



Meeting Notes
July 14, 2021, 1:00-3:30 P.M.
Hegewald Center & Virtual Hybrid Meeting

Participants:

1. Jon Paul Anderson, High Cascade, Inc.
2. Erin Black, MARD District Ranger, USFS
3. Lucy Brookham, Cascade Forest Conservancy
4. Gary Collins, Backcountry Horsemen of Washington
5. Sharon Frazey, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards
6. Jeremy Grose, SDS Lumber
7. Tom Lannen, Skamania County Commissioner
8. Rick Larson, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
9. Tom Linde, Gifford Pinchot Accountability Group
10. Matt Little, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
11. Jay McLaughlin, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards
12. Ryan Ojerio, Washington Trails Association
13. Dave Olson, GPNF Restoration and Stewardship Staff Officer, USFS
14. Josh Petit, Collaborative Coordinator
15. Anjolene Price, Hampton Lumber
16. Mary Repar, Community Member
17. Whitney Reynier, Klickitat County Program Coordinator
18. Sean Roome, Cascade Forest Conservancy
19. Andrew Spaeth, WA Department of Natural Resources
20. Emily Stevenson, Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Program
21. Sean Tran, WA Department of Natural Resources
22. Sean Tackley, GPNF South Zone Planning Team Lead, USFS
23. Jim White, Underwood Conservation District
24. Sue Wright, Community Member

Welcome & Introductions

Meeting Purpose: This meeting featured: (a) a screening of *The West is Burning* documentary and follow-up discussion, (b) a presentation on the Little White planning area by the USFS, (c) USFS Ranger Updates, and (d) SGPC Monthly News.

June Meeting Notes: Approved as written.

Update: USFS Ranger Updates (Erin Black, USFS)

- Hiring of FMO – This isn't time of year. Received a very short list. Will look again in October. Will have an AFMO detail into position.
- New Chief – Randy Moore – career agency employee.
- Lewis River Rec Area – going well from management perspective. Receiving some complaints for spontaneity.
 - FS is being flexible – allowing folks to drive down to cell service to get a ticket and FS writing out pass to put on dash
- No active Timber Sales – due to limited operating period, market, and work force. Should see pick up soon.
- Big Hollow Planning Project – comments were supportive. Finishing up NEPA decision.
 - Roadside Salvage logging could start soon.
- Upper Wind – finishing up this month
- Jay - MARS partnership - working with Dave Olson, Sam Grimm on presale work.
- Huge increase in recreationists.
- Comment from Gary - Ebikes on hiker trails – no one knows they are restricted. Have seen more out there and there are no signs. They are going too fast. There will be accidents.
- Sue – New Science Findings (OSU newsletter) is about social media and recreation.

Screening: Screening and subsequent discussion of *The West is Burning* documentary

- Brought to us by Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition, Landmark Stories, The University of Arizona – College of Ag and Life Sciences, Wallowa Resources

-Jerry Franklin

- Working to unite ecology and economics for sustainable forestry
- We were focused on detecting and suppressing fire – easy in frequent fire areas – low fuels and right structure – but didn't maintain this level or structure
- Large and Intense fires today
- West & Intermountain West - Millions of acres need treatment

-Greg Aplet, the Wilderness Society

-Susan Jane Brown – Environmental Law Center

- Aggressive logging not sustainable – disappearance of OG forest
- Public trust lost
- NW Forest Plan
- Harvest fell to 3 billion board feet

-Mark Webb – Blue Mtn Forest Partners, John Day

- Lose forest to fires partly due to shutting down logging
- Fuel buildup, warming climate
- Majority is high severity fire
- More people in harms way, and harm is getting worse

- Fire adapted ecosystem – houses are not
 - Weaverville - The Watershed Center – Nick Goulette
 - It will take generations to fix this
 - Tools = Thinning, Prescribed Fire
 - With fuel treatment, fire will head into treatment, flank and lay down
- So much material – start with mechanical work and reintroduce fire or allow fire to reintroduce itself
- Need market development, mills need to retool
 - Restoration – retain oldest, biggest trees, thin small trees
- Collabs – social consensus that provides license for agency to move forward with programs
- Need is great – too many barriers
 - FS not staffed or funded appropriately
- Chris Topik TNC
- Spending up to 57% of budget on fire – coming out of management budget
 - Wildfire Emergency Fund – to stabilize management budget
 - Now need to invest in Fire Adapted Community (FAC) work
- Dylan Kruse, Sustainable Northwest
- Small low-value wood
 - Vaagen Bros – Colville – retooled mill
 - Russ Vaagen - Need scalable solutions
 - New products: Biomass, wood chips, cross-laminated timber
- Jerry - Multiple values – fuels, wildlife – need interdisciplinary groups
- Need smoke and controlled fire before get Megafire
- Nick - Resilience of landscape and community are the same thing
- To learn more or comment: Westisburning.org

