

Deschutes Provincial Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: December 15, 2015

Time: 09:00 am

Location: Deschutes National Forest Headquarters
63095 Deschutes Market Road, Bend, Oregon

Attendees:

Ed Keith	John Allen	Nancy Gilbert
Valerie Maxwell	Paul Anderson	Woody Starr
Erik Fernandez	Dave Elpi	Andrew Merschel
Marilyn Miller	Garth Fuller	Pete Caligiuri
Nancy Gilbert	Woody Starr	Dennis Benson
Chuck Arnold	Elvira Young	Chuck Burley
Carl Backstrom	Beth Peer	Clay Penhollow
Carol Benkosky	Lauren DuRocher	Susan Skakel
Dennis Oliphant	Jerry Hubbard	

Science Presentation

Andrew Merschel, Faculty Research Assistant at Oregon State University, presented research findings on “Historical Fire Regimes Across Mixed-Conifer Ecotones in Central Oregon.” This local study was undertaken to help fill data gaps in mixed conifer forests of the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project area to help the collaborative group develop recommendations for forest restoration. Andrew and Pete Caligiuri partnered with the collaborative, providing field trips and data sharing as it was developing.

The study identified regions of similarity where historical fire frequency, structure, and species composition vary with environmental setting/landscape context. Pete Caligiuri provided an overview of how the Deschutes Collaborative (restoration planning subcommittee) used the science in developing their restoration recommendations for mixed conifer. Stand types and their level of departure from historic conditions provide a framework for describing restoration opportunities and actions.

Sustainable Recreation

John provided context of the sustainable recreation issue for the agency and why we want to address recreation and sustainability on all Central Oregon federal lands (Deschutes NF, Ochoco NF, Prineville District BLM, and Grassland). For example, there has been an explosion of use on public land; use is exceeding capacity; and how do we keep pace with growth?

Small groups worked on developing a list of the things people are most concerned about.

- Trail concerns – diverse experience levels, connectivity with community, transportation modes to Forest.
- On-trail conflict (e.g. bike v. horses)
- River/waterfront access and overuse

- Uncontrolled use: user-built trails, dispersed camping, social media advertising those areas.
- High use and saturation – weekends + holidays vs. weekdays – how to manage peaks and valleys. Over use degrades habitat.
- Traditional uses – protecting that opportunity (firewood, hunting, solitude), also Tribal traditional uses
- Overreach of what habitat can handle – carrying capacity
- Reframing our thinking – public perception everyone wants their own piece of the forest and how to manage that across the landscape
- Impacts to wildlife – both summer and winter
- How do we identify capacity and demand; what are thresholds and measurements?
- It's a problem to not know what is accessible before you head out to the Forest
 - Encountering inaccessible trailheads and trails due to current design and maintenance standards
- Doing planning with lack of accurate or current data
- Noise impacts to quiet/solitude
- Limiting use
 - Lack of spontaneity
 - Can have more impact on those who need to rely on motorized access
- Balance between access and use for locals and tourists
- Promoters of use – (e.g. tourist industry) aren't responsible for providing use and all that comes with that.
- How ill public adapt to any changes
- Other uses such as shed hunting, mushroom gathering, game hunters, are not necessarily being considered when we think of recreation. These uses can get displaced or wedged out; and they can be part of over-use problem.
- Dispersed camping areas becoming over used, degraded. Become like developed sites (but without maintenance)because they are so heavily used.

And also listed some ideas for what we can do:

- Take comprehensive approach
- Encourage stewardship that supports the habitat and economy
- Protect traditional Tribal resources: fisheries, wildlife, water quality
- Recognize the problem
- Trail standards – work into how they are built
- Use good map symbols and legends
- Informational kiosks
- Identify compatible uses and where they go well together and where they may not
- Land management agencies being more visible on land and community – soft diplomacy
- Trails – landscape areas in management, emphasis areas that can be identified by public, alternating days/seasons; ROS to plan urban vs. primitive; areas of exclusion for wildlife habitat
- Community connection
- Need flexibility/adaptability for long-term and changing social landscape
- Limited use – permitting needs funding and enforcement
- Corporate sponsorship?
- Funding partnership with group- long term 2-3 years
- Managing expectations (both local and non-local users)

- Flexibility in management plans – adaptability for long term
- Zones of use – high use areas and low use areas / Segregation of use
- Limited use – permitting (requires enforcement; funding)
- Public education (NWFP funding, etiquette)
- Educating the public – incentives, enforcement, etiquette
- Education and stewardship
 - Comprehensive approach
 - Range of opportunities – deliberate planning, infrastructure to support
 - Target where people want to go
 - Business community – how to bring them into the conversation
 - Advertise bringing people here
 - Plan for diverse users – expectation of different communities, both generational and background.

Sustainable Recreation Subcommittee

Much work of the PAC will be accomplished with smaller groups, or subcommittees, bringing information back to the larger group. Please let Beth know if you would like to be part of this recreation subcommittee. Meetings separate from the full PAC committee meeting will be scheduled.

The following people already volunteered to serve on the Sustainable Recreation Subcommittee: Garth Fuller, Dennis Oliphant, Dave Rathbun, Chuck Arnold, Elvira Young, Woody Starr, Carol Benkosky.

Additional Focus Area for PAC

From September PAC meeting minutes: The intent is to identify three or four topics or issues that can be taken up over the next 12 to 18 months. Overall thoughts on identifying focus areas:

- *Consider a mix of project scale and type.*
- *Don't jump to solutions before fully fleshing out the problem.*
- *Structure topics so that work/projects can be scaled to Forest Plan revision.*
- *Use best available science, tools, and analysis methods available.*
- *Connect to collaboratives already in place. Identify overlap, leverage or build on their work.*
- *Review past work to ensure we're not reinventing the wheel on any process already in place.*
- *Define terms (e.g. "sustainable recreation").*

Include both tangible projects that can be completed and broad scale policy projects for the long term.

Think "base hits" vs. "home runs."

The committee brainstormed focus topics and then each person was asked to vote on their top three from the entire list:

- **Restoration on the ground / restoration economics: continue to increase stewardship work and other active management, consider economics, how to work in conjunction with biomass group, developing woody biomass energies (TOP 3).**
- Continue to move stewardship program forward for forest products on public land. Continue doing more and smaller projects. Boost small forest products and stimulate economy in wood products.

- Funding opportunities – what are goals of FS over 5-10 years in recreation and then look at the increment of money needed over budget. ID Funding opportunities in grants, corporate, partnerships, etc.
- Travel management – review and monitoring of implementation; assess what is working and effectiveness of decision.
- Invasive plant control – review program implementation and level of success. Inform future decisions and needs.
- Prescribed burn program – is there anything the PAC can do for assistance to help that program progress; How to use fire as a tool – often more planned than can be done. (TOP 3)
- Community education – broader strategy to approach (TOP 3)
- Aquatic habitat – is there special management interest for riparian resource – disproportional effects.
- Recreation shooting – within urban interface; safety of shooting I places they have traditionally been but now development pops up; plus degradation of shooting sites (trash, dumping).
- Encourage, enhance and expand recreational opportunities while improving experience
- Organization of the Grasslands, Ochoco, and Deschutes – combine admin. of areas.
- Lower Deschutes Management Plan – Wild and Scenic River management plan – does it need to be revised/updated? Field trip?
- Use social and wildlife science already out there to help inform
 - Help id science that would be best to further
 - Maybe get HEM to come present on what work is currently being done
 - Oregon parks and rec – draft of recreation plan
- Wildlife connectivity- Get together (FS, FWS, etc) to look at wildlife movement at the landscape plan – to better inform project planning, connectivity corridors for species – which habitats is the PAC most interested in?
 - Connectivity of suitable habitat but how does it actually flow for species
 - Not just maintain but also improvement/enhancement of habitat – research from Starky
 - Ecosystem guide, less single species, but as a whole;
- Risk of losing something – whether that is wildlife habitat, riparian zone, wildfire
- Open space – what will the future look like – will this area turn into a sprawl of development
 - Value of open space like BLM land in the future; will they be used for community development like dumps, utilities, etc
 - What do people value those lands for, are there areas to id for preservation and/or those area that maybe should be let go for these uses

Field Trip Ideas & Future Meeting Dates

The group provided a few ideas for field trips: Glaze project, Kew project, Ochoco National Forest recreation areas, Lookout Mtn. (Experimental Forest). Field trip agendas will be developed to incorporate issues that the PAC is working on.

The next PAC meeting will be scheduled for March. A doodle poll is currently open for three dates: March 9, 11, and 18. As of press time, the 9th is looking like the winner.

Other News

Nancy Gilbert announced her upcoming retirement from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A new representative from USFWS will eventually be assigned. Jennifer O'Reilly will begin to receive PAC correspondence.

Chuck Burley has resigned from the PAC. A replacement to represent the forest products industry will be sought.