for 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Wildlife surveys cost more.
  - c) There was discussion of doing economic assessments up front, since contract mods are not simple given not only the process, but the workloads people are operating under.
- Scoping and public meetings will further narrow down the proposed treatment areas, so what is put in for surveys may be more than we treat. Ideally we will have time to mod out some units post-scoping and before the survey work gets completed to minimize unnecessary cost.

### HELICOPTER LOGGING

- Where in the project priorities do the helicopter units fit? Need to revisit those priorities as defined in the first Pilot phase.
  - a) BLM can filter down areas of helicopter logging to determine feasibility, but areas shouldn't be eliminated entirely to allow for future opportunities. Multiple DRs can be done to account for surveys, market shifts, etc.
- John G. mentioned there is potential for exploring stewardship helicopter logging with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), but is unsure at this point. Something to keep in mind though.
- Blair M. also pointed out that something to keep in mind with areas of lower volume estimates that Swanson is the only company that runs small ships, and even then the cost might not pan out. Also, the cost for subsidizing is huge, and would not make economic sense.
- There was discussion of using road building to access portions of units that are being considered for helicopter logging, where feasible. Nate G. pointed out that while we can do that, it may compromise future sales within those areas.
- Logging systems need to be reviewed in helicopter units for other potential opportunities. John G. will check with Darren at TNC about timelines---helicopter arrival at their project corresponding with the timing of the Pilot implementation, etc.

### TRANSPORTATION GROUP/ROADS

- John G. reviewed what the group discussed in their last meeting, stating that the purpose of the group is to look at Pilot phase2 area and assess the correct size of road system. Evaluated based on:
 

○ Road Types	○ Maintenance levels
○ Surface	○ Closures (existing)
○ Veg types	○ riparian areas

- Discussed how to deal with issues regarding:
  - 1995 and 2008 RMPs
  - WQRP and road densities/impacts
  - 9 Mile fish values
  - Non-system road the area
  - Steep roads
  - Private land cooperation
- Fixing vs. obliterating/removing, and/or limiting road construction to temporary construction only
- Discussed the costs of road obliteration vs. maintenance, and how part of that cost is dependent on several variables (stream-related issues, etc).
- OHV trails in Ferris Gulch Area need to be considered with regard to how our actions affect OHV use, or even non-motorized use.
- Local Fire Dept. and ODF should be involved with this group from here on.
- Road Density:
  - a) Varies throughout the area, but is as high as 4-5 miles in some sections.
  - b) Mike D.'s overall impression is that there is little storm proof work needed; however, there is a need to do maintenance in many areas.
  - c) George M. reminded that the list of public wants/needs/desires is large in relation to BLM's budget...just a reminder.
  - d) The Transportation Group could present at a public meeting to summarize their findings.

### **SCOPING**

- Issues seem to be the same in in Pilot 1, with a few extras (A summary of public comments was handed out).
- Stephanie made sure everyone got the comments, so make sure you read them if you haven't already.
- There have been lots of comments submitted that don't address the purpose and need, which Stephanie will address in the EA.

### **OTHER**

- Nate and Stephanie discussed that Grants Pass RA is proposing an integrative veg. management project in the Williams area adjacent to the Pilot project area.
- GPRA can't get to a unit due to road issues, and surveys are completed. They are willing to hand it over to Ashland RA, which would involve some mention of a whole new HUC7 in analysis. Mike D. mentioned that it does increase the complexity hydrologically, but it can be done.
- Specialists will need to consider the Williams side IVM project in their cumulative effects analysis as appropriate (resource and issue dependent).
- Their consultation package is due on Friday, and the decision is that they (GPRA) will include it in that package, and we will use the resulting decision.

# **Pilot Thompson Project Relevant Issues**

*(Identified during 1st Scoping Period –September/October 2011)*

## **Contracting/Project Implementation**

- Use stewardship contracts that work to offset costs of important restoration work.
- Balance economic and environmental needs
- Consider helicopter logging
- Utilize low impact, innovative logging systems

## **Economics**

- Address how the application of F/J ecological principles will provide jobs, promote economic growth, and generate revenues for the benefit of O&C Counties on a sustainable basis.

