

Meeting Minutes for RAC Meeting #1

A Federal Advisory Committee Act meeting related to Title II of the Secure Rural Schools Act

HOOD-WILLAMETTE RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAC) SUMMARY OF MEETING

November 7, 2024

The Hood-Willamette Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) convened for its first meeting of calendar year 2024 at 9:00 A.M. on November 7, 2024, in a hybrid format at the Keizer Civic Center in Keizer, Oregon and on Microsoft Teams. Meta Loftsgaarden was present in her role as the committee's Designated Federal Officer (DFO). The meeting was open to the public from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

For the record, it is noted that committee members abstained from discussion and voting on applications from their respective institutions or in which a conflict of interest could occur, and committee members signed a statement to this effect in advance of the meeting.

Committee members present:

Name	Category	Term	Attendance
Alyssa Brownlee	A	1st	In-person
Heather Buch	C	1st	In-person
Patrick Davis	B	2nd	In-person
Kurt Doctor	A	1st	In-person
Mark Gourley	A	1st	In-person
Melanie Kate-Mason	B	2nd	In-person
Jeff Parker	B	2nd	In-person
Cheryl Pouley	C	1st	In-person
Richard Ragan	A	2nd	In-person
Katherine Stanton	B	1st	Virtual
Frank Vehaflic	A	1st	In-person
Steven Wilent	C	2nd	Virtual
Rebecca Wolf	B	1st	In-person

Staff of the USDA Forest Service present:

Name	Position	Attendance
Meta Loftsgaarden	RAC Designated Federal Officer and Mt. Hood NF Forest Supervisor	In-person
Eileen Kitayama	RAC Coordinator and Willamette NF Partnership Coordinator	In-person
Colleen Urban	RAC Assistant Coordinator and Mt. Hood NF Partnership Coordinator	In-person
Gar Abbas	Mt. Hood NF Deputy Forest Supervisor	In-person
Donna Mickley	Willamette NF Acting Forest Supervisor	In-person
Duane Bishop	Willamette NF Deputy Forest Supervisor	In-person
Omero Torres	Willamette NF Staff Officer for Recreation, Heritage, Lands, Minerals, & Partnerships	In-person

MEETING PURPOSE

The purpose of this meeting was to orient and welcome new committee members, appoint a new chairperson and vice chairperson, and listen to presentations for proposals received in response to the FY21-23 Title II funds solicitation, prior to the RAC reconvening and voting on proposals at the next RAC meeting on December 2, 2024.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

Meta Loftsgaarden, the Designated Federal Officer, and Eileen Kitayama, the RAC Coordinator, provided a review of the agenda and an overview of the Secure Rural Schools Title II program and funds. They shared the following information:

- Approximately \$3.4 million in Title II funds were available this round for 50 proposals submitted.
- Many of the committee members were going to term-out in March 2025, so it was important to stay on schedule to complete reviews and recommendations.
- This RAC covered about a quarter of all Oregon counties. About three quarters of available funding would cover projects on the Willamette National Forest, and about one quarter would cover the Mt. Hood National Forest and Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.
- At least half of the total funds needed to be invested in road maintenance or watershed restoration projects.
- There was one media inquiry prior to today's meeting with interest in the Santiam Canyon corridor in Marion and Linn Counties.
- No public comments were received prior to today's meeting.

Committee members asked where the Title II money came from, and how county shares (%) were selected. Secure Rurals Schools Act Title II funds originated from revenues generated by the U.S. Forest Service through activities like timber sales, grazing permits, and special use permits occurring on National Forests and Grasslands. Allocations were generally based on which county the revenue-generating action/fees occurred in. Funds could be shifted around between forests, but not between counties. It was possible to have a project proposal that spanned multiple counties or forests, or both. In some previous years, there were not enough projects to spend out all the available Title II funds. However, this year, proposal requests exceed available funding.

Meta Loftsgaarden and Eileen Kitayama reviewed the purpose of the Hood-Willamette RAC and pertinent operating guidelines. Committee members were reminded that they should recuse themselves from voting on a recommendation if there was any real or perceived financial benefit to themselves, their family, or their employer. There was discussion about identifying potential conflicts of interest. All current committee members had already completed the annual ethics certification prior to the meeting.

Committee members were informed that subcommittees established among committee members for purposes of RAC business must not constitute a quorum, otherwise meetings must be noticed and documented. Committee members expressed their interest in following up on past recommended/funded projects to inform future funding recommendations. There was interest in a 2026 summer field trip to visit one of the funded projects.

