

Northeast Oregon Forests Resource Advisory Committee Meeting

Nov 18, 2022, 10:00 AM Pacific Time
Whitman Ranger District Compound
3825 11th St
Baker City, Oregon 97814

AGENDA

- 1000 Call meeting to order, welcome and Introductions (15)
- 1015 Process and background
 - Recommendation Process (10)
 - Budget Overview (10)
 - Q&A (10)
- 1045 Break (10-15)
- 1100 WW presentations and Q&A (60)
- 12-1245 Lunch (45) with 5 to spare
- 1250 MAF projects (45)
- 1335 Break (10)
- 1345 Umatilla Projects (45)
- 1430 Committee collaboration and recommendations (105)
- 1615 FY23 timeline updates and close out.

Attendees:

Council members present:

(In-person)

1. Steve Munkers
2. Teena Ballard
3. Travis Henslee
4. Ted Davis
5. John Williams
6. Jerry Moore

(Zoom)

7. Mike Gorman
8. Zach Williams
9. Rob Klavins
10. Richard Nichols
11. Brent Kerns
12. Paul Anderes

Also Present:

1. Doug McKay, Designated Federal Official
2. Darcy Weseman, NEO RAC Coordinator
3. Colleen Malaney, Malheur NF NEO RAC Coordinator
4. Gene Yates, Wallowa-Whitman NF NEO RAC Coordinator
5. Deb Gutierrez, Umatilla NF Administrative Budget Officer (Zoom)

1000 Call meeting to order, welcome and Introductions (15)

1015 Process and background

- Recommendation Process (10)
 - Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) Chairman, Teena Ballard (TB), in reference to the PowerPoint
 - Explained in general the approval procedures for the RAC committee membership, a quorum (9 members, 3 from each category to constitute a quorum) must be present (via in person or virtual) to constitute an official meeting, and that a project may be recommended by the RAC for approval if the project has been approved by a majority vote by category
 - Highlighted the purpose, intent and objectives of the Title II funding program (PowerPoint) and added that a high priority of the Forest Supervisors (FSUPs) is weed management, youth groups engagement and sustainable restoration.
 - 50% of all project funds be used for projects dedicated to road maintenance, decommissioning and obliteration or restoration of streams and watersheds.
 - There will be a few challenges that we will encounter during this meeting including almost everyone being new (i.e., RAC members, DFO, FS support staff), incorporating folks being virtual and having a clear understanding of the directives. Please keep that in mind as we work through the day and I will do my best to conduct the meeting in a fair and efficient manner.
- Budget Overview (10)
- Q&A (10)
- Process for day:
 - Question (Q). Rob Klavins (RK): how much discussion for projects where county funds have surplus?
 - Answer (A). TB if there are questions and issues with specific projects there will be opportunity for Q&A and will be voted on as an individual project. The RAC committee usually deals with counties exceeding their allocation and have to make adjustments to projects. The RAC cannot move surplus funds so they are carried over to the next fiscal year within the county.

- Introductions

1045 Break (10-15)

1100 WWNF project presentations and Q&A (60)

- Wallowa Whitman National Forest (WWNF) Engineering Projects (i.e., Baker, Grant, Union and Wallow Counties) –
 - **Dave Plummer** - Engineering Staff spoke on WWNF Road Maintenance Projects – Title II funding is included as a portion of the budget for road related work. Priority for work is established by multi-purpose uses by the public. Maintenance is primarily grading, brushing, road repairs, and work not otherwise funded by the Federal Highways (e.g., 51, 73 roads, which are major roads that act like highways, Elkhorn Scenic Route, that are collectors, are paved, but are FS roads. How do we use the funds to help with FS budget? Funds are allocated where best used, and to supplement other funding such as through the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) and the Forest Land Transportation Program (FLTP), which is funding via transportation program for roads not in the federal highway system (FHS).
 - Q. Contract or FS crews? A. Contract;
 - Q. Cattle Guards considered part of the road or fence? A: Depends on term grazing Permit. On the WAW, cattle guards are considered responsibility of the forest for safety reasons
 - Q. RK: Understand there is a backlog on road maintenance, so how is work/project locations prioritized? A. Determine which routes serve multiple facets and multiple use of public. Where is the return in funding when addressing issues such as safety, use, etc. Specifically targeted projects tend to get own separate funding. We use prioritize Title II funding to public use.
 - Q. Steve Munkers (SM). Do sales collect funds for maintenance fit in with logging? A: Yes, is done cooperatively via sales contract. Title II helps recoup maintenance for funding shortcomings over time due to declining sales.
 - **Russ West** – Powerpoint presentation. Many volunteers, 155 this year. Work projects in Eagle cap wilderness and Wenaha-Tucannon wilderness consisting of clearing trails, esp. trees and brush; drainage problems; repair and build bridges, replace signs. 1400 miles of trails. Group is asking funds to clear/open deferred maintenance Trails: 3 proposals, prorated to work for each county.
 - Q. (TB) – Do projects involve youth crews? A: Yes we have used Wallowa County Youth Group and Whitman college groups in past. 2023/24 funding will cover two years for each county.
 - **Marty Gardner** – Hells Canyon Recreation Association (HCNRA) Trail Collaborative – Can provide lots of volunteer money, are requesting funding for

