

## Hebo Stewardship Group Meeting Minutes

May 9th, 2013  
Driftwood Library

Name	Affiliation		Name	Affiliation
Ron Hudson	USFS		Vanessa Petro	OSU graduate student (presenter)
David Skelton	USFS		Michele Long	ODFW
Alex Sifford	NNWC		Anne Walker	USFW
Jeff Uebel	USFS		Sue Gabriel	Butte Cr landowner
Lisa Phipps	TEP		Pete McSwain	SDCWC
Paul Katen	SDCWC		DeAnndra Prueitt	Tillamook Public Works
Mike Kennedy	Siletz Tribe		Grant Graves	Tillamook Public Works
Guy Sievert	NNWC		Jane Barth	Facilitator

The meeting began soon after 3pm with welcome and introductions. April meeting notes were approved by consensus. They will be posted at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/siuslaw/stewardship-groups>. Handouts and other information related to the HSG can be found at: <http://www.cascadepacificstewardship.org/hebo>

### Special Topic: Beaver

#### ***Evaluating Nuisance Beaver Relocation as a Tool to Increase Coho Habitat in the Oregon Coast Range***

Vanessa Petro, an OSU Graduate Student in Forest Ecology gave a presentation based upon a research project she conducted in the Alsea Basin. Her presentation covered the following key points:

- Rationale behind beaver relocation in western Oregon
- Do all beavers construct dams?
- What do we know from past relocation studies?
- Study methodology for the Alsea Beaver Relocation Study
- How are the study beavers responding to relocation efforts?
- Incidental findings: Are there more beavers on the landscape than we originally thought?

The following are some of the points Vanessa's made during her presentation:

- Beavers have "dual citizenship," meaning they are predators on private land and fur bearers on state and federal land
- Typical relocation study elements are survival, movement from release site and dam construction at relocated site
- Vanessa used 2 models created from local data to come with "best" sites to relocate. She found 19 locations in approximately 2.6 km of stream that fit her criteria. Six already had beaver and landowners of 4 locations said no. That left 9 sites.

*Approved*

- Vanessa did stream habitat surveys alongside relocation work. This information will improve one of the original models.
- Want to have dams since dams create conditions that benefit coho salmon. But, beavers aren't building dams. They are burrowing in the banks. More research is needed to explain why they aren't building dams.
- Observed beaver eating red alder, vine maple, salmonberry so lack of food doesn't seem to explain absence of beaver.
- Where large wood is placed, beavers colonize the area. Relocating beavers typically result in other beavers moving into the unoccupied habitat.

Sue Gabriel, a landowner on Butte Creek described beavers that live on her property. Beavers removed alder, willow, salmon berry, apple tree (that they had to tunnel under the fence for). They did not select elderberry or blackberry. Beavers leave the site during the winter and return during the summer. Appears they may have been caching food at different sites. Appear that they are working on many sites at once. Pruned the apple trees and put the trimmings in the stream; beaver used them each time. Vanessa added that caching is not as likely on the coast range, and is expected more in high altitude environments. Mike Kennedy shared that beaver also like roses.

### ***Beavers and the Siuslaw National Forest***

Jeff Uebel, SNF, distributed a handout that he drafted to help the stewardship groups understand how the SNF currently approaches beaver management on its lands. The following are some points from his presentation:

- Beaver are beneficial to coho salmon and are a keystone habitat forming agent for coho in the coast range.
- Understand landownership concern on different ownerships. [Jeff circulated an article from the Western Forester titled *Landowner Incentives and Tolerances for Managing Beaver Impacts in Oregon*. Jane will email to the group.]
- FS manages habitat for multiple species, and not species management. The Forest Service supports ODFW management of beaver populations and research studies. Restoration projects on FS lands are habitat enhancement/restoration projects that improve habitat.
- FS will focus on habitat restoration for multiple species, and supports ODFW's management or relocation of beavers. [Jeff and Michelle Long, ODFW, both had copies of the ODFW handout *Living with Wildlife: American Beaver* to distribute to the group.]
- Public involvement and education are key to changing how beavers are managed. Many landowners are now supportive of beaver and public outreach can help change attitudes towards beaver management.

The HSG greatly appreciates both Vanessa and Jeff taking the time to come share information with them.

## **Input for Spring Roundtable Meeting – May 28<sup>th</sup>**

### **Forest-wide Project**

After hearing Vanessa's presentation, the group questioned whether stewardship groups are ready to do on-the-ground restoration projects that will have an impact on increasing beaver dam construction and consequently have a positive impact on coho. There was interest in supporting additional research on a forest-wide basis. Retained receipts can't pay for research, but groups or watershed councils can apply for research grants to better understand beaver habitat selection, effects of relocation, preferred forage selection, dam building activities, etc. And, stewardship groups could sign letters of support for research projects that others, like Vanessa do, to help increase their chances of getting funded. The group also is comfortable with the public outreach about "living with beaver" being an initial focus of the forest-wide effort. Changing people's attitude, understanding habitat attributes, dam & den building behavior are keys to "living with beaver." Wayne Hoffman's information on beavers as ecosystem engineers, Fran Recht's information on beaver deceivers, and Vanessa information on stream conditions, diet, etc. could be meshed into that outreach effort. A beaver trapper could present at meetings, too, to give landowners and organizations that perspective.

### **Outreach Funds**

The 2012-13 stewardship outreach funds (total \$6,000) are still at CPRCD. Groups have been waiting to decide how to use those funds until more was decided about the forest-wide project. If the Roundtable does not decide on any amount to request be used jointly, \$1500 will be allocated to each group. NNWC & SDCWC have discussed the possibility of using these funds for the Cascade Head experimental forest \_ year anniversary. Since that will happen in 2014, it could be supported with next year's outreach funds, leaving this year's still available. The group will discuss this further after the Spring Roundtable.

### **Field Trip – Friday, May 31<sup>st</sup>**

Confirmed will visit active logging operation on Nesko Thin (FS 1200 rd) and also the Austin Thin, a recently completed sale. Michelle Dragoo (wildlife biologist), Nathan Pearson (timber sale administrator), and Wayne Patterson (silviculturist) will be resource people for the tour. Ron will contact the logging operator to see if he wants to talk to the group, too. Decided to hold a short business meeting prior to the field trip in order to debrief the Roundtable meeting and to have initial discussion on stewardship projects people are thinking to propose this year. The plan is to meet at Neskowin Valley School at 11:30 for lunch at the pavilion. Alex Sifford will check with the Neskowin Valley School to make sure no conflicts with meeting there and to see if they want to join the field trip. Bring a sack lunch. Tour will be from 12:30 to 3pm, when most logging operations end. Jane will work with Ron on an electronic postcard/flyer to distribute. Ron will bring handouts with a map of the areas we are visiting.

## **Other Issues/Updates**

Alex reported that stewardship projects approved in Dec 2012 have not received funds to begin implementing contracts for design, permitting, etc. Need funds early in the spring to make sure funds are available for contracts. Jane shared that CPRCD is waiting for Grants and Agreements to obligate the funds before it can complete contracts with project applicants. The group suggested that in future, applicants may need to apply for funds 2 years in advance of planned in-stream work. Roundtable reps will bring this idea to the meeting.

Anne and Paul K are meeting with landowners at the Sitka Center on May 30<sup>th</sup> to discuss possibility of a stewardship project for butterfly habitat restoration.