

Meeting Notes
Roseburg District Collaborative Forestry Initiative
Wednesday, April 14, 2010
6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
Roseburg BLM District Office, 777 NW Garden Valley Blvd

Attendees

Members of the Public Attending:

Cindy Haws, Dennis Morgan, Don Hardwick, Doug Heiken, Francis Eatherington, Jake Ritter, Janice Reid, Joseph Patrick Quinn, Ken Carloni, Laura Long, Liz Reich, MA Hansen, Mary Oleri, Melvin Thornton, Mike Bormuth, Pat Skrip, Patrick Starnes, Richard M. Chasm, Rick Sparks, Ron Yockim, Stan Martindale, Stan Vejtasa, Stanley Petrowski, Steve Erickson, Thomas McGregor, Wendy Wong-Haigh

BLM Employees Attending:

Jay Carlson, Craig Kintop, Meagan Conry, Jake Winn, Lisa Renan, Abe Wheeler, Liz Gayner, Rex McGraw, Ward Fong, Bob Hall, Jonas Parker, Kristen Thompson, Susan Carter

US Fish and Wildlife Service Employees Attending:

Jim Thraikill

Facilitator

Karen Bolda

Welcome and Opening Remarks —Jay Carlson

Jay Carlson welcomed the attendees and then made the following remarks:

- This is a two-stage process. (1) First we are looking at two specific projects—one in a wet and one in a dry site. (2) After that we will scale up to broader landscape look.
- We have had indoor sessions, breakout sessions, field trips—all to accommodate different learning styles.
- Tonight I have asked you to frame what kind of issues we should consider in the dry site.
- No action is a perfectly reasonable alternative. If this is what you favor, then help us to understand why.

- Action alternatives, of course, are also useful. We want to hear about the pieces and parts that we can use to build representative alternatives.

Meeting Ground Rules—Karen Bolda

Karen asked all attendees to introduce themselves and then reaffirmed the following list of meeting agreements from previous meetings:

- Cell phones silent or turned off
- Raise hands before speaking
- Address the issue and not the person
- Limit comments to 3 minutes (as decided by the attendees)
- No side conversations

Input on Dry Site Alternatives—all attendees

Jay Carlson asked the audience to help answer four questions (the same as those asked at previous meetings regarding the wet site). He provided all attendees with a list of questions to help guide the input:

1. How would you create/enhance structural components of suitable habitat for spotted owls and marbled murrelets?
2. What would you do to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire?
3. How would you manage the near-stream forest stands?
4. How would you provide for timber volume in an economically viable way?

Question #1: How would you create/enhance structural components of suitable habitat for spotted owls and marbled murrelets?

Patrick Starnes: On the trip on Saturday you mentioned a no-action alternative vs. a regeneration harvest. Is a regen on the table, and how would it satisfy the three goals?

Jay Carlson: Anything within the bounds of the Northwest Forest Plan is fair game. A regen harvest would have a hard time meeting the goals. On the other hand, the no-action alternative does not meet our economic goal.

Patrick Starnes: It seems like the stand [the stand the group visited in the Major Glasco Project area] met the habitat needs already.

Jake Ritter: Maybe you should try to enhance the prey. Wood rats like ceanothus; could this species be introduced?

Stan Vejtasa: I was taken by the dry site. I didn't see a fire risk. Also, dry sites respond very slowly. I felt that Major Glasco shouldn't be treated. I found it hard to believe that it could be improved. I would advocate harvest along the road for volume and fuels.

Frances Eatherington: Why aren't we going into thinning sales instead of Major Glasco? I haven't seen a Pacific Gas Pipeline map. I would like to see that and would like to see it discussed.

Krisann Kosel: It [the proposed Pacific Gas Connector Pipeline] does go through the project area for a small distance.

Frances Eatherington: I support no action. We can't improve on God. She's doing a great job there. I would like to look elsewhere.

Jay: We are not going to areas already analyzed and scoped. We withdrew Major Glasco and therefore are using it.

Pat Quinn: I didn't know what to expect [on the field trip]. It looked like nice forest to me—the only natural forest in the area. I was disappointed that the timber industry wasn't there. The term "bimodal age class" made sense to me. In the 1980s, the BLM says that there was no money for precommercial thinning. Sustained yield forestry is a bust. In Major Glasco, I would say no action.

Melvin Thornton: In this area [around Myrtle and Days Creek] you don't have to look far to see what will happen to habitat. There is lots of lightning in the area, and, therefore, we will have a repeat of a Bland Mountain type fire. I would like to see a prescription to minimize fuel loading to help us control a fire.

