

John Day Snake RAC Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2019; Umatilla National Forest

Meeting convened at 12:12

Present: Larisa Bogardus, Greg Jackle, Jerry Brummer, Terry Drever Gee, Art Waugh, Shane Jeffries, Lisa Clark, Dennis Teitzel, Jim Reiss, Jim Boethin, Randy Jones, Dave Plummer, Ed Guzman, Don Gonzalez (DFO), Gus Gustafson, Shanda Dekome

Guests: MaryAnne Fleischman (GOB), Susie Koppert (rockhounding group), Jeanne Waugh

No quorum due to illness and waiting for members to be approved

Agenda adjustment – added talk on NEPA and being an effective commenter in place of the Deschutes National Forest Wilderness Fee Proposal (postponed until Feb. mtg).

Meeting minutes: change Dave Plummer note on June minutes to edit Anthony Lakes add to their rental program – not that they are the concessionaire.

Why do we do NEPA? See PPT

We need to take a hard look at environmental impacts, and make an informed decision AND document our thought process on why we went the way we did. In the process, public input is important because they know things we don't know and can keep us from making mistakes; the public gives us info we didn't know or a different way of doing things.

Whenever we do things, we need to disclose the impacts. When dealing with adjacent agencies, the Forest Service automatically has status with BLM projects; on the other hand, the BLM has to ask for status with FS projects to be seen as a cooperator. Tribes have their own special role – like a cooperator.

When it says take a hard look, what does "hard look" mean? It's out of the handbook. Means really think about it.

Scoping – this is something we often do right out of the gate. This helps us determine what we need to think about as we start a project. What are everyone's first thoughts about the project? What are the opportunities, what do people want? We use this information from our staff, partners, and the public to help us develop the NEPA and the alternatives we're going to consider.

Along the way, we have more opportunities to get input from the public and cooperators, and we take those comments and respond to them, and even adjust the NEPA.

Finally, when we make the decision, we consider those original issues and objectives and how well we did meeting them.

An environmental assessment is a shorter document (DOI has time limits of 180 days and 75 pages) and we can use this tool if there aren't going to be significant impacts that we can't mitigate. Scoping isn't required but we usually do it at least informally. There's also no minimum comment period if we do a comment period. We don't HAVE to respond to substantive comments – we consider them but we don't have to have a section in the document that says how we dealt with a comment.

With an environmental impact statement (EIS) we have to finish them in a year, and we use this type of document when we can't mitigate significant impacts or you know there will be significant impacts. We

are REQUIRED to do scoping because we need to give the public a heads up to get involved. There's a required 45 day comment period. We respond to comments in the final document.

Involving the public

1. Scoping – optional except on EIS; frequently done on EA.
2. Draft document – optional review on EA; required 45 days on EIS or 90 if RMP
3. Public Meetings- not required on EA; one required at draft review
4. Final document – not required on EA; required on EIS for 30 for EIS or 60 days is RMP
5. Decision – EA appeal in 30 days; appeal for 30 days or protest to director if its an RMP in 30 days.

We have an authority for smaller projects without impacts that are identified as being able to be completed using a Categorical Exclusion (called CX, Cat Ex, or CE). An example could be thinning under 70 acres, or doing some emergency repairs at a recreation site. These used to not be appealable, but the courts have told us that these are appealable now, so they're not a slam dunk.

The public can't appeal the Forest Service now – we're now going through an environmental analysis and decision making process called EADM. Emphasis is now to be efficient but the court may decide we were deficient on analysis... so it's a balance to be short and efficient but also thorough and smart about where we put our efforts. If we lose in court, we've lost our efforts. So we're starting out by focusing first on lower controversy project to make headway as we do this EADM.

What are substantive and useful comment?

Example: "contributing to human extinction" What do we do with this comment? It doesn't really give us anything to do. We need to be able to tie it to something you want or need us to do with the project – tell us what you want and why.

Non-substantive comments – don't make the document/analysis/project better.

- Votes don't count or help. "I want alternative A."
- Mass mailings, form letters, - these count as one.
- Simply agree or disagree with policy. Say why!
- Don't pertain to the project
- Comments that are vague and open-ended

When you're looking at one of our documents, start by getting the lay of the land. Read the cover and the flaps – get an idea of what's up. Then, do a broad-scale read. What are the main sections, how many alternatives? Is there a discussion of project design features? Are there appendices? What issues were analyzed?

If you have a neighboring project can you use the EA from the first one? Yes – if everything is the same. We call it a Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA); HOWEVER, if we knew about the first one in the first place, we would have at least considered it under cumulative impacts.

What do we do with the comments?

We categorize them by code so we can lump the same ones "in favor of Alt 3 because it protects tiny plants from damage by mice." This gives us groups to look at or assign to the right people to look at. And

remember when we give the public a due date, it's firm. Must at least be stamped by the post office as getting into the mail by the deadline.

Questions? Things to add?

On the notice requirements for documents are these posted in local papers? Most RAC members are busy and don't read the paper of record. Is there an opportunity for the BLM or FS to make a regular check of when a document is out for public comment and notify the RAC?

Yes. It's something done by each office – we have a “paper of record.” Some offices might have mailing lists for people interested in xx types of projects. We do try to send this via email if we can.