The RAC then voted to elect Jeff Parker as the Chairperson and Patrick Davis as the Vice Chairperson. After becoming Chairperson, Jeff Parker recommended developing a strategy for reviewing and recommending projects. He stated that there was urgency to get projects selected at the next meeting in December to make sure that there was time to get agreements initiated and avoid any delays. He recommended breaking into county subgroups to review proposals. The 2024 Hood-Willamette RAC Subcommittees were chosen to be as follows:

Subcommittee	Subcommittee Members	As-needed basis
Lane and Douglas County	Heather Buch Melanie Kate-Mason Jeff Parker	Cheryl Pouley for tribal/heritage input
Linn and Marion County	Alyssa Brownlee Mark Gourley Cheryl Pouley	Jeff Parker
Hood River, Jefferson, and Wasco County	Patrick Davis Richard Ragan Katherine Stanton	Cheryl Pouley for tribal/heritage input
Multnomah and Clackamas County	Kurt Doctor Frank Vehaflic Steven Wilent Rebecca Wolf	Patrick Davis, Cheryl Pouley for tribal/heritage input

Meta Loftsgaarden directed the committee members to comply with all law and policy pertaining to the SRS Act and Title II Funds, as well as the operating norms for the Hood-Willamette RAC. She expressed that RAC recommendations should be comprehensive and reflective of local communities. She encouraged the committee members to prioritize projects that benefited people, leveraged additional work, and were unlikely to be funded in other ways.

PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS

Meta Loftsgaarden and Eileen Kitayama provided an overview of the proposal process and the proposals that were received. Proposal had been accepted during a one month window. There were a total of 50 project proposals, representing all nine of the counties served by the Hood-Willamette RAC. Proposals were supposed to be scalable so projects could be adjusted according to available funding. Each proposal had a project sponsor (forest/organization) and a point of contact.

Proposals would be presented to the RAC, with each project sponsor having approximately 5 minutes to present their proposals, including time for Q&A. Committee members were instructed to take notes during presentations to capture what stood out for them. Committee members were informed they had access to the Box folder as of Nov 6th so they could review proposals electronically. Eileen Kitayama shared her screen to show committee members what the Box file structure looked like where they would access the proposals. She said she would be available to answer questions regarding Box access or proposals.

Meta Loftsgaarden and Eileen Kitayama reviewed the table showing funding available by counties and fiscal years. There was approximately \$3.4 million in Fiscal Year 2021-2023 (FY21, FY22, & FY23) Title II funds available for award through the solicitation. Per Title II funding regulations, funds were required to be awarded to projects that would benefit the National Forest lands and resources

within the county where the funds were generated. Approximately \$20,000 (0.6%) was set aside for RAC overhead.

As a minor detail, Meta Loftsgaarden noted that the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area did not generate a lot of revenues, and therefore their proposals were submitted through the Mt. Hood National Forest with the Mt. Hood National Forest's permission.

Committee members asked about the availability of seasonal workers to get the work done. Committee members made comments that the Forest Service should recognize the value of volunteers, while also recognizing that they are not completely free; there is a cost to help manage them so they have a good experience and projects are well organized. The Forest Service works with organizations that help manage volunteers, for example, Cascade Volunteers on the Willamette NF.

Eileen Kitayama reminded the committee members that their votes would be recommendations to the Designated Federal Official, Meta Loftsgaarden, who would make the final funding decisions.

Proposal presentations occurred virtually and began at 10:45 A.M.

Forest Service Proposals on Willamette National Forest

- Brandon Green (Engineering) – Forest-wide Road Maintenance and FSR 1506.

This was H.J. Andrews' main access road. It burned over during the Lookout fire and was being used as a fire control line. It had lots of vegetation removed and left along road, so debris now needed to be removed and it needed erosion repair and ditch/culvert cleaning. NEPA had already been completed.

- Jonah Gladney (Zone Fire Management Officer) presented on behalf of Greg Ver – Roadside brushing and hazard tree removal projects within Linn and Marion Counties.
- Matt Peterson (Forest Recreation Program Manager) – 4 Recreation Program Projects: (1) Priority Developed and Dispersed Site Deferred Maintenance, (2) Trails Maintenance, (3) Portable Toilet Rentals, (4) Recreation Access Roads.
- Mckenzie Jensen (Middle Fork Ranger District Recreation Staff) – Abandoned Vehicle Removal and YCC Crew.