hard expenses, tools, herbicides, fuel, jet boat transportation, etc. Non labor costs. This project provides funding for the Oregon side of Snake River. Idaho side covered by Idaho Counties Title II.

- Wallowa Mountains Office (WMO) Youth Trails Conservation Corps –
 - **Sweyn Wall** - WWNF high level of collaboration with groups. Youth – Boy Scouts, UI students, Id Youth Challenge Academy, and corrections.

- Sheep Creek Low-Tech Stewardship project.
 - **Noel March**, Trout Unlimited – Hand work, youth crews, local contract crews, Wallowa County Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC) goals to restore, construct beaver dam analogs, repairs to 85 existing dams, plant 4000 hardwoods. Multi-agency (Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Trout Unlimited, Grande Ronde Model Watershed) funding for adjacent projects by Bonneville Power Administration, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. Can involve a lot of volunteers to help due to low tech approach requiring non-skilled labor.
 - Q. Ted Davis (TD) about leveraging other funds will happen without funding – A. Yes.
 - Q. SM. durability of work after high flow: A. Changes in restoration – moving now to processes that can be sustained rather than heavily engineered structures. Main goal is to return beaver to do the work.
 - Q. questions about feasibility and prospects for success. A.. Project is trying to create complexity in system.
 - Q.C. RK – supports project, but big price tag.
 - Noel March – explained history of stream.

- Dougherty Campground Well Location Survey –
 - **Sweyn Wall** presented –
 - Q. contract? A: Wallowa Resources to perform work.

- Riparian Monitoring (Wallowa County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD))
 - **JW** addressed questions
 - Q. TD had a question re. Riparian Monitoring Project. -004- A. monitor impact. Multi-party group agreed to help fund monitoring. FS is doing legally required monitoring. This project is above and beyond legally required monitoring. There are five sales laid out. One is finished.
 - Q. TD Report or analysis. A: County will do that collaboratively with FS.

12-1245 Lunch (45) with 5 to spare

1250 MNF project presentations and Q&A projects (45)

- Revegetating to Combat Invasive Plants control projects – Powerpoint –
 - **Jessie Brunson** (MNF) presented Title II is critically important to program. Has historically funded over 60% of total funding.

- John Day River Private Lands Forest and Range Inventory – Grant County – Hardcopy Handout
 - **Kyle Sullivan** (Grant County SWCD) presented. A hardcopy handout was provided to the RAC members that were present, but all of the members that were virtual did not have access to this information. This project provides private landowners a ground-truth assessment of condition of their forest and range lands. This information is used to identify the condition of their lands, treatment needs and assists the landowners with connecting to funding needed for treatment. These lands are located for the most part next to the public lands and treatment of the lands will help create a buffer that will reduce the risk of wildland fires spreading down into the urban areas in the John Day Valley.
 - Q. How to distribute materials, info to landowners. A. at first, coordination meeting with interagency/partners to stakeholders/landowners in area.
- MNF Trail Maintenance
 - **Kevin Green** (Virtual Presentation (VP))– Blue Mtn. Trail. Partnered with Greater Hells Canyon Council. Funds with Northwest Youth Corps.
- White Creek Riparian Fence
 - **Amy Stiner** (VP)– Biological Opinion required fence. Fence ¼ mile (1.4 miles of fence needed).
 - Q. Richard Nichols (RN) – who maintains? A. Permittee
- TEC OYCC Youth Crew
 - **Howard Richburg** (VP) – wildlife and recreation projects: fence maintenance, riparian collection, seed collection, planting Stream culvert improvement projects; Recreation, maintenance of trailheads, campgrounds, dump sites, and trails, etc.
- 73 Road Asphalt Repair– Grant County –
 - **Dan Story** presented
- Sensitive locations Fuel Treatments
 - **Katee Withee presented**
 - Q. what kinds of locations? Cultural sites, 19th century placer gold mining, especially wooden features and other combustible artifacts.
- Collaborative Capacity to support landscape level planning/implementation
 - **Mark Webb** presented– enhances FS capacity to do work. Helps with outcomes.
 - Q. John Williams (JW) – what is the work that gets funded. A. Funds salaries, works with FS staff.
 - TD – could FS plan revision funding help fund this project?
 - RK – Is this general collaborative? A. Yes. Annual budget? A. about \$100K.
 - Who funds outyears? Other sources of private, state, grants to state agencies. This funding facilitates non-federal position.