Mike Bormuth: On Friday I visited the stand. It is growing slowly and probably isn't natural. If you do any kind of activity, even spaced thinning, for example, will lead to limb damage to other trees. It's a rare good opportunity for the BLM to create openings. This would increase the amount of edges, and edge effect increases habitat for wildlife and prey species. This would make operation more economical as well.

Doug Heiken: Enhancing owl habitat. The underlying purpose there is ungrounded because of the unlikelihood of a fire. We can reduce risk for a community by treating young stands in the area.

Wendy Wong-Haigh: I live right by Major Glasco. We haven't had a fire. I do hear owls and other wildlife in the area. The cuts in this area would affect me and my neighbors. I think that these forests are healthy and not overgrown. I would like the BLM to focus on other areas.

Cindy Haws: I have years of experience in this area. This stand is very good for northern spotted owls. The only alternative that would meet the goal is no action. Bland Mountain started with a tractor surrounded by young stands. This area itself is a great place for a fire to go through. Its structural components are not a fire risk. With the fuel break, create it in the young forest.

Dennis Morgan: When we stopped to see a red tree vole nest, I saw trees that weren't growing; it seems like we could cut these, especially if this would help with beetles. I would also like to see a non-road option.

Question #2. What would you do to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire?

Richard Chasm. Catastrophic wildfire, what does this mean, and is it practical?

Ken Carloni: In this stand, the biggest danger is the fuel all around this site in the plantations. When Native Americans burned, stands were abundant. Now, stands like this are rare.

Pat Skrip: Bland Mountain has burned two times. The first time, lots of old growth burned. Also, it was not the worst day of the year. The second fire burned through lots of regen, but it was during a mild year. On this sites, without management, the risk of reintroducing fire is high to the adjacent land owners. In addition, we would need good places to anchor [a fire fighting effort] from.

Doug Heiken: Regarding the risk of fire to habitat vs. community, it's not a risk to habitat. Instead it is a mechanism to help create habitat features. (2) In communities, we need to remove fuels within 200 feet of structures. The landscape stuff is virtually meaningless because it is such a small part of overall risk.

Patrick Starnes: Up on the ridge [during the field tour] we saw an open stand. It's arguable that this is where fire would reoccur. It's a stretch to say that this is a priority. Finally, regarding escape routes along road, up in the tiller area, we have come up with a neighbors' alternative, where the neighbors would help do the work.

Pat Quinn: We seem to be saying "what responsibility does this site have to the surrounding areas?" We should turn this around.

Cindy Haws: Regarding Bland Mountain #1 [fire], we might have different impressions of what is old growth. The stands were young and needed treatment. These stands influence fire on a landscape. Fire is a mechanism that creates habitat elements—like the prey base. It hasn't

benefitted from the biomass removal. The modeling wasn't accurately reflecting the risk in that stand and was also considering worst case scenarios. Maintaining fire treatments is very costly.

Melvin Thornton: We can have all different beliefs. When talking about fire, don't think that we don't see fire as a tool. When I walked through this area I saw evidence that there was probably a fire in the 1930s. Typically when we get enough fuel, a stand replacement fire is common. Lightening comes in the summer and starts fires. We can keep them small, but not if we don't do treatment.

Stan Vejtasa: In the Tiller Complex [2002] 80 percent of the area was classified as a low severity burn. Just over 150 acres were classified as stand replacing. This is a very small percentage.

Dennis Morgan: A road treatment 50 feet on either side would be OK. [When designing a fire break] In old growth cut a swath around the old growth trees through the areas that have already been cut. Put any new roads in those younger forests. Finally, are home owners liable if they start a fire?

Melvin Thornton: If they are negligent, they can be 100 percent liable. If they are doing forest operations and are not negligent, then they may be partially liable.

Dennis Morgan: If people don't do the required things around their property, are they then liable?

Melvin Thornton: If in an area with multiple homes, then the owner needs to do specific things. If fire starts on they may be partially liable.

Mike Bormuth: We have kept fire down for at least as long as Major Glasco has been there. Fire now would be extreme because of fuel loading. That is why fire breaks make sense. We need a way to control the unnatural fires.

Thomas McGregor: If you do anything, do it along the roads. Within the units, only do things to restore the negative effects of the absence of fire.

Laura Long: The treatment area is like the center of a doughnut with surrounding areas not being treated. The treated areas won't influence these surrounding areas that are untreated. Also, how will the fuel treatments be maintained?

Emily Sands: We can get money for fuel treatments and maintenance.

Laura Long: Can you treat the surrounding areas?

Emily Sands: I met with Pat Skrip [of Douglas Forest Protective Association] and representatives from industry to work out a cooperative project. Industry is enthusiastic about this.

