

## **Harney County Restoration Collaborative Meeting Tuesday September 26, 2017 at the Harney County Community Center Summary Notes**

**Attending:** Melissa Ward, Mel Hall, Travis Swaim, Christy Cheyne, Howard Richburg, Frank Heide – USFS, Pam Hardy- West. Env. Law Center, Leon Pielstick, Jim Campbell- land owner, Dan Haak- Soldier Crk Mill, Phil Jenkins, Zach Williams- Iron Triangle, Tyson Bertoni-Riggs- Or Dept. of Forestry, Dave Hannibal- Grayback Forestry, Jack Southworth-facilitator, Brenda Smith, High Desert Partnership

### **Action Items:**

- **Write letter of support to Steve Beverlin for Soldier CE – Jack – draft first to Travis by Oct. 1, then to full collaborative.**
- **Prescribed fire committee will meet again before next meeting.**
- **Jordan Van Sickle will present on hydrology at the next community-based water planning meeting, there will not be a joint collaborative field trip at this time.**
- **Meeting date has changed again – First Tuesday of the month. Next meeting December 5.**

**Jack asked the group what is the most important thing that HCRC should do in the next year. Answers included:**

- Keep doing landscape scale on Emigrant Creek
- Keep working together as a group
- Maintaining what we are doing
- This time next year be on track to burn 2 times as much as last year,
- Burn more, have new faces at the collaborative
- Quadruple burning and restoration footprint
- Find maximum feasible acres to treat with fire and find other treatments we can use
- Branch out to more restoration, mahogany, meadows, stream restoration
- Find funding for recreation, tap into user groups for funding trails, outback horsemen
- Pursue more burning, it is the best bang for the buck.
- Gain the social license to burn.
- Need to come to terms with smoke as a society, we can help have the conversation with the community
- Convince people smoke is a necessary part.

### **Update on Rattlesnake Project – Travis Swaim**

Solider Project Categorical Exclusion was identified at 3,800 acres and we whittled it down to 3178 acres but we only can treat 3000 acres. Currently out for comments until Oct. 15. It is all commercial thinning and 40 sq. ft. basal area per acre will be the target. Need to get out there faster before the bugs get out there. We met in the field, it was the right thing to do, and we did this to expedite treatment. We need to get it laid out soon. The collaborative could send a letter of support to get this out on the ground soon. Solid commercial thin treatment. Rattlesnake Project will be separate from the Solider CE.

This project is not in CFLRP boundaries so it is hard to find bidders. If this project slows down it will make it less desirable and the timing makes it less desirable. Cumulative effects analysis and show that next in line will be treated for restoration.

Comments:

Pam urges a mild amount of caution on this type of project – doesn't feel that collaborative.

We all said we wanted to proceed – that was basically consensus.

Zach – the way this collaborative works, we are framing the project wrong. The reason for CE is for bark beetles. Once the trees die and get to it in six years, there will be no value. Very little value to start with.

Travis – this is 100% forest health issues, bugs are the issue, entomologists are backing us up. But it sounds like it is hard to take it back to environmental community with just a commercial treatment? I have a draft of Rattlesnake Project if it would be helpful to the environmental community to see what happens next.

Christy -At the same time we should look at how much it will slow it down to add those two components.

Melissa- feels we should just make Rattlesnake a priority project. We would need a letter of support by Oct. 13.

Leon – I will support anything to improve forest health

Dave - What will the letter say and will it be reviewed by email? The insect issue is the reason we chose the farm bill. That is sad country up there, miles of bug kill trees.

A letter will provide the purpose and need for this document – there is an immediacy, it is in the planning process but not timely enough. It is a CE and the next thing is in the decision, put it the project record.

Environmental community needs the context. It could go in the CE and then rationale can go in the decisions and we could draft the language up front.

Pam feels this will be litigated.

Other restoration work in the stand will occur because that is how we do the treatments – doesn't say this in the CE.

