

Collaborative Adaptive Management

Location: Swamp Creek, Enterprise, Oregon



Project Summary: A process was developed whereby the FS and other stakeholders could discuss and reach a common understanding on a variety of issues relating to the adaptive management of a cooperative restoration project and a grazing allotment.

Resource Challenge: In 2001, the FS and Wallowa Resources cosponsored a grant for the Swamp Creek Restoration Project to improve riparian areas, fish (steelhead) and wildlife habitat, and recreation and education opportunities, while maintaining grazing. By 2004, the parties involved were concerned the Swamp Creek Restoration Project was not fully achieving stated goals. However, various people had different ideas regarding the condition of Swamp Creek and the severity of grazing impacts. Although additional funding was available for phases two and three of the restoration project, there was disagreement on what the project goals actually were and how

best to achieve them. At the same time, the FS was nearing completion of a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Swamp Creek allotment management plan (AMP). One of the grazing alternatives focused on adaptive management. The FS and the Natural Resources Advisory Committee requested that the NRST help their interdisciplinary team and stakeholders reach a common understanding of specific riparian resource objectives, a management strategy to meet those objectives, and a short-, mid-, and long-term monitoring framework to inform future phases of the restoration project and guide adaptive management within the AMP.

Key Partners: FS, Natural Resources Advisory Committee, permittees, NRST and network members, Wallowa Resources, Oregon State University Extension, Nez Perce Tribe, Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration Fisheries Service, FWS, The Nature Conservancy, and the Grande Ronde Model Watershed.

Activities:

Prework: A situation assessment included a series of telephone discussions with diverse individuals who were directly associated with or concerned about the future management of Swamp Creek. This information was then used to design the workshop.

Creeks and Communities (C&C)

Workshop: A 3-day workshop was held, with 2 days in the field conducting PFC assessments as a group and discussing alternative management and monitoring options and 1 day inside documenting findings and identifying site objectives.

Followup: The group met again to finalize the site objectives and to spend time in the field with the FS

ecologist discussing site potential and how best to proceed with subsequent phases of the restoration project.

Outcomes: Regarding the restoration project, the group concluded that the system had a fair amount of stability as well as an upward trend and that the remaining project money would best be spent somewhere else in

the forest. To meet site objectives, some planting continued, but not as much. In terms of the AMP, the FS incorporated the assessment findings and objectives from the C&C workshop into the adaptive management alternative for the AMP, which withstood various appeals and litigation. The group's actions, including their decision to

cooperatively implement long-term monitoring of vegetation and channel characteristics in addition to the annual stubble height measurements, have helped them progress well in moving toward the objectives identified in 2004. Numerous monitoring efforts and projects have been completed on Swamp Creek since 2004 (appendix A).



“What was learned, agreed to, and set in motion for subsequent years is still talked about today and referenced in the current planning sessions and assessments.”

John Williams (March 2007)
Oregon State University