Discussion:

- Mary – how much do you think small communities in WUI have ability to change the size of fires?
- Ever expanding WUI – landowners, commercial timber companies
- Mary has links to helping communities become more wildfire adapted
- ~80-90% of wildfires are human caused
 - 1990-2010 – 41% increase in new houses in WUI
- Jim – need to tell people where local forests are in fire regime and landscape
- Tom - County has been actively raising awareness
- Brought Era of Megafires film, Paul Hessberg
 - No overarching group – does not gel unless one group leading effort
 - Mid-Columbia Fire Prevention Group is coming online again
 - Firewise program is active
 - Working with UCD to create sign

- Eagle Creek Fire – 4 years ago – people forget
 - Put group together to develop some kind of a plan
 - Community initiative with lots of different players
 - Grant money to help prepare homes for wildfires
- Jeremy – as Jerry said, responding to and treating depends on environment
- Building codes and growth planning in film are different than OR/WA
 - Takeaway – industry is key partner; economic end use is cost prohibitive
- Andrew – we are not in chaparral forest but do have persistent winds – long dry, hot summers
- This is a unique location - need to push envelope
 - Climate change and forest inventory data show need to treat 30-50% of landscape
 - Nowhere near what currently happening
 - Going to have to challenge what is appropriate for the future
 - Lots of constraints – need to be bold
- Mary Repar – basis of trust is important - between public, agencies, stakeholders
- Jay – comment on message of film
- Recently read article in The Hill on Rx Burn Policy - message seemed off
 - Need to start with basic message for audience – especially if high level, policy changing
- WAFAC – Washington Fire Adapted Communities – promoting this work statewide
- “How do you want your smoke” ~Paul Hessburg
- Erin –
- Rx fire does not seem controversial from current comments
 - This may change due to more smoke from longer wildfire seasons
 - Liked Jerry’s comment: Only one outcome – if focus only on fuels reduction
- Dave Olson –
- More stable budget
 - Trying to build capacity with others, like DNR
 - Finding harder to do than hoped. No capacity out there.
- Tom Linde –
- There is not a short-term fix
 - Have to continue to manage for fuels because constantly growing and changing.
- Mary – seems the Forest is having identity crisis
- Timber or ecosystem management
 - Middle path – opportunity to manage for multiple uses
- Matt Little – hope to find funding and resources

Presentation: Little White Planning Area (USFS Staff)

- Current timber target – 55MMBF
- Landscape approach – considering climate change
- Incorporate DNR’s Landscape Evaluation
- Northern Spotted Owl in watershed
- Riparian strategy – likely to continue with previous strategies
- Almost all land is matrix
- West of lava beds is Late Successional Reserve – approximately 2 stands
- Stand Exams – surveys happening
- National Forest boundary
 - considering shaded fuel break
 - working with the Willard Fire Chief
 - Actions of Community Wildfire Protection Plan
 - May become Categorical Exclusion
 - May look at Prescribed Fire
 - Looking at Fire refugia concept – best pockets to preserve or enhance them
- At the recent landscape characterization team meeting, they looked at resources in watershed. Identified this project would be a good collaborative opportunity.

Schedule

- In field this summer, collecting data
- Project will be the focus this fall, winter to spring – define proposal
- Draft Environmental Assessment - Oct 2022
- Final Decision - Feb 2023

Q/A

- Perhaps have a fire themed site visit?
- In Fall – may have opportunity to discuss with specialists
- Slash piles – is each contract specific to how to treat and the size?
 - Prescriptive as far as size
 - Concern for fire hazards
- Jim White – Be careful and look for laminated root disease
- Good place to do early seral
- Historic Photo Replication – Monte Cristo
- Deer and elk winter range overlaps with stands

Update: SGPC Monthly News (Josh Petit, SGPC)

- July field trip logistics – SEBO or Little White
- Social gathering after meeting at Walking Man