Dan Haak – Property boundary is the Reed Ranch– for the last 2-3 years he has been doing the cutting on the south end, mistletoe is a problem, also doing firewood now more than enough for a small mill.

Did adjoining property owners get notified?

Phil – This is the worst and sickest part of the forest. If we do nothing are we saying we aren't going to manage the forest. It will get thrown into Rattlesnake Project which is a year out.

Action: Write a support letter, part of a whole, additional dollars would help, - address to Steve Beverlin or the veg board? Gerald Dixon/ could submit as a public comment also. First draft on Thursday to Travis.

**Update from Fire Committee - Review draft letter (sent with accompanying email) to send to Smoke Management Review Committee – Pam Hardy**

Prescribed fire committee did 2 things –Listed the barriers around prescribed fire and then named solutions We have another meeting with the committee and FS folks because they couldn't attend due to fire season.

Kerry sent around a letter at the last meeting and we asked her to redraft that letter and she did that and sent out to prescribed fire committee. We made edits. We have another meeting scheduled for this committee.

Agency to agency are moving forward with coupling efforts for resources on fires.

### **Hazard Tree EA- Melissa Ward**

This would be for all 2 or 4 digit roads and the would cover the whole district. Not sure if we came up with a boundary – about 150-200 feet from the road. Old growth would be left, modeled after Egley EA. Trees are felled and left in special designated areas. In old growth areas need large woody debris in the ecosystem.

Q. Any way to have hazard tree sales along rangeland fences? A. That map would look crazy if we did that.

Q. How many hazard trees per mile? A. Some are in the hundreds.

We have over 500 miles of 2 & 4 digit roads on the district.

Q. What vehicle to target the work? A. Timber sales – we hope that it would pay for itself.

Seems like there is a lot of work cutting, Phil has a concern that you go and cut and then go back again the next year and a whole new set is dead. A. We hope to score them as best we can to avoid the need to return in the next year.

Q. What is the criteria for scoring? A. Need to ask Mark Moseley, roadside salvage is too complicated.

Q. Are you managing by fear of litigation? A. More like reality, we want to get something done and we need to get it done with a fast turnaround and we promised the county we would help with this.

Public complains no matter what we do.

Dan is in favor of salvage logging along the roads, don't like to see it rot.

EA by February and final EA by April, decision by July – this is responding to one symptom of a larger ecological issue.

Mark – FS took the county out to the forest and the intent was to push some of the boundaries of what can be cut. County wanted to use a local person and use the good neighbor authority.

Is there a way to give citizens a few trees? – John Day has been doing a little different uses with firewood permits.

Scoping packet ready for the group in October.

### **Discuss having a combined meeting with Community Based Water Planning collaborative on October 24 – Brenda Smith**

Brenda updated the group on the community based water planning effort that has been ongoing for about one year. This is a Harney County Watershed Council / OR Water Resource Department pilot project to develop an integrated water plan for the county. The group has identified upland vegetation management and understanding the water cycle in the upper reaches of the watershed as a need for more information. We think the HCRC has valuable information to add to the water planning group.

Jordan Van Sickle would address the question “Does management of the Emigrant Creek Ranger District affect the amount of water that flows into the Harney Basin?”

Trent Seager could help with this.

OSU extension – watershed folks could be helpful.

Sustainable Northwest – western juniper utilization working group. Zach is on that committee.

Not seeing a joint meeting need at this time.

### **Final thoughts and adjourn**

**Next meeting – Zach presentation on cut to length**

**Dan mentioned about recreation, Eric Amstead is our recreation planner and he could give a presentation**



**Anything on Rattlesnake – we do have a proposed action. How about an update on non-commercial timber?**

**10/24 next meeting**

Rescheduling the monthly meeting. Fourth Tuesday is a tough time for me to meet, conflict.

Next meeting will be: **First Tuesday - Dec 5. Will run with first Tuesday for a while.**

Need to keep asking ourselves what is important

Smoke folks looking forward to the committee report