Laura Long: If we can go onto other lands to address fire risk, why don't we leave Major Glasco, where there is contention, behind.

Question #3: How would you manage the near stream forest stands?

Patrick Starnes: The draws had the big trees in them; therefore I would prefer the no action alternative, since those areas are fire proof.

Frances Eatherington: The question should be "How should we treat the riparian reserve?" It's about 180 feet wide in this area. This makes more sense. I would recommend no action within 180 feet in order to leave everything possible for the stream and on the site.

Stan Vejtasa: As dry as this area is, we has to look hard to find streams in Major Glasco.

Richard Chasm: Dry sites do have wet spots. I don't want an arbitrary number [for a buffer width]. We should look at each site for what it is. We shouldn't be hasty with decisions and should monitor our actions. This is a place near rural residents, and water is important. That said, you could take timber in some of the [near stream] areas.

Doug Heiken: The PNW brochure shows the value of headwater areas for some species, salamanders for example. They even allow some species to move from one watershed to another. We should keep this in mind when designing fuel breaks.

Cindy Haws: Yes the Northwest Forest Plan intended this in headwaters. Certain species travel through these habitats during their life cycle.

Richard Chasm: As a tree planter I noticed that these are the headwall areas that fail.

Patrick Starnes: In looking at the area around the project area, I noticed willows along the roads near the ridges. Doesn't this almost disqualify the area from being a dry site?

Jonas Parker: We see quite a bit of willow along road cuts.

Susan Carter: In addition, these could be upland willows.

Question #4: How would you provide for timber volume in an economically viable way?

Stan Petrowski: What would be the minimal volume that would be economically viable?

Don Hardwick: That depends on the system being used, the design of the harvest, and other things.

Stan Petrowski: Question #4 says "substantial" volume. That's more the issue.

Mike Bormuth: If you want to return money [to the county] then you have to get past scratching on the surface.

Richard Chasm: To be economically viable on my land, we need at least 50,000 board feet. This is important. The BLM ought to think more like a small woodland owner by looking at long term contracts with people—especially those who are very local. Why is the government selling timber when prices are down—especially if they are doing it for the money? Long-term stewardship contracts are the way to go. We don't look at long term and stewardship management enough.

Patrick Starnes: What is the range of volume for economic viability?

Stan Martindale: If you're moving a cable system in then 50,000 mbf not worth doing.

Pat Quinn: In major Glasco, would anything short of a regeneration harvest pay for itself?

Several People: Yes

Frances Eatherington: That question leads us down the wrong road. Aren't we also considering social benefits? Some things are economical when it comes to ecological services. We can address fire issue around homes. That would be the economic benefit. The county won't lose money because of the Secure Rural Schools legislation. Stewardship is the way to implement this.

Doug Heiken: Major Glasco can't be improved by commercial logging. I want to see it contribute to storage of carbon and other things. There are other stands where we can meet commodity production goals.

Cindy Haws: We need to consider short term versus long term economic viability. Doing something will cost us by increasing the risk of fire hazard, reducing property values, and other aspects of forest management. Right here right now the payments to counties [from timber receipts] are severed anyway. Carbon sequestration is a very important piece. That [Major Glasco] is also a major water storage site.

Dennis Morgan: If you did thinning, 10 percent or so every 10 to 20 years, you could get quite a bit of volume and capture the growth.

Frances Eatherington: There are lots of young stands in the area that would seem to be viable.

Mike Bormuth: There are two sets of costs: more size helps to spread the fixed cost and bigger trees help with viability. More and bigger pieces increase economic return.

Stan Petrowski: I can't see an economic extraction of wood out of there [Major Glasco] because we are looking at a three-legged stool. How could any profit be made taking out smaller wood?

Wendy Wong-Haigh: To make this economically feasible, can people put up money to protect a stand? I would like the BLM to do this.

Cindy Haws: Private lands don't pay severity taxes.

Richard Chasm: The Roseburg District name shows an urban focus of management. Decisions here have a deep effect on folks in small communities, where the BLM ground is. BLM should do more to reach out to the small communities and work in partnership with them. Right now, it [the BLM] is a black hole.

Closing Remarks—Jay

Jay made the following observation and posed a question to the group: I heard a big push to go to the landscape scale. Some ideas are already out there. Do people want to continue with the meeting scheduled on April 21 to review analytical methods or would you prefer to start looking at a landscape scale?

A discussion followed regarding the direction of the collaborative initiative. Some attendees expressed a strong interest in moving to a landscape scale—phase II of this process as originally planned. In the end, Jay agreed to begin discussing landscape scale issues at the next meeting instead of addressing analytical methods for phase I as originally planned.

Meeting Adjourned