1335 Break (10)

1345 UNF project presentations and Q&A (45)

- Junkens Fish Passage and OHV Trail reroute
 - **Richard Christian** presentation –
 - Q. TD – did you apply for OHA funds to help with reroute? A. No.
 - Q. RN – Other funding sources confirmed? A. Yes.
 - Q. RK – Will new trails be analyzed to ensure they will not cause damage? A. Will be designed to be non-damaging, shorter, appropriate bridges.

- North Fork John Day Trail Maintenance
 - **Holly Hendricksen** – Presentation requests funds for youth corps to bolster force account/crew trail work. Hard to get volunteer groups for this area.
 - Q. SM – have you gone to Oregon State University for assistance (for intern?). Mt. Adams Institute internship has been helpful, because they are 6 mo. Positions. Retention rate with Mt. Adams has been good. Return rate is good. NFJD does reach out to OSU, etc. for other seasonal positions.

- Grant County Invasive Plant Project
 - **Brad Lathrop** – Presentation
 - Q. TB – any aerial proposed? A. No
 - Q. Doug M – is project scalable? A. Yes;
 - Q. How much county v. NFS land would be sprayed? A. Both areas have county roads that are portals to NFS land.

- Road Maintenance – (Grant County)
 - **Shaun Oliver** presentation.
No questions

- YCC – North Fork John Day (NFJD) Ranger District (RD) (Grant & Morrow County)
 - **Stephaney Kerley**, NFJD District Ranger, request to build a youth crew to help with a variety of projects.
 - Q. Funding split question from SM. A. need to reflect 50/50 split in budget, something FS will correct.

- Wenaha Wilderness Grande Ronde River Noxious Weed Control
 - **Chance Appleford** presentation.

- Wenaha River Trail Maintenance
 - **Kbott** presentation. – fire damaged area, trees down, etc.
 - Q. SM. Duration of funding? A. 3 years.
 - Q. RK – what percent does Wallowa Resources get for admin fees?

- Q. TD – what about fire rehab funding if due to fire? A. Chance A. – Burned Area Emergency Response would not fund wilderness improvement work.

1430 Committee collaboration and recommendations (105)

- TB asked for suggestions from the RAC members on how to vote on the projects. Brent Kerns recommended that we vote on groups of projects whenever possible. TB agreed with that and proposed that we would go through each Forest and identify projects that may need additional discussion and be voted on individually.
- TB then discussed that a project may be recommended by the RAC committee if the project has been approved by a majority vote by category. TB also stated that there is some still some clarification needed on the definition of “majority vote by category” and if we experience a questionable vote that the project will be recommended with notation of issues for the approving officer to consider.
- TB opened up the process to identifying the projects that the RAC committee has additional questions and concerns that will require a vote as an individual project.

MNF Projects (Grant County:

- Sensitive Locations Fuel Treatment
 - RK – Is NEPA a problem? Concerned with treating additional acres with a controversial timber sale.
- John Day Valley Private Lands Forest and Range Inventory – Federal dollars for private lands.
 - Doug M. – John Day River Valley Private Lands Inventory. Title II may not be expended on non-NFS lands.
- Collaborative Capacity to support landscape level planning/implementation
 - Mark Webb Blue Mountain Forest Partnership (BMFP) responded to RK lack of support for the BLFP mission and shared that they have a different perspective on NF management. Mark Webb shared that this program has been instrumental to enhance MNF program of work.
 - Q. TB Is Title II the appropriate funding tool for this project?
 - A. Mark Webb - other funding sources fund specific projects. BMFP facilitates other projects coming to fruition. There haven't been other sources of funding for this kind of work – facilitation and collaboration
 - Zach Williams (ZW) – Reports that BMFP has been instrumental in advancing project work on the MNF.
 - RN – solution in search of a problem.
 - Mark Webb – explanation of kinds of projects/issues that the collaborative resolves.
- Revegetating to combat invasives –
 - Q. JW – Will this be done with natives A. yes