Would it help to get a gmail account for the RAC? Maybe, but it would also be good to have a list of the different places with the Forests and BLMs in this RAC that says where to write/email to get signed up for information about the various projects. In addition, each subgroup does have a chair – that chair could sign up for information and send it out when they get it. We can start with a gmail account and go from there. Larisa and Lisa will get that and create a list of where folks can sign up for mailings. Then group members can go out and sign up for what's interesting to them.

Lower Deschutes Fee Proposal – Jeff Kitchens (See PPT).

Review of past motions.

We get about \$700-800,000 from fees a year. Of this, \$200,000 goes to State Parks and the rest goes to BLM. The total cost to manage the river is close to \$1,000,000. Funding comes in allocated dollars to help make up this difference between what we collect and what we need.

Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) overview. This is the Act that allows us to charge fees at developed sites (cabins, campgrounds, day use, etc.)

Special Recreation Permit System – allows for fees where there are extra measures needed for resource protection. Once fees are charged, we're required to invest majority of revenue back into the fee site. Things like:

Standard Amenity Fees – day use fees in areas with amenities like toilets.

Expanded amenity fees – highly developed areas, extra things.

To have/change a fee, our business plan needs to show how we're going to reinvest the money, how we compare to other areas, the fee we charge needs to be commensurate with the benefits we provide, and we're not layering fees on top of each other. We need to get REC RAC approval to add a new fee or to expand or limit fees or implement fee level changes.

Why can't RAC make recommendations on concessionaire permits? They're handled on a different process. We use a prospectus and take bids on operation of the facility. The business plan the bidder proposes demonstrates how they'll put money back into the site.

Why haven't we gone out to the public comment for the Lower Deschutes fee yet? The RAC approved the process a year ago? We've been working on re-vamping our business plan and have to run the latest info through our State office again. We had to re-do the economic analysis since we added in the

overnight camping fee, etc. With that done, we now need to go out with the Federal Register Notice to start the public involvement process. The FRN will have to go out and trigger a 180 day public comment period. We also have to post the need for comments for 90 days and tell people how to comment at the rec sites. We missed the season this year and want to make sure we ask for comments during the use period.

Our goal is to have the FRN go out February, and, we'll concurrently post the info at rec sites, etc. from April – July for comment to hit higher use. We'll also post it on Rec.gov and get folks who are buying passes. The timing will be important to get as much notice to the public as possible.

When will you implement the fee? If we get the FRN, comments, etc. then we'd be implementing the fee change in 2021. How will fee distribution notice happen if people are getting their permits at a different time of year? We'll do our best to reach as many people as possible. We can pull some names from people who purchased passes prior to catch a bigger window. Can you do the Rec.gov at the same time the FRN is posted and for the whole length? Yes.

Once we get the public comments, we'll bring it back to the State Office and then back to the RAC. Once approved, we'll post the final plan. *Do you have to get review by the Washington Office? Do they have to sign off? No.*

Don: with projects like this, the time to involve the RAC is early. When the Wallowa-Whitman came to the RAC for the fee, and the RAC said they wouldn't endorse it, so the W-W dropped it. The RAC provided early input on the JD fee and that went well with public opinion and the folks that commented at the meeting. The RAC approved this one.

The whole process leads to an outcome – implementation – to benefit to the users and resource. The question is how durable are fee proposals? Is there a requirement to go back through the entire process if the fee isn't right? With everything – you need to do a periodic refresh of a business plan. Do things make sense? Do we need to change? Use changes can drive fee changes. Note: John Day fee will need a tweak. Will come to a different meeting.

We thought we'd be a bit farther along, but we're learning the snail's pace of govt! One question – there's a standard amenity fee for kids under 16. If the comments are that kids can't float because they're going from \$2 to \$5 on weekdays. What if kids and/or folks are priced out? It'll depend on what input we get from the public. The fee program isn't supposed to target youth and we are supposed to encourage young people use of public lands. We are seeing more non-traditional trips offered by our outfitters. So far, we're not getting a lot of input on youth and fees.

Since the Deschutes is starting the trail/wilderness fee proposal, it'll be interesting to see how the two processes go forward side by side.

Agency updates:

Prineville – see handout.

For the Crook County free use mineral pits – it will be very helpful to have these pits all over the county. Really helps lower haul costs and the time to haul. Thanks for the work on those – BLM and County worked well.

On Thirtymile – is there an easy way to turn that into a different segment? Would like data on how many people will want to launch 30 mile or Clarno? How will that change use – you might see a lot of people switching to here for ease of float. When we go to Rec.gov, our ability to limit the number of permits will change the heavy use we saw this summer. What will the management plan focus on? Just recreation? All the resources and what to do with them. Will the RAC be able to comment and help? Yes. We'll figure it out on how to get comments from the RAC. Since the RAC is an advisory board, we can take comments outside the public comment periods.

Lower Deschutes River – is there any talk of changing the number of guides and outfitters? You go up by 4 every year. It's all common pool – so G&Os have to compete with everyone else for available permits. There's no advantage – they compete together. We are starting to see businesses close as the market regulates itself. We are seeing the types of services change too. Are guides complaining about not getting permits? Not really. There's a lot of contracting or subcontracting; and only a few have actually complained. We can see it in their post use report - how many passes they bought and didn't use. They don't get a refund or credit next year so there's no benefit to hoarding passes.

CRR – Can you explain the Dingell act? Our portion – moving the Wilderness Study Area boundary Steelhead Falls down to the river instead of up on top of the canyon by Crooked River Ranch with the idea of making it more easy to do a fuels reduction project. We'll be able to work on about 1800 acres. We can do an initial 70 acres of work under a CX; and then do an EA to do the rest.

Also some personnel changes at Prineville. We'll have a new Field Manager – Amanda Roberts coming down from AK. And the first week of December, new Associate District Manager – Mike Decker - currently with Army Corps of Engineers.

Don Gonzalez – Vale
See Handout.

CCAAs – these are private agreements between USFWS, rancher/permittee and SWCD unless permittee releases info. That's to alleviate fear of monitoring and lawsuits. *Didn't that also have to do with a fear of a land transaction?* Not sure.

Tribal ethnographic field study – could someone from the tribe/elder to come talk to the RAC about history? Don will check on that for the Baker meeting.

Virtue Flat – is in a sage grouse PAC. Trying to figure out why grouse are down – is it because of OHV use? Some wanted it closed and BLM said not yet - we need to see what the effect of OHV is. The lek is actually in the OHV area and still being used. There are voluntary restrictions around lek and users are following it so far. Before we make a decision we need to get a bit more data.

As a note: Implemented the fee adjustments for the Interpretive Center. December is a freebie month too. Thx for the input!

Wild horses – using a new birth control that can be injected (darting) and it lasts longer than PZP. Need to be within about 50 yds of the horses so the contractor has to hide out somewhere like a water hole. They document the horse/photo, etc. and they dart them. Anecdotal/Nonscientific study showing that the effectiveness is coming in cheaper than a gather and adoption. The proposal is for a million dollar study. Horse advocates at the SE OR RAC mtg didn't object to the idea.

Wyden held a staff meeting in Malheur Co. with a group of ranchers/business vs environ conservation groups to look at wilderness study areas in the county, and lands with wilderness characteristics – to see if they can come up with an agreement for a wilderness area to propose to Congress and for some lands to drop from WSA consideration. The group has been meeting since July – and will work with his staff to come with a bill. BLM can't influence Congress but we're there at the meeting to provide info about wilderness, W&S Rivers, policy, etc. and provide GIS data etc. Adding in grazing to restore ground, flexibility with management, etc.

You may have heard DOI is moving the BLM headquarters to Grand Junction. DOI wanted to reorg BLM and move people to the west. Grand Junction will be the new home. They've made decisions on what positions will stay, which ones will go to GJ and which ones will go to the state offices. We'll get a few here in Oregon. Some to NV – horse related; ID – range/riparian, CA – lands, Human Resources – CO and the NOC, AZ – cultural and training. There will only be about 27 actually in GJ. A minor core in DC. The Director for BLM will be located in GJ. The current Washington office employees got notices that their jobs were moving, 30 days to decide if they're taking it, and 60 days to move. OR – they can look around for a new job in DC; new agency, etc. If they move, they'll get a bonus and moving expenses paid.

With this – higher positions that are a GS-12+ have a bit of a freeze – they'll get advertised first at WO and then if no one is interested (about 2 weeks'sh) then we can fly them. We don't have to take that person, but we have to justify it to the WO.

Have you heard, if there are expectations that come with this for RACs? Change in mission? No, not likely – just moving people. Not changing structure. They are pushing positions out of the “headquarters” and pushing them down to states and districts. We're in a massive Table of Organization evaluation. SO what should a state – district – field office look like? And we may have to justify why we don't look like we should. It's fast and due mid-November. A good thing out of this is that some of the positions will work out of the State but will be WO employees – but we're also getting vacant positions to fill as we see fit. We're getting on the eastside between 15-20 positions coming out. We'll look at how we can use folks across districts, as well as what else we need. We also need to make sure the funding is there. Some real opportunities.

RACs – some look at reducing the number of RACs. They have already dumped two. We'll continue business as usual here.

Can we get the State Director at a meeting? Yes – we'll do an invite. We'll have Jose Menares as a detail for the next 120 days. The interest announcement is out again.

Deschutes National Forest

Wasn't here for June – they were the last two days of the previous forest sup. John Allen retired and the new Forest Sup is Holly Jewkes as of August.

- October – is the reporting season on the forest. We got a lot of Rx fire done - Almost double the normal – over 8200 acres. We completed the Ryan Ranch Restoration - worked with a lot of partners to repair erosion, reconnected the Deschutes with a wetland, etc. to benefit OR Spotted Frog.
- Deschutes has a lot of partners and volunteers. Over 2500 – for 99K hours of service for 2.5 million dollars of benefit.
- In 2018 – every 5 years we do a visitor use survey. In 2013 about 2 million visitors, in 2018 a 65% increase.

Wilderness Permit Fee Proposal – we’d hoped to be here this time with the public comments. But it got stuck in the Washington office. Got a lot of scrutiny, even at the Dept. of Agriculture level. Last week, finally were able to open the comment period which will run Oct. 9 – Nov 25. We have already gotten 100 comments. Range from “about time, fees should be higher,” to “I hate it but OK,” to “I hate it to profanity...” Basically, one of the big things I’ve been hearing is people wanting an annual pass or local pass. What about volunteer hours for credit. Can groups receive exemptions? Low income exemptions? Plan at this point – limited entry will start May 22, 2020. Would like the fee to start at the same time but might be really tight. Will get it in place as soon as possible.

