

# SGPC Monitoring Plan 2019



## **Introduction: Why are we doing this?**

The South Gifford Pinchot Collaborative (SGPC) consists of a diverse group of stakeholders who work with the Mt. Adams Ranger District to advance landscape scale restoration projects. The SGPC plans to explore multi-party monitoring in an effort to increase the pace and scale of forest management and restoration work.

*THE SGPC MISSION is to participate in the development, facilitation, and implementation of projects that enhance economic vitality, forest ecosystem health, recreation, and public safety on the south end of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and in surrounding communities.*

The main objectives of multi-party monitoring are to:

- Increase awareness and shared understanding of diverse values and perspectives, and provide an opportunity to increase availability of data and science used to evaluate management decisions,
- Build capacity for agreement on key management topics identified in the group's Zones of Agreement work provided to the District,
- Evaluate effectiveness of past projects' successes and create a feedback mechanism for adaptive management opportunities.

In addition to these main objectives, multi-party monitoring will also benefit the group by building relationships and trust among collaborative members, Forest Service, and other partners as well as increase understanding of scientific monitoring techniques. Funding to support the development of this monitoring plan was provided by the National Forest Foundation Community Capacity Land Stewardship Program.

## **Strategy: How will we identify our annual monitoring goals?**

We have identified several areas of work that we would like to explore for monitoring. Our overall goal is to be comprehensive in our approach--to apply an evaluative lens to the collaborative's work and incorporate a feedback mechanism across different projects. The majority of the group's work over the past seven years has focused on offering recommendations on vegetation projects and retained receipt restoration projects. Thus, we have chosen to focus on these two areas for monitoring efforts over the next several years. We have included a third piece to our monitoring plan, science learning opportunities, to better inform our overall monitoring strategy.

## **Integrated Approach: Align Zones of Agreement Work with Monitoring**

Zones of Agreement (ZOA) have been a major focus of the collaborative over the past two years.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of a ZOA document is to provide the Forest Service with a record of the collaborative's current areas of agreement on particular management topics. The FS may use these agreements as sideboards when considering project locations and treatments within a planning area. Where ZOA have been developed for specific topics, such as Plantation Thinning, the collaborative will explore how the sideboards align with specific projects on the ground (e.g., Did the sideboards have the result we wanted? Does the project area look the way we thought it would?). Incorporating assessment of ZOA into the monitoring process offers an opportunity for us to revisit our collective agreements and modify or maintain them based on the results we find. In addition, looking at past projects through the ZOA framework provides an opportunity to identify needs for future ZOA and monitoring topics to explore. We will build a monitoring goal based on our ZOA work into our annual work plan. Evaluation criteria used to identify topics that will most benefit the collaborative's work will include the following. Does the proposed topic:

- (1) Relate to SGPC's mission?
- (2) Fill a critical gap in knowledge?
- (3) Increase efficiency in the collaborative process?
- (4) Address a controversial topic lacking agreement?
- (5) Increase the pace and scale of restoration?
- (6) Serve an educational role in checking current Forest Service or collaborative assumptions?

## **Evaluation of Retained Receipt Process**

We also plan to incorporate an evaluative process for past Retained Receipt Restoration Projects into our annual work plan. This process monitoring will better inform our discussions and recommendations for current proposals as well as provide opportunities to make recommendations and changes to the process of the overall program. An initial step will be to review final reports for past projects, prioritizing reviews for those restoration activities that are recurring or later phases of a previously approved project. In addition, we will have a goal to visit one completed restoration project a field season, choosing the project based on: timing, relevance to ZOA work, recurrence of proposal, cost, and location on or off Forest.

## **Science Learning Opportunities**

The final piece of our monitoring plan will be to integrate science learning into meetings, field trips, and committee work on a regular basis. Topics will be chosen based on collaborative priorities, major unknowns on a project/planning area we are working on, etc. We will work with the FS to identify topics of shared interest and explore presentations from a variety of sources: Forest Service specialists, PNW Research Station, universities, forest collaborative groups, and partner organizations. Through this effort, the collaborative will learn about on-going projects, build knowledge and understanding of science-based monitoring and research, and integrate emerging information in our strategy for choosing future monitoring topics. Lastly, as funding and time allow, we may consider bringing multiple partners together through a more comprehensive workshop to share information and collaborate on monitoring and scientific research in the region.

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<sup>1</sup>SGPC approved "Zones of Agreement for Plantation Thinning: Gifford Pinchot National Forest, South Zone Planning Area" in December 2018. This ZOA highlights the group's rationale and recommendations for plantation thinning, riparian reserve management within plantations, and road access to plantations.

## **Timeline: When will this happen?**

Our annual work plan will incorporate three goals based on: our ZOA work, review of Retained Receipts process, and science education opportunities. This work plan will identify timelines for each proposed project.

Through collaborative meetings in the fall of 2017 using the criteria described above, we identified our first two monitoring topics to explore: Temporary Road Restoration Effectiveness and Economic Contribution of Stewardship Sales.

For the Temporary Roads Monitoring project, we developed a protocol with assistance from the Forest Service and our Monitoring Committee. The protocol was tested by visiting the same sites with two different volunteer groups. This allowed us to identify any questions or issues with the monitoring protocol as well as compare data to better understand the capabilities of the citizen science platform in supporting and informing our agreement process. Changes were incorporated into the protocol to clarify the objectives and descriptions of monitoring metrics as well as to reduce the survey time required to gather sufficient data to meet project goals (see Appendix for protocol). We plan to implement this monitoring project in the summer/fall of 2019. We will survey temporary roads on a variety of timber sales from different vegetation types, topography, and years of implementation. This is planned to be a one-season pilot resulting in a summary and comparison of temp road recovery conditions. For more details on the scope and timeline, see the Temp Roads Monitoring Protocol in the Appendix.

The group also initiated a study on the Economic Contribution of Stewardship Sales. In the spring of 2018, Skamania County and the SGPC approached USFS Pacific Northwest Research Station Economist, Jean Daniels, about the possibility of conducting a socioeconomic monitoring project similar to one she completed on the Mt. Hood National Forest. Jean was able to secure funding for a study on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and further her work by exploring our unique forest and economy. Jean will be working with Max Nielsen-Pincus and Aakash Upraity from Portland State University on this project. Along with the Pinchot Partners collaborative group on the north zone of the forest, SGPC is in the process of providing feedback on study parameters. The study will begin in spring 2019.

## **Coordination: Who is responsible and what is the end product?**

The intent of this plan is to engage collaborative members as much as possible. Monitoring coordination may be accomplished through contracts with partners as needed; however, members will be recruited for the actual monitoring as first-hand experience is the best way to build knowledge and understanding of topics.

SGPC will compile, summarize, and share data with our immediate group as well as other organizations with similar interests such as the Washington Forest Collaborative Network. We will work with the Forest Service to identify the best avenues to share and store this information such as agency databases. The collaborative's temporary roads monitoring effort is already incorporated into the 2018 USFS Western Washington Ecology Program's Monitoring Report, a compilation of monitoring efforts on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie, Olympic, and Gifford Pinchot National Forests designed to facilitate sharing of information.