Voting:

MNF (not #'s 3, 4, 7)

CAT A: Yea,

CAT B: Yea

Cat C: Yea

#3, Sensitive Locations Fuel Treatments

Cat A, 1 nay, 4 yea

Cat B, Yea

Cat C, Yea

#4, Collaborative Capacity to support landscape level planning/implementation (BMFP) –

Cat A: Nay 2, 3 yea,

Cat B: 1 nay, 3 yea

Cat C: 1 nay, 2 yea

#7, John Day Valley Private Lands Forest and Range Inventory - Grant SWCD

Cat A: Nay, 1: Yea, 4

Cat B: Nay, 3: Yea 1

Cat C: Nay 0: Yea 3

Need to further clarify funding rules for this project

As Chairman, Teena Ballard, concluded that all MNF Grant County projects be recommended for approval as proposed, with the exception of Project #7 - John Day Valley Private Lands Forest and Range Inventory that will be recommended for approval with the following notation of issues for the approving officer to consider:

- **Issue 1: Clarification is needed if Approved by a majority vote by category was interpreted correctly** – The results of the vote by category were 2 Yea to 1 Nay and total vote of individual were 8 Yea to 4 Nay. The understanding at the time of the meeting is that the project was approved by majority by category, therefore recommended for approval.
- **Issue 2: Clarification is needed if Title II may not be expended on non-NFS lands – SEC. 202: General Limitations on Use of Projects Funds** states that project funds may be used on non-Federal land where projects would benefit the resources on Federal Lands. This is discussed above in the MNF presentation by Kyle Sullivan (KS) of the Grant SWCD.
Confusion on this issue may have influenced how a RAC member may have voted.
- **Issue 3: Virtual RAC members not having access to the hardcopy map and project information provided by the presenter (KS)** - The presenter was unaware that RAC members would be virtual. Not having this information available may have influenced how a RAC member may have voted.

WWNF

Union County – Proposal from Paul Anderes (via email to Colleen Malaney)

The Union County priorities as discussed with USFS personnel and with Union County Board of Commissioners are as follows:

1. UN-WAW22-602 Trail maintenance	\$11,138	Eagle Cap/ Hells Canyon Volunteer
2. UN-WAW22-606 Improvement	\$31,800	Mt. Fanny Comm. Site Access
3. UN-WAW22-603 50%	\$79,500	51 Road Slump Repairs FUNDED At
4. UN-WAW22-609	\$10,600	WWNF Portal Sign Replacement
5. UN-WAW22-604 Less \$2,000 of full request	\$24,500	5125 Road Reconditioning & Brushing

The total of these projects should be \$157,000 +/-

WWNF for each County

CAT A: Yea,

CAT B: Yea

Cat C: Yea

Union County – Projects Recommended for Approval as proposed above by County Commissioner Paul Anderes in consultation with the WWNF.

Baker County – Recommended for Approval as proposed.

Grant County- Recommended for Approval but scaled to fit budget and RAC also recommended moving available funds from MNF Baker Co. to this project. See spreadsheet.

Wallowa County - Recommended for Approval but scaled to fit budget. See spreadsheet.

UNF for each County with funds moved to appropriate county. See spreadsheet

CAT A: Yea,

CAT B: Yea

Cat C: Yea

1615 FY23 timeline updates and close out.

FY23 timeline was recommendation proposed as follows,

-Outreach for 2024 project is late November to early December 2023. Project due back to Forests in late March of 2023. RAC recommendations tentatively in late June.

-RAC members recommended late June. Not on Fridays, June 22 or 30. 2-day meeting recommended.

-Forest will work with leadership to confirm 2024 project outreach date and solidify proposed timeline.

After Action Review (AAR) proposed to capitalize on what we have learned over the past 12-24 months. AAR survey will be shared with project leads and RAC members next week to better understand what is working and what can be improved on during our next round.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 P.M.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

Doug McKay
Designated Federal Official

Northeast Oregon Forests RAC
/s/ DOUGLAS MCKAY Digitally signed by DOUGLAS MCKAY
Date: 2023.01.03
16:39:07 -08'00'

Teena Ballard

Chairperson
Northeast Oregon Forests RAC

/s/ *Teena M. Ballard*

These minutes will be formally considered by the Council at its next meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.