After public comment, we’ll come to the RAC with the comments. We’ll probably want decisions at the Feb. meeting so we’ll get “pre-work” out to the RAC prior to the Feb. meeting.

If you can get us enough time to see the comments, where things fall out, etc. We definitely need to see briefing ahead. Need to read about the entire proposal first. Understood – we’ll see what we can do and go from there. Would like to not approve and then implement a year later – it’s confusing to the public. Maybe we could we burn things to a thumb drive/disk and loan out to the RAC. Give folks plenty of time to review and come to the Feb. meeting ready to go. I’ll commit to getting it to you the soonest possible. My hope would be that everything is in order – cleaned up. Might be wise to think about having an additional meeting. Could be conference call, and physical. If westside RAC has to approve at the same process. Is there a way we can do this at once? What’s the conversation with the westside RAC? We’ll find out.

Subcommittee – Gus, Randy, Greg, Art, Jim, Steve

Ochoco National Forest – see handout.

Introduce Johanna Kovarik – new District Ranger for Paulina Ranger District.

Re: Wild horses – what protections do they have? Can they be moved? No – their territories are established by Congress. Advocates are very passionate; make the case that the herds are genetically unique. Wild horse mgmt. doesn’t distinguish from herd to herd. We’re working in a strategy to look at managing them according to their genetic work – we’re going to try to study them and see if they’re genetically unique; as well as if they’re genetically depressed. If you want to improve the genetic fitness AND protect uniqueness – then you have to bring in a horse that is similar... but you have to know the genetics to know how to do this. In the meantime, it’s hard to keep horses on territory. The Ochoco and Malheur are working together to try to address horses that have moved across the S. Fork John Day and camped out on the Ochoco. We’re trying to figure out how to move them back and reduce challenges with advocacy groups, permittees, etc. While BLM/Malheur is working on the plan, we need an intermediate plan to get horses back on territory. They aren’t part of the Big Summit horses.

Do horses have more rights than mule deer and elk? Somewhat, yes – in Herd Mgmt areas. Wildlife are managed by the state; “wild horses” are protected by federal law. ODFW does manage for about 40 since their area overlaps with BLM and FS.

Sunflower grazing – attempting coordination with Crook County. Crook Co has established a natural resource committee to advise the commissioners and the Judge on issues that are important to the county and tied to the Nat Res plan. They’re doing an plan revision and road closures with a permittee (and some in Wheeler Co). Will need to see if there’s a nexus with Wheeler. Will look for a way to bridge between the needs to both counties.

5,000 acre Canyon 66 burn. Well-done, and we tried hard to meeting hunting and community needs. Objectives met with a few hot spots. Overall there was good community outreach. A little grousing but not much.

Timber sales and acres treated – this year we had furlough and snowmageddon. We lost about 50 days and still met our targets. Pretty substantial effort; have a lot of “can-do” folks.

Rager Ranger Station – most of decommissioning done. It’s a really beautiful spot and the rehab is showing what the basin can really look like. Would like to work with community (Paulina) to see what the future is. Some infrastructure is there and ODFW and other community use happens. Would like to see continued use but need to see what that is – RV site, campsite?

Does the Ochoco and FS – what are their plans for Summit OHV system? No plans at this point. We’ve had conversations about it – we have a tremendous network of user created trails out there that were never designed for the use they’re getting; lots of erosion and resource damage; disturbance to big game, impacts to surrounding ranches by game coming out to the ranches. So we really need to address that. We have an open system out there. As we do other analyses, we’ll look at opps to connect existing systems (smaller steps) and rehabbing some sites. We won’t do a big bite project again.

From the State, DEQ, what can we do differently to work more collaboratively with FS on Rx fire? – There are some good examples going on. Thinking of the Deschutes and Oregon Dept of Forestry, the Cohesive strategy and project wildfire – looking to reduce impacts just a bit with Rx fire. Biggest impact that we’re feeling is that we do a lot of work in communities and we sell the idea of Rx fire to limit bigger smoke in the summer. The primary obstacle is sometimes the projects sitting on the desk at DEQ. Not sure if it’s strict policy limits or just “that’s the way it’s been” – maybe we need a conversation with the governor. We need to be able to have DEQ with us when we get the window. FS – that’s a good summation. In fact, in this corner, we’re striving to mirror the work in Central Oregon. We have an Rx fire council and a cohesive strategy group – we’re all on board with Umatilla, Vale, ODF, W-W, - looking at hiring a shared person to work on the smoke side of things. It’s different here because we don’t have a huge population center like Bend. But we still have La Grande, Baker, and Enterprise. It can be tough. I’ve been impressed with ODF support and it’s a cultural shift for them with re: smoke mgmt. I’m envious of some of the work that’s going on in Central Oregon.

In the last year we’ve had a lot of progress in smoke mgmt. – working with communities that have a smoke mgmt. plan. We tend to get our violations at night when smoke sinks down. To implement burns, you need to have a community that has a plan to protect when smoke settles in. If DEQ can help with this, then you have safe places for people to go when you have “exceeding” situations. Reverse 911, etc. to notify people with lung issues, etc.

