

**Payette NF Level 1 Meeting
Payette NF Supervisors Office
May 18-19, 2009**

May 18 – SFSR Field Trip

Attendees: Ana Egnew, Rodger Nelson, Ben Hipple, Gina Bonaminio, Ally Turner (USFWS), and Rick Edwards (NOAA)

- Viewed culvert upgrades along mainstem SFSR (Sister Creek, discussed undermining), Goat Creek, Pheobe Creek (Rick discussed laying back bank, armoring at stream edge, and adding J-hook or half-vane to redirect flow to north bank to reduce ongoing erosion), Indian Creek. Discussed adequacy of culvert sizes and placement.
- Viewed and discussed decommissions of old roads in Poverty Salvage area and viewed the remains of the old road system and cup trenches.
- Viewed and discussed the bald eagle nest and nesting eagle at Poverty Flat.
- Discussed Nasty Creek and waterfall barrier at mouth. Decided that it was probably natural, other dry channels may have been overflow channels or simply different routes the stream has used as it moved around on alluvial fan. All agreed that it should not be removed when the culvert is upgraded, but should attempt to match culvert gradient to natural stream gradient.
- Looked at and discussed Reed Ranch and airstrip proposal. All agreed that there would be no effect to listed fishes. Ana noted relatively high level of browsing on bitterbrush along strip.
- Looked at EFSFSR bridge. Rick and Rodger agreed that the large boulders on McCall side should be retained as they are probably keeping the abutment from being undermined. Rick suggested a large boulder just downstream and across from pier 1 might further help stabilize the bank under the abutment. The site will likely still collect debris that Valley County will want to remove and put under the high water line or in the river downstream of the bridge.
- Looked at Three-mile trailhead and Hamilton Bar road. Noticed gate lying along road – discussed if this will be the gate the FS plans to install to keep full-size vehicle traffic off road. Discussed grading work that occurred earlier by County. Noted a large horse and mule camp at Hamilton Bar.
- Along entire SFSR noted water murky colored, possibly more than would be expected without continued run-off of old ash.

May 19 – Office Meeting

Attendees: Ana Egnew, Rodger Nelson, Ben Hipple (part day), Ally Turner (USFWS), and Rick Edwards (NOAA)

Reviewed notes from SFSR Field Trip:

Further discussion on culvert sizing and placement when we replace/upgrade culverts. Team agreed it would be prudent to err towards too large a culvert rather than find we undersized the culvert. Asked Ben to discuss this topic with other PNF engineers and RO geo-technical engineer on the SFSR field trip occurring 5/19.

EFSFER Bridge Replacement BA:

- Improve project description and further discussion on timing of bull trout movement.
- Clarify items discussed yesterday on field review, i.e., do not remove boulders along base of slope (stabilize slope and provide fish habitat) - in addition, add big boulders near base of slope along river to help stabilize slope; discuss potential toxicity and composition of grout.
- Mention that natural bedrock vein in river appears to provide some protection for bank by turning water.
- Ally had comments on Corps draft BA – will email to Rodger on May 20.
- Rodger will rewrite and submit BA by May 21 to be able to receive a BO and subsequent 404 permit from Corps by mid-July.
- Ally agreed with “No Effects” determination for NIDGS and lynx. NIDGS is not a listed species on the FWS list for the Krassel Ranger District and project would not impact lynx habitat or any conceivable lynx movement corridors. Rodger will remove analysis for wildlife species and submit BA only for aquatic species. FS to notify Corps of change.

Reviewed Topics from March Meeting that required Further Discussion:

Sediment monitoring adjustments: Rodger reviewed proposed changes to sediment monitoring changes to decrease costs while maintaining intent and provided a report documenting proposed changes. Ally and Rick will review and provide comments. Rodger hopes that Ally and Rick will approve the changes so that we can have the reduced monitoring effort and remain in compliance with the terms and conditions in the Forest Plan BO. Rodger also proposed that the provided report will satisfy part of the reporting requirement for 2008 under the Forest Plan terms and conditions.

SFSR/EFSFER Emergency Consultation wrap-up: Rodger indicated that he has been working on it but was unable to get a draft ready for this meeting.

Review of projects that may require consultation:

- **Warren Wagon BA**- BOs completed and in the mail
- **Brundage Placer Mine**- NE (reaffirmed)
- **Walla Walla Mine** – NE (reaffirmed)
- **Winter Travel Plan** – Ana described that she anticipated relatively few changes to analysis when action (winter travel) was dropped from the Ongoing BAs. Forest Supervisor would like to sign decision in October. Add discussion of potential effects to listed fish, L1 team does not anticipate this will rise to level of take (NLAA).
- **Big Creek Ford** – need project status update from district, review on ground in July.
- **Golden Hand Mine** - need project status update from minerals program manager, review on ground in July.
- **Unity Mine** – not operating this year?
- **Reed Ranch** - no effects to listed species
- **EFSF Bridge** – see above
- **Livestock Grazing** – Ana shared that a RAC proposal from woolgrowers and Nez Perce Tribe requested funding (in part) for monitoring of AOIs. If funded, is there anything that should be monitored in relation to listed fish species? L1 team agreed monitoring of sheep movements when they come off hill to cross bridge to Nethker Corral and near Grouse Creek meadows to ensure they don't get into the creek.
- **Smokey Boulder** – check with Dale on status – check previous notes on how to reconcile.
- **Big Creek Roads** - need project status update from district, review on ground in July.
- **Nez Perce Tribe Partnership work** - review on ground in June or July.

Noxious Weed Program Documentation of Non-compliance:

At March L1 Meeting, Maura shared that in summer 2008 a noxious weed site near a NIDGS colony was inadvertently sprayed with 2-4-D. No adverse effects were noted, but Maura plans to avoid any future problems by no longer using 2-4-D. The PNF committed to tracking when and how we treat near NIDGS sites and share the information each year with the L1 team.

L1 team discussed that to resolve this issue, Ana will send an email to Ally noting the non-compliance, lack of known impacts, and measures to avoid any future occurrences.

Counterpart BAs:

Counterpart BA discussions at L1 – May 18, 2009 letter from Boise office to Idaho Forest Supervisors notes that due to heavy FWS work loads, FS should use counterpart and other authorities and proceed through the alternative consultation pathway (NFP) whenever possible. Ally stated that she was still available to review and comment on BAs prepared under NFP, if FS desired.

Framework:

Rodger gave status report. In January 2009, Rodger wrote a document outlining our (new) approach to Framework that was presented to the L1 team. Framework is tied to FP Monitoring. FP Five-year monitoring plan is being completed in next year. L1 Team agreed to “jump start” monitoring in consultation of Ongoing BAs. Rodger has not progressed as quickly as he would like on Framework due to detail into East Zone Fish Bio position and other commitments (e.g., EFSFSR Bridge BA). Rodger said he hoped to have a synthesis of our accomplishments to date by end of summer. Rick would like to see our priorities into the future. L1 Team agreed to work on this through summer and into fall.

Next Meeting Dates and Proposed Topics/Projects:

The L1 identified dates we are available for field reviews – June 8-10, July 13-15, Aug. 3-5. Proposed projects to be reviewed include Nez Perce tribe partnership projects, Big Creek Ford, Big Creek roads, Golden Hand Mine. Project lead and district biologists need to be contacted to firm up dates.