



Report on the Post-Fire Recovery Workshop

1/30/14, Canyonville

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This document reports on a day-long workshop facilitated by Theresa Jensen and Jon Lange of Oregon Consensus on behalf of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). We first identify the goals of the workshop and follow that with the agenda. These sections are followed by the participant list, an edited version of the notes from the day, and a summary of the outcomes.

Goals:

- Build understanding of the dilemmas the BLM faces as it attempts to balance sometimes-competing issues such as long-term habitat restoration, protection from future fire, minimizing short-term impacts, safety considerations, private land concerns and economic recovery
- Seek stakeholder input about those dilemmas
- Enable stakeholders to learn from each other
- Learn about possible common ground.

Agenda for the day:

- Facilitator-led opening: introductions, goals, ground rules, agenda review
- BLM Presentations/Participant Questions. Topics included:
 - Roads & Road Safety
 - Fire Planning
 - Potential Unit for Salvage
 - Riparian/Watershed Issues
 - Habitat
- Layered Issues in Douglas Complex: Matrix and LSR

- The BLM Field Managers presented information about a GIS-layered specific piece of ground that included both LSR and Matrix areas, in order to show the dilemmas the BLM faces, including all the different constituent interests as well as some of the legal requirements/constraints, discussed layer by layer.
- Small Group Work
 - Two groups of *mixed interests* discussed:
 - *How would you approach the various dilemmas presented by this multi-layered scenario? What would you prioritize?*

WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

A sign-up sheet that was passed out at the beginning of the day had the following names. (Some BLM personnel did not sign up and so there are a few agency names missing from this list)

From the BLM: Dayne Barron, Mary Smelcer, Abbie Jossie , Allen Bollschweiler, Steve Lydick, Chris Foster, James Whittington, Cheyne Rossbach, Emily Sands, Krissan Krosel, as well as several more.

Doug Heiken, Oregon Wild
 Pat Quinn, Umpqua Watersheds
 Stan Vejtasa, Audubon Society
 Doug Breidenthal, Jackson County Commissioner
 Andy Geissler, American Forest Resource Council
 Melvin Thornton, Douglas Fire Protection Agency
 Pat Skrip, Douglas Fire Protection Agency
 Phil Adams, Roseburg Forest Products
 Javier Goirgolzarri, Communities for Healthy Forests
 Sue Kupillis, Communities for Healthy Forests
 Lee Patterson, Communities for Healthy Forests
 Jim Thrailkill, USFWS
 Cindy Donegan, USFWS
 Jack Swift, Southern Oregon Resource Alliance
 Bill Eriel, Grants Pass Realtor
 Cameron Krauss, Swanson Group

WORKSHOP NOTES

The following notes were taken by different people, including the facilitators and some BLM personnel (for the two small groups). Theresa and Jon edited the notes in an attempt to clarify participant comments. While some of the notes are still difficult to understand without comment, most are clear and provide a good idea of participant comments and questions. A summary of the information presented by the BLM (prior to these comments) may be found in other BLM documents.

Large Group Clarifying Questions and Comments in reaction to the BLM Presentations and Layered Issues

Landscape on Rabbit Mtn – high/medium intensity fire. You see habitat... adjacent private owners see a landscape that scares us to death. I see future fire risk because our neighbor has huge, massive amounts of dead trees. Does the BLM see there are too many dead trees that also risk your habitat in the event of fire; do you see the need in that specific area?

USFWS: It is inevitable that salvage will happen. Salvage is not just economic recovery; it's a tool to reduce fuel loads in a post fire catastrophic event to prevent future fires. Goal is looking for beneficial impact over time. Emphasize roadsides, matrix, outside CHU, for salvage.

In riparian areas, the felled trees should stay, and then using contour falling and falling towards stream to meet standards. We won't have new trees in riparian areas for the next 50 years. Vast majority of large trees including snags will be left for future wood. (To meet goals & objectives)

Replanting in riparian areas: what species? BLM: Same species as what was on site. Conservation community: We would like to see early seral species there too. BLM: Our intent is to plant mixed species in variable densities.