For the Ochoco to be able to pull off a 5k burn next to Prineville, it’s a big deal. DEQ was with us. With Cohesive Strategy positions, is DEQ involved in these working groups? We could do a better job of bringing you in so you have a broader role and being a part of the checklists for “go – no go.” Maybe we don’t have the staffing in DEQ but maybe can work on something. *It’ll be a cultural shift that doesn’t come with a lot of direction or staffing but there’s a great conversation to be had.*

Brett – Umatilla. See handout.

With the Vet crew- are you seeing many leave for perm position? Yes – we have had 3-4 that we picked up and a number that have gone on to other states. We've had good success and very excited. Do you talk about it as “not a long term idea – it's to get you qualified so you can move on” – yes. We have some perm seasonal that stay, but we encourage the 1039s to go get positions.

Adjourn 5:05

October 18, 2019

Same members present; add in Eric Watrud for attendance. Kathleen Cathey (Wyden staffer), Jessica (Merkley staffer)

Malheur – review Cow Fire video.

What do you seed with? Native grass seed. Only applied on dozer lines and handlines and a few high erosion areas. Soil severity burn map showed only 8% high severity burn. The fire burned 500 acres initially, and we ordered a team. Wanted to reduce exposure to firefighters and look for the best containment lines for safety rather than the ones closest to the fire that might be less safe. Wanted to allow fire to play its role, be applied strategically. The team had the time to work with us due to the summer's conditions. And we could protect bull trout/riparian habitat due to overall moisture, green-up. Also doing a lot of aquatic restoration, lodgepole pine in meadows, etc. and trying to slow down the water, get it spread out and restore the water table.

This wasn't specifically a resource benefit fire although we got benefit. It was just an opportunity that we could take advantage of. We protected a guard station and cabin and other resources. Original fire was lightning in the Inventoried Roadless Area – we were dry followed by wet and wind. Initial decision was safety due to wind and snag threats. The safety issue directed the strategy – not necessarily resource benefit as the driver.

This can be the challenge – telling the message that we're doing full suppression that ALSO meets resource objectives. When the message entwines, sometimes it can be challenging for messaging. It would be good to tell the whole story without people thinking there are underlying messages – and having feelings about burning up the forest and not using all the materials.

On the lower end of the fire, we had to prep the road – so we brought in hot saws and feller bunchers and log truck and pulling material out. We were able to deck it and sell the ½ million board feet of dead lodgepole that was sold to become “hop poles” in the valley.

There was a town hall in Prairie City and the fire wasn't really mentioned. It shows the FS did a good job of messaging. People knew the strategy, and the FS did a good job of building the case.

Will there be any salvage from this? We looked at the interior, and there are a few roads even though it was IRA but not much to salvage. *There aren't any grasses in the interior, when the dead trees falls, what will happen? Before the fire it was very thick dead and down. The fire consumed most of that. We hope that the next time lightning strikes there it can burn as well. Mother nature will dictate the next fire and hopefully the reduction of material will make it better the next time. Glad it burned this past summer, under normal hot, dry conditions it would have been explosive. It will give us options for the next natural start. No more mechanical treatments because it's too remote.*

I have a concern about neglect – and encroachment and overstocking – and the effect on mule deer. There's not a lot of browse right now, and we might not even get rejuvenation. What's the plan for the area? We're hoping with additional light we'll get natural rejuvenation. The Burned Area Emergency Rehab team didn't suggest any more seeding. I'm optimistic that natural recovery will happen. What about seed sources? If they have to get blown in from a ways away it could take a long time. There's already a few grasses there; and, I want to wait until spring to see how things recover on its own.

I think one of the most effective slides is the mosaic pattern, and how it fits into context of past events. Given the strategy taken here, it acknowledges the role of fire in the landscape. It's great message using the latest science of ecology, silviculture, etc. It's a 30-year educational effort for the public. This fire was allowed to burn with some limits. What monitoring will be used to show the recovery of this mosaic? We had the wildland fire module documenting during the fire. We'll have the photo points and start of this monitoring right now – and we'll need to decide how we follow up.

*Ochoco - The message in the video is a great tool to share. Well done. Messaging is an important piece. The video talks about having fire fighters available and having a suppression objective. At the same time we have all these benefits, **AND** we have a suppression objective. Makes people wonder why we didn't just put it out when it's small if we had a suppression objective. How do we transition to getting people to understand the bigger picture of benefit, ecological role of fire, etc.? We're going to be met with suspicion if we're not transparent. If we then salvage – then it'll look like we "let it burn to get more salvage." I just want to continue thinking about this so we don't have distrust in our communities. Don't have the answer just want to address it. From the Malheur situation, we had a public meeting and that was the comment. Why didn't you keep it as small as possible? We had a heated meeting and had to talk it out. We had another meeting a week later and we answered more questions. Overall, with people going out to look at the area, they see it wasn't that bad, and some who haven't visited still say the Forest Service nuked 10,000 acres. We had a camera on the fire the whole time, and that showed we had some unstable days where the fire stood up. Then it would rain. So it would move around, then burn up some pockets and then lay down again. Ochoco – I think you could have the conversation about objectives within that greater extent of the bigger containment area. We're ready to face this challenge. The outcry would have happened if we had continual smoke but mainly it went another direction. This fire was a good fire, but people are still raw about the Canyon Creek fire. It'll be hard for years to come for some folks. I wasn't here for that, but I heard the story and I know we lost over forty homes. The conditions were different but the reaction this summer was fear.*