## **Forest Health and Stand Density**

- Manage for Forest Health and Resiliency
- Focus thinning treatments in areas that most need it (tree plantations, WUI, dense poles encroaching on dry pine sites and ridge tops)
- No harvesting of large trees
- Include commercial treatments in mature timber

## **Wildfire and Fuel Hazard**

- Wildfire Prevention
- Burning slash piles – minimize mortality of surrounding trees.

## **Wildlife and Special Status Animal Species**

- Maintain connectivity for wildlife
- Protect old growth, retain habitat for old growth dependent species (NSO)
- Consider deer, elk, and other non-ESA species , improve their habitat by considering restoration of early-seral stage habitat and vegetation that provides forage for elk, deer, and other wildlife.
- Apply Survey & Manage exemption criteria, including legacy tree exemption and the dry forest restoration exemptions.

### **Special Status Plant Species**

- Protect special status plants from project-related activities through buffers and/or seasonal restrictions appropriate to the species in question.

### **Invasive, non-native Plants**

- Soil disturbance and vehicular travel can facilitate the spread of non-native weed species.

### **Aquatic Systems: Hydrology, Water Quality, and Fish**

- Maintain use of riparian buffers (preserve riparian areas)
- Protect clean water and fish habitat (Coho salmon) from sediment pollution
- Include commercial treatments in riparian areas

### **Transportation System**

- No new road construction
- Use existing roads and decommission post-project.
- Maintain Road Access for the Public (not related to Timber Sale)
- Remove unneeded, problematic logging roads (seek out opportunities for road decommissioning).

### **OHV**

- Concern that there is undue resource damage associated with OHV activity in the Ferris Gulch area – decommission roads not needed to minimize impacts

### **Soils**

- Concerned about Impacts from logging on dry, rocky soil

### **Safety**

- Logging trucks, especially when driving too fast, pose a safety risk to others using the road.

### **Cumulative Effects**

- Consider the effects of past, ongoing, and reasonably foreseeable projects in the area.

Additional comments were received that did not meet the purpose and need for the project. BLM received requests to analyze a range of alternatives that would;

- (1) Compare the application of N/J principles against other forest management strategies,
- (2) impose only fire and no thinning as a restoration method,
- (3) place a 16-inch diameter limit,
- (4) Girdle and kill or fell and leave on site live trees over 16" dbh, rather than remove and sell, to actively recruit more large snags and downed log structure for wildlife,
- (5) replicate and evaluate the ecological principles applied to the project for all dry forest O&C lands.

The intent of this project is NOT to compare treatment methods, but to demonstrate one type of treatment method, the application of N/J principles. The BLM has also identified additional objectives for the pilot project, which are to provide commercially-viable timber sales that provide jobs in local communities from forest management, logging, and wood processing and provide additional employment from stewardship or service contracting, and to gauge the degree to which active forest management, with a focus on ecosystem restoration, has a broader base of social acceptance than traditional management practices. The alternatives listed above would not meet all of these objectives and have therefore been eliminated from detailed analysis (to be discussed in considered but eliminated section of the EA).

Consideration must also be given to how these alternatives would affect the application of F/J dry forest restoration goals, which are to:

- Conserve and improve survivability of older trees (trees >150 years of age) by reducing nearby fuels and competing vegetation.
- Increase resistance/resilience of forest stands and landscape to wildfire, drought, insects, etc. by reducing stand densities, ladder fuels, and shifted tree species diversity.
- Restore more sustainable structure and composition by reducing stand densities and enhancing tree diversity, including hardwoods, and desirable understory species.
- Accelerate development of structural complexity such as larger tree structures and decadence.
- Develop spatial heterogeneity within stands (e.g. fine-scale structural mosaic).
- Create conditions that are favorable for the initiation, creation, and retention of snags, down wood, large vigorous hardwoods, and understory vegetation diversity in areas where these are lacking
- Contribute to fulfilling the intent of the Endangered Species Act by conserving ecosystems upon which species depend and incorporating elements of active management proposed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in the draft revised Recovery Plan for the Northern Spotted Owl.