Hazard trees along roads: 2 ½ tree height above roads and 1 ½ tree height below roads – not every tree will be felled – but that is the area in which we'll look for hazard trees – that defines the area. This can also vary by slope.

Roads: is there an opportunity to close roads? (BLM: Those not being used/needed, BLM would notify counties when closure is proposed. This could be done through gates, blockades or decommissioning.)

CHU – Kalmiopsis is not shown as included since the USFWS said Wilderness already meets the intent of ESA, so didn't show on CHU designation.

Small Group Flipchart Notes in Response to the Questions:

- 1 *How would you approach the various dilemmas presented by this multilayered scenario?*
- 2 *What would you prioritize?*

Group 1

LSR:

- Inventory LSRs
- Manage for LSR characteristics
- Natural versus active management. Look at how to grow LSR habitat the quickest.
- Consider variable stand ages, wood rat demography, impacts to soil, future fire fighter suppression hazards, future fire severity potential, LSR assessment with consideration of fuels per acres
- Replant with wider spacing
- Use a stand specific approach
- Remove high mortality stands
- Reassess for low mortality stands
- Economic recovery is not an objective in LSRs
- Strategically compartmentalize the area with considerations of resource concerns (soils, owls, future fire)
- Assess risk of future fire potential and reduce. Consider values, exposure (i.e. railroad)
- Let BLM be creative with a variety of approaches)

Matrix:

- Connectivity – maintain 25% late successional stands
- O&C Act
- ESA Act
- Salvage log, but reduce impacts to soils
- Consider utilizing returns from salvage towards restoration opportunities elsewhere in the area
- Recover burnt timber and reforest as per matrix objectives
- Provide viable access to roads

Group 2

LSR:

- Even aged monoculture is more prone to fire
- Stands that are heavily managed in the long term would be less risk of fire
- By leaving brush we get more of a dead fuel component over time. If it's not treated, risk of fire is higher
- We should allow fire back into the ecosystem
- We are trying to get back to a point that fire is reintroduced
- We need to understand the economic implications of fire suppression

- Are we looking for a harmonic balance? We need to provide for fire safety first
- Can we look at treating sections of the burned area to leave some for wildlife but treating some of the areas with hotter burn? If replanting is not done in hot burn areas, there is no effective seed set available
- The majority of fires that ran were on BLM. Fires with heavy fuel loadings were more stubborn
- Concern around compartmentalization – at what scale would it be done? You may want to compartmentalize in the LSR
- First priority is Road Safety; second is fuel breaks. Then replant. If you don't remove some material you will not have these areas on a *trajectory to become habitat*
- How do we plan for future fire preparedness? Firelines, ridge tops
- We have created unnatural conditions
- Planting should be able to happen without salvage
- We have good examples of salvage and replanting that are beautiful forests
- If you start with a young complex forest habitat you get old complex forest habitat
- Road safety is something that we can address. Not 2 ½ tree lengths
- Air Quality is a big issue. The Fed has an exclusion on air quality when fires happen (2.5p level)
- BAER report says the fire burned hotter in plantations.

Matrix:

- Look at long term effects of management
- Planting regimes can have long term impacts. Take into consideration long term impacts.
- If we will manage matrix and LSR for full canopy structure, what happens to early seral?
- Highest fire risk is in monoculture plantations, – Are we replicating the same pattern in the future? How about a buffer between plantations and old growth?
- Common interests – preventing future fire. Re-introducing prescribed burns is of interest
- A possible “sweet spot” – raising level of ecological function as a goal; possible diameter limit; “smart” or “strategic” ridge top treatments; variable density plantings; conventional harvest on existing roads (no new roads); leave plenty of snags; active Option management.

Large Group Flip Chart Notes

All participants gathered together for the last part of the workshop.

Discussion Regarding Future Scenarios Including Possible Litigation:

- Removing large trees may bring litigation
- Public values are social issues. Cannot be “my way or no way”

- If we agree that our goal is raising ecological function, then perhaps environmental community could agree
- Salvage logging on 20 inch or less diameter trees is reasonable to some—but not to the timber industry
- Landowner (RFP) may be willing to look at differing treatments, plantings – potential area for negotiation / common ground
- That private owners may be willing consider adjusting planting density along borders is a huge consideration for some representatives of the conservation community
- Snags – may depend on slope and position. One option: leave on lower 1/3 of slope, remove from ridge tops – if this would be part of a negotiated deal, we would look at that
- Diameter limit is still important
- Need to find room for complex early seral
- Classic conversation that two opposing groups get into - we don't get past threshold of sacred cows. No real negotiation space about different land use allocations.
- Strategic ridge top treatments, roadside treatments are of interest
- Would private owners be willing to consider thinking about different land use allocations on private land?
- Finding common ground to avoid litigation may be possible
 - 20 inch diameter limits won't get there.
 - Stop point for some groups is the LSR (i. e., no salvage in LSR)
 - Matrix is less contentious.
 - Young stands in LSR are not healthy.
- Private owners could identify specific areas and consider setting them aside to assist with providing connectivity
- Points of possible agreement/common ground: Get busy along roads. Variable retention harvest. Let's try to get out what we can get out (salvage in matrix).
- I/we want a collaborative.
- Fire potential is increasing--we want to see improvement in fire management
- We live in a productive forest. We want to see work done.
- The discussion surfaced differences in science related to causes of fire: does it start in snags or in mono-culture plantations? It may be important to address this issue.

Final suggestions for the BLM from the group:

- Consider heavy willow and alder planting to address water issues. Include in RX
- Keep a landscape perspective – managing across the landscape to include “what is not getting treated.”
- Remember adjacent landowners and their interests
- Fire risk – dead fuel loading, long term impacts of fire, both local and state (high suppression costs and social value)?
- Real problem: no action happening on the bulk of public lands
- How about a case study on a portion of the Douglas Complex to try out some of the concepts we discussed today?

SUMMARY

Though the total number of participants were fewer than ideal, we believe that the goals of the workshop were met, particularly when assessed in the context of the previous workshops and field trips (Fall, 2013) and the public meetings in early January.

1. *Informing the Public Toward Building Understanding:* In addition to the information from those earlier public meetings, the morning presentations informed participants about updates and draft ideas. The GIS layered issues presentation was particularly effective in conveying the dilemmas faced by the BLM. Some participants commented on how the BLM must obviously follow the laws, and asked that the BLM use treatments that are “stand specific,” blending all that they must with regard to safety, erosion, wildlife concerns, etc. Some of the participants asked that the BLM “be creative,” applying what they must do and what they know about constituent interests as they approach their task.
2. *Getting Stakeholder Input:* The earlier-listed “Notes” best exemplify the information that the BLM received. It is clear that there are competing interests represented. Taking it all in throughout the day, at the end one of the field managers said to the large group, “As I sort through all the information that goes into my decision-making, I will hear your voices.”
3. *Learning from each other:* This goal seems to have been accomplished as well as participants exchanged information previously not shared. A particularly compelling example, among many, includes the exchanges about future fire safety, regarding what must be salvaged and where, as well as what kinds of treatments yield what kinds of (fire resistant or fire prone) effects. In addition, this workshop included some high quality dialogue between some members of the timber industry and some from the conservation community. One private land-owner representative talked about the possibility of avoiding salvage logging within certain buffer zones next to BLM land, and even managing some parts of their lands with goals similar to Matrix and LSR areas, thereby demonstrating understanding of some environmentalist concerns. Though the continued discussion was only between two participants—in the main—people were considering how to achieve an ecological focus (while promoting active management for future fire prevention) and strategic salvage logging (toward that same end).
4. *Common ground:* Any common ground discussed repeated earlier-known overlap between constituents such as ensuring roadside safety and eliminating hazard trees; ensuring future fire fighter access; selected fire breaks; replanting in plantations and unhealthy forests; special care with riparian areas, etc.

For a more thorough treatment of the post-fire public processes with which Oregon Consensus was involved, please see the larger document by Jensen and Lange entitled “Report on Post-Fire Recovery Public Meetings-March 2014.”