I feel the same about B& B over Santiam. Why no salvage? It's a problem now 15 years later. Need to be able to tell these stories. 8 % high intensity – but that means 92 % low or medium intensity. That says something. Managing fire vs suppressing it – this can happen on the same day. Over the last 10 years the perception is swinging in favor of more fire on the landscape. I'd like to see you share the video with more sources – like OPB. And then for the B&B, the Willamette was ready to salvage and we ended up tied up in court until the value was gone. We didn't want the video to just be a feel good piece – it's supposed to show that it's tough, that we're taking chances and risk and that we thought about it. Audience may not be general public – still figuring it out. I applaud them for having the courage to do it on the heels of the Canyon Creek fire. We need to make these tough decisions, and fix the years of fire we suppressed. But still – fires next to houses need to be put out. More prescribed burns, fire, smoke talk, and treatments to get to where we need to be. One flank hit the bug kill from the 1939 fire, another flank was recent slash and piles. The models showed us what direction the fire would likely take, and we

were able to plan for how we'd stop it based on that. *With this context of doing more - this was 10,000 out of a couple million. We need to have a lot more of "right time, right place" to make real progress.*

See handout for rest.

*Road closures- Malheur seems to be closing a lot. Yes, we're trying to close roads that don't have meaning to people. We're analyzing this through EAs and getting public input. Then we'll have to look for money to close them with berms or gates and we'll keep taking looks. We have re-opened roads that we've closed when we find they're of importance to some folks that didn't speak up first. *It seems like some of the roads that are being closed might be important to fire suppression. Could be creating the perfect storm. The old forest supervisor said "we can open them up" but I know it can't happen fast enough. The CC fire burned in just a few hours.* We are mainly looking at duplicate roads, etc. Travel management was supposed to be done after the forest plan revision. That didn't happen, so we're still figuring it out and when we'll do it in the big scheme of things. Right now we have unchecked travel and that's not a good thing either. *Isn't the overall driver with roads economics? How can you keep them open from a cost standpoint?* Through this process of looking at watersheds, we're finding roads have closed themselves. That might be an easy grab. *There are lot of roads on the landscape and these aren't great for wildlife like elk. We'd like to see patches without roads so the elk move, stay on private, have good hunts for folks, get ODFW more tags, etc. We have a lot of elk here and have the research from Starkey that shows motorized use disperses elk.**

Topic idea: have Starkey folks come talk about elk and motorized travel.

Roads are a huge topic – and they come with different public views, economics, wildlife, habitat, safety, etc. But really, we cannot maintain, monitor, install gates, etc. with our budgets. Even if we did have more funding, our system was put in place when we were really logging. Our responsibility is now to find the balance. Roads can be trails, mountain biking routes, game cart routes, roads, etc. or even roads that can be opened with a blade quickly. It's about having the conversations with the public about what that balance looks like. If you have a singular focus like just four wheel drive roads or close everything for elk, you'll have a tough time.

These conversations have a lot to do with trust. In Baker, we first got folks together to talk about roads, and monitoring them and we spent a year getting info. Then the Wallowa-Whitman didn't look at the info the public provided. That cost trust. The Forest Supervisor at the time rammed the plan through without this consideration. And the people said "nope" – folks are usually willing to sit down with the agencies – if the agencies are willing to listen. The miners hated BLM and Don came and listened. He couldn't solve all the issues, but he spoke honestly about it and built trust.

This is a good segue to a brief round table, and it reminds me that we're here today in the context of decades of activity on public lands. We're not cutting timber in the higher volume right now and we're managing for multiple values. Trust is a good point as we work to find that balance. One of the tools that can be used is travel management. But, these words can be a trigger. We'll have the conversation again and again.

I've been on the RAC for over 25 years. I'm really happy to see that people are really starting to work together – agency, county, constituents. Really happy. Applaud everyone. Treat people with respect and it's reciprocal. And lawsuits are driving conversations too. When you lose more than you win, you realize it's cheaper to talk to folks first.

I'd like to reiterate that trust is good. Another win is education. If you have the outreach out front, and you tell people what, why, what is the risk, that you can't appease everyone, etc. you gain a lot more. If you end up having people saying after the fact that "I didn't know about it" then you have problems. We've made a lot of progress with our collaboratives and committees and while we don't always agree, we get along and we're making a lot of headway and we get to answers. *These are good words that lead to direction on how the RAC can operate.*

Brian Wolf – OHV – Virtue Flat (phone in)

Video of area.
See PPT.

We've went out there to the staging area about 6 years ago. It used to be that was an open area. It seems like it's now limited. Yes, that's based on sage grouse priority habitat mapping. We did a perimeter fence around the lek and limited people to existing trails. There are a LOT of trails out there so it has everything you ever wanted. Are you doing bicycles yet? No, we don't have them yet. The push is electric bikes. We think that will come to this area and become more popular. There are bike groups that go out there and ride when Anthony Lakes is snowed out. You should have Anthony lakes partner. We have connected up there and shared info. The main trailhead has a puncture vine issue so we've been working on clearing that. I can see a day where you spend time at Virtue and then head up to Anthony. That would be good. I think we're looking at an e-bike to help with patrols, etc. There's a lot of new technology – we want to be out doing the same things as the public. We need to know the sport and connect people and have credibility. I'm curious if you're monitoring traffic volume (buried traffic counters) and it'll give you baseline of how much use without a camera or a body or a box. We put out some TRAFX last year. Our wildlife bio did this. And an OSU researcher used a camera. I don't know results yet. It can be hard to track because use is weekends and evenings. Not a lot of use during the summer either – too hot and dusty.