She said the Forest Service coordinates with law enforcement to help track vehicle owners, however; it's not uncommon that an abandoned vehicle cannot be linked to an owner.

- Raymond Perault (Fire Management Specialist) – Middle Fork Meadow Restoration.

He said this project was scalable in terms of accepting funds to do work in some meadows instead of all meadows. The staff salary line item could be for Forest Service and/or partners. There were several meadows proposed throughout the Middle Fork Ranger District.

- Heidi Jump (Detroit RD Botanist) – Invasive weed treatments in post fire environments in Marion County and boot brush stations.

She said the treatment method in the proposal was mostly hand pulling, and that physically pulling scotch broom with the roots is the most effective.

- Sarah Uebel (McKenzie River RD Botanist) – Noxious weed abatement in Linn and Lane counties (EDRR—Early Detection, Rapid Response).

She said the Forest is using herbicides that have been covered by NEPA; typically, these herbicides are applied with June timing. And that one juvenile work crew is composed of 1 crew leader and 5 kids.
- Brett Blundon (Disaster Recovery Staff) – Restoring Forest Access within the Lookout Fire. Road maintenance, fuel breaks, fire access, and removal of danger trees that could hit road.

He said there will be opportunities to clear culverts to improve fish passage. And that this proposal is related to the FSR 1506 proposal, but that it is not the same work.
- Libby Hamilton (Middle Fork RD Aquatics) – Watershed Restoration.

She said the Willamette NF conducted a road strategy around 2015 to balance competing needs between road maintenance and road decommissioning. Whenever NEPA is done, the WNF also looks at opportunities to decommission/store roads, such as duplicate routes. Roads selected for decommissioning were located mid-slope.
- Mark Richardson (Detroit RD Hydrologist) – Breitenbush River Aquatic Restoration, Marion County.
- Cayla Kennedy (Sweet Home RD Archaeologist) – Breitenbush Hot Springs Restoration (Phase 1, Planning Stage), Marion County.

She said that her district had worked with the University of Oregon in the past with the Detroit Flats project and had positive results. She noted that she was looking for other grant opportunities in addition to the \$61K she requested from the RAC.

- Matt Peterson (Detroit RD Recreation) presenting on behalf of Alex Lasher – Recreation Management Around Detroit Lake Reservoir (lake sweeping, dispersed recreation management, OHV use).

He said the Forest Service has an Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and had been doing lake sweeping for decades as part of leading recreation management around the lake.

Forest Service Proposals on Mt. Hood National Forest

- Steven Beri (Recreation Program Manager) – Abandoned Vehicle Removal
- Ut Huynh (Soil Scientist) – Olallie Lakes Planting Project and Road Maintenance & Decommission Project
- Garrett Berkey (Engineering) on behalf of Jenny Lyman – Road Maintenance Project for MTH and CRGNSA, 4 counties.

He said the roads had been prioritized to receive maintenance using a Mt. Hood National Forest list that tracks road maintenance priorities.

- Christina Mead (East Zone Botanist) – Invasive Species Treatments Project and Native Plan Materials/Seeds Development Project.

She said that the herbicides being used had been cleared through NEPA, and that there would be one treatment per year, per site.

- Greg Wanner (District Ranger) – High-use Trailhead Improvements on Zigzag RD in Clackamas County to replace porta-potties with vault toilets.

He said the estimated cost was about \$40K per toilet and that they were spending about \$90K per year on porta-potties. He also said that three priority trailheads had been identified.
- Jon Breithaupt (East Zone Recreation Program Manager) – Trails Deferred Maintenance.

Committee members appreciated that he reached out to volunteers to help with trails maintenance.
- Danielle Clearwater (Wildlife Program Manager) – Protecting Wildlife & Improving Rangeland at Camas Prairie (Wasco County) Project and Meadow Restoration Project within Riverside Fire Footprint.

She said it was the permittee's responsibility to maintain the fence once it was built, but they were not responsible for full replacement. She said she would need to follow up with the program specialist for an estimate on the life expectancy of the fence, and would need to work with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for their feedback on the idea of dropping dead trees to create habitat and reduce fence repairs.
- Erin Baumgart (Area Geneticist) on behalf of Chad Atwood – Seed Orchard Resilience and Protection Project, Clackamas County.

She said that seed production in their seed orchards without insecticides was still more efficient and genetