



Southwest Jemez Mountains Landscape Restoration Project

Notes from Public Meeting – Feedback on the Draft Purpose and Need

March 10, 2012, 10 am – 12 pm Santa Fe National Forest Supervisor's Office

Notes taken by Will Amy

Checked against flip charts by Julie Bain on 3-13-12

Questions and Answers

Q. Areas of the forest look like tree farms with crowns touching. Very dense tree farm look.

A. The forest is using the northern goshawk guidelines to clump and space trees. Past work had a more uniform approach. Now we want to encourage diverse tree stands. Currently we have many stands of 9-12" trees, which makes it difficult to promote diverse stand structure. Current guidelines encourage us to promote diverse tree structure. Because of the existing condition of stands, it will take time to diversify them with treatment.

Q. Will you go back and re-treat stands in future?

A. Yes, we will need to go back. It is a long term project.

Julie – We plan on having a committee to prioritize treatment areas.

C. (Comment) Cibola has showcased an area to show what is meant by and to promote clumpiness. Due to the current condition of stands in the project area, it may take several rounds of treatment and many years to get to our desired condition.

Linda – We understand. It will be a challenge to go to forest we want from what we have. It may take decades due to current condition. May take quite some time to get to that vision. Monument Canyon as example if we don't.

Q. Do you get a lot of comments from the public against treatments?

A. Some, but we haven't done this size of a proposal to date.

C. The forest that we "want to see" may not be what we should be looking at. We need to promote the function that it had 100 years ago. The mentality "tell us what you want it to look like and we can do it", will fail. The function is more important to build resilience. Future may look much different with regard to precipitation etc. This is where function is more important.

A. The agency understands and is working toward that. Please keep reminding us of this aspect since we are so used to the terminology of "desired condition" rather than "function."

Q. Stewardship contracts could open door for a lot of problems and mischief by creating incentives outside of the goals of the project. Will you have standards for equipment such as ground pressure etc?

A. We consider soil types and other factors and will have side boards on contractors to make sure folks are doing what they should.

Q. Are you saying that using the wood will reduce costs?

A. Yes. Thinning alone costs \$600-\$700 per acre. Using the material can help the operator to reduce what we would pay for the treatment, like the White Mountain Stewardship contract, for example. It could be a win win for all.

Q. Seems like it may be dangerous because folks may abuse system. It needs to be monitored.

A. We need to do what is best silviculturally to achieve outcome. But a person can't make ends meet on 8-9 inch material.

C. Industry has to offset costs otherwise tax payer pays the whole tab. Operator is obligated to call and advise when a tree is cut that shouldn't be cut. Cibola is doing a great job in monitoring.

C. We can't just leave it on the ground or it causes other problems on the ground. Many operators are being creative like making dowels or landscape mulch.

Thoughts on Purpose and Need.

Aesthetic impacts of treatments - can they be mitigated? Concentrate on leaving areas along roadways. Use minimum impact treatment tactics. Make it look good!

Purpose 4 - what does resilience have to do with cultural? What is considered historical? What is a cultural resource? How can those be resilient? Make sure that this purpose is broad enough to cover the protection of all heritage resources.

There is a lack of encouraging fire as a landscape process in the purpose and need.

Need to employ people beyond mechanized equipment. Broaden use of people. Educate people to opportunities in the woods. NM Forest Institute training folks (Navajo) to be tree markers.

Function is mentioned in 1 but not 2. Stand condition to support function, fire, soils, wildlife. Include emphasis on function throughout the purpose and need. Soil and aquatic structure and function need to be included.

Purpose 3 – Encourage more local folks to seek forest jobs. Include something in the purpose and need about educating locals that there are these kinds of jobs available.

Purpose 2 – “Increase riparian vegetation”; more may not be better. Having more riparian vegetation might not fit all treatment areas. May go back to the idea of function. Improve or return to natural function.

Purpose 2 should include need to do more road maintenance. And better design.

Purpose 3 – need for horizontal and vertical industry. Vertical is taking product through site to market. Horizontal – supporting industry such as markers and mill building.

Develop a local industry that is capable of using forest products off the forest.

Add something about using wood products locally to the purpose and need.

Ensure mechanical treatments are regulated: only used on dry soils, tracked instead of wheeled vehicles, etc.

Reduce forest use impacts from recreation and grazing and other activities.

Purpose 2 - increase riparian veg – add shrubs to sentence.

Need active livestock management to maintain treatments

Add to purpose 1 “Reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire while promoting characteristic wildfire.”

Need to remove excess live and dead fuels.

Is it the need to remove or what is left behind. Another way to think about it. Focus on how the ground is left after the treatment.

Project could be aided by state and local legislation. Could this be incorporated into the purpose and need. Instead of getting products from China, have a tax or other structure to promote local use. Example of certified lumber where it is harvested in Chile where pollutants are created else where. Instead of produced here where regulations may be better to reduce pollution.

Environmental movement needs to forgive sins of industry past. Industry needs to forgive too. Industry is different now.

Using low impact equipment and techniques. i.e. tracked equipment vs. wheeled, on dry ground, etc.

How do folks want to stay in touch?

1. Volunteer projects – keep folks in touch
2. Email works well.
3. Post reports on-line
4. Interest in silvicultural consultation, marking, contracts, and administration
5. Have frequent public meetings
6. Interest in prioritization committee
7. Need to share predecisional information. Informal or formal. Agency needs to learn to interact with people and be more trusting. Be willing to vet ideas with public.
8. Field trips!! Rather be outside getting dirty.
9. Quarterly meetings. Industry wants to be involved as much as possible to garner support.
10. Send out notes so not retreading ground.
11. See that we use the information collected from the participants.
12. Brown bag lunches.
13. Group meetings are good.
14. Create a comment-response document so we can see how our comments were used
15. Publish these meeting notes on-line.
16. Folks should consider joining the NM Forestry Association. Membership is cheap.

Julie B: How was it to have FS folks in each group?

Wanted to have wildlife person available and not taking notes.

Enjoyed having FS folks with groups.

Agency has a tend to stove pipe process. Need to include livestock and recreation when doing restoration work. May need to limit livestock or OHV use. This is going to be tough and there may be some losers in this process.

Linda – are doing projects that are on-going where NEPA was completed.

Jon W.- will work with livestock operators to minimize impacts to treatments.

Linda – putting in fences etc.

Liked the facilitation and appreciate opportunity.

Most enjoyed having FS folks in groups.

The End!