What are you doing to retain values on wagon trails? NHOTIC has actual ruts you can hike to, and a lot of ruts are on private and not in the OHV area. We monitor 4 miles of ruts, and some more miles on NHOTIC side.

Mentioning the e-bikes. The Department of Interior has sent out a memo saying that any place a mountain bike is allowed, an e-bike will be allowed unless the district does a special closure. This will help us develop loop trails so you don't have head on collisions. The Forest Service has taken a firm policy that e-bikes are mechanized and NOT motorized. This will be causing confusion. For us, there aren't a lot of these bikes yet. But they're coming and folks will look for places to ride. We want to develop world class opportunities without going full bore into changing Eastern Oregon. But if we can figure out where people will want to go, we can plan for this.

Randy – Oregon State Water vision. See one-pager.

Important that we start having conversations due to link to life, clean water, industry, basic needs, water rights, fish and wildlife. There's great water vs not great water - water comes out of our taps and we don't think about it. A lot of infrastructure is needed, and that includes having healthy forests, watersheds and landscapes - ground systems that filter water. We also have to consider treatment, waste, etc. If we wait until the quality fails, then the game will change. We need to reach out ahead of this to build resiliency into our infrastructure and natural systems now.

There will be workshops to engage around the state, as well as the ability to go online and share your thoughts about how you think about water. The analogy is this – if you’ve flown over the west – you know we’re influenced by on-shore flow in our RAC. We have a marine west coast climate. It’s shaped how we’ve built infrastructure to take advantage of it. Here’s a thought for the RAC and how we interact with public land managers. We need to think about climate change, demographics, and there are considerably more retirees in eastern OR than other age classes. This all changes how we set policy, priorities and develop infrastructure. I know the words “climate change” are a trigger, but I think we’d be remiss if we didn’t think about the next 100 years or next generations, whatever thoughts you have for planning long term. I’d like to suggest that we add a filter in how we look at issues and shape our advice to land managers.

There will be a future economy across Central and Eastern Oregon. We’re not cutting the same amount of trees, mining is always a changing process, ...we need to consider this picture of change for prescribed fire, fuel density, etc. and the impacts to our headwaters and watersheds. All of this flows downhill. It’s an important lens to consider.

*There’s a gentleman in Wallowa, a scientist monitoring change. Maybe he could give us the view of a scientist and can give us things to do and consider. There’s the Wallowa Climate Watch – it’s a good organization and might be a good presentation. About 6 years ago, wasn’t there a study to look for dry ravines and contemplating damming those to store extra water? There are about 160 different flows of the Columbia basalt groups, and where those zones connect you may have water. So the thought is to use these as storage and they can prolong outflow – serve as SAR programs (storage and recovery program). **Cook with NE OR Water Users Association is also a good resource. Might be a good panel discussion – 3 or 4 folks that could cover different slices of this.***

We could start with...drought, snow receipts, ground storage → evapotranspiration, wildfire, → runoff, erosion, → how do we talk about watersheds around us in consideration of watershed security. These are adaptation strategies, not just an OR strategy – we do need to talk about many of these topics and demonstrate the work going on. **Might be value to hear from the research folks behind these.** Some of the work in communities – stage zero restoration happening in partnership with conservancies and water districts, etc. to create storage capacity and groundwater recharge in public land systems (not just municipalities) – looking at innovations in restoration, management etc. Maybe some good examples that can be used in Prineville.

For the panel – consider the Dept. of Geology (Jason, Baker area). They’ve done a lot of Lidar mapping.

Subcommittees:

Subc’s compile issue-related facts, query relevant agency, review public input if any, summarize assessments, and craft draft recommendations to bring forward to the full RAC.

A couple of new options for subc’s and we can **E-mail solicitation to see what committees you want to be on:**

- Deschutes Wilderness Permit Fee (Steve, Lisa, Larisa, Shanda, Gus, Greg, Art, Jim R. Don, Randy)
- Thirtymile Management Plan
- E-bikes – how to integrate into mtn bike areas, etc. They’re not quite OHV but more than a mtn bike etc. We already have companies looking to get the ebikes out and about.
- Lower Deschutes River and overnight camping fee

- LWCF acquisitions – portion of offshore oil proceeds that come back to land management agencies to purchase lands and get them into public system to meet certain requirements (blocking up land, recreation access, etc.)

For the Deschutes Fee – that'll be a fair amount of work to meet the needs of the public and the agencies. We will need to do our homework so that we can be ready to bring information forward to the Feb. meeting. This also means that we **HAVE** to have a quorum.

Public comments close Nov 25; we need to meet in Bend with Lisa Machnik and get the status of the comments, timeline, the comment summary that they can provide. Then we'll digest them and start generating our thought process. We'll do our best to meet agency needs, but need to recognize that inertia, politics, process, public etc. get in the way.

Is this a pilot program? Or are there others that have them in place? We're kind of in between. There are some that are similar but a few differences. Similar stuff is really old so we'd kind of be new but not exactly. It's certainly not common. Once we have a chair, we can figure out the when and where to meet. Is there a possibility that the initial fee is just the rec.gov fee? For the first 6 months? Then we add the fee. Our concern is that if we don't add the fee this year, people would still have to pay a fee and that can be confusing.

Public Comment Period

Jeanne – in relationship to the Lower Deschutes River fee proposal, I think it's a good idea of putting in new fees for the hikers and bikers to pay their fair share. They're using the facilities and the boaters are paying the fees. It's about time the cost of the use was shared. Also, getting an email web address is good. Public site is good for basic info and included minutes and members, etc. Getting together to talk about fees etc. to gather information to be better prepared is good. Happy to help the RAC any way I can!

MaryAnne – e-bikes can be for people with disabilities to access public lands. But what happens if they fall, etc. This needs to be thought through. I'm also concerned when I have mountain bike vs horse or hiker encounters so e-bikes are more of this issue. The Great Old Broads are also looking at climate change. We're doing broadchats and looking at it – change on desert, forest, rivers. Getting a grant to focus stewardship on this as well.

Can you post the draft minutes on line before they're approved. Maybe – but we'd like to make them as accurate as possible. I'll do a draft of a summary and send it out for review to see if it meets your needs. Don will also check in on what we said for email voting.

For next meetings: what are the local hot issues that might draw people in to participate in the RAC?

- Don may send something out to see what we can build on. Like we talked about a panel to talk about water.
- Raising Wallowa Dam by 4 feet and impact to launch, state park, fish passage, water storage, irrigation, 14 million \$ allocated at the state, etc. LWCF – might apply here as well, east marine project.
- Elk management and road closures – ODFW, Mike Wisdom
- Education – as an agenda topic to make sure we can talk about including work we do with people and partners.

- Local hot issues – invite locals to come talk and or listen
- RAC video – invite Greg, Matt or Toshio to help with this.
- Wallowa climate trust
- Annual charter review and re-introduction to mission; intro to FS and BLM, etc. Redo and update new member guide book
- Add Subcommittee reports on agenda
- We should have a webpage. That has profiles with backgrounds, who we represent, etc. Be more open to public contacting the RAC.

Feb meeting – for the field trip - Ash Grove. Thursday morning 8 am in Baker. Be out there at 9, field trip.

If we're on the ball, then maybe even subcommittee could meet Wednesday night. Feb 20-21 Baker

Engagement of public – invite local groups, community college instructors – and students, to come see the process.

Learning topics –

- Impact that effects of fire borrowing, and end of fire borrowing. What does this look like moving forward for fire response. Does this change anything on the ground? How does FEMA fit in now? Does it? Etc. etc.
- Virtue flats and sage grouse; sage grouse numbers across the state, sage grouse research and management, raven trapping
- Solar development – what about mitigations
- What's happening with regard to mule deer and elk management
- Species – bats, frogs, etc.
- Hunter responses about harvest – should have by April. Dictating tags, etc.

Round Table:

Greg Jackle – ODFW embarked on electronic license system; tags are on the phone now. Don't let it run out of battery! We went to a new contractor and it's all electronic. But can still print tags and most still do. Some people don't have smart phones. We're still working out the system to deal with variety of abilities and technology. Deer season pretty was challenging this year; we're working on collaring 150 elk this winter, in the southern Ochocos to Umatilla. Trying to better manage elk, and legislative bills that address elk damage. We should manage the wildlife not legislature. So we're looking at cow hunts in areas of elk damage, etc.

Terry Drever Gee – working with BLM and FS and county and miners on agency roundtable meeting. Coming up in Nov. Good information sharing with timelines, etc.

Art Waugh – ATVs just reclassified the weights and widths on class 4 – side by sides. Can be 84 inches wide and 2400 pounds. Basically like a full size pickup.

Jim Reiss – damage hunts used to happen and now, a landowner contacts ODFW and can get tags to distribute to his/her friends, etc. Seems like it's too much power with the rancher. "Private hunt" kinds of things. I would like to see some of these go to the public or vets or something. Also – there are 40 acres of FS by him, suddenly a bunch a no trespassing signs. Apparently neighboring private landowner was having trespassing on private so they signed the FS. FS Law enforcement officer worked with landowner to resolve.

Jim Boethin – regarding bow hunting. This needs to be limited entry. Bows are so technical now, people can hunt from so far away and they don't even know how to hunt sometimes. Greg Jackle - ODFW needs comments from folks like you. We hear mainly from folks that don't want regulation. We need to hear from others who have the issues too.

Randy Jones – demographic curves. Facilities are approaching end of life with waste water treatment facilities and these need to be replaced. How do you do this in tiny communities when they cost millions? There used to be substantial federal grant moneys and that spigot has been turned way down. It's difficult - working on the state clean water revolving fund. Looking at projects to fund and combining with incremental bits of money to help. There are lots of communities.

Gus – on consensus. Significant to this group, as we deal with decisions. We'll have a lot of separate opinions. When it comes time to make decisions, we need to remember that we don't need to be 100 % in line with every thought. We won't always get what we want – we look for compromise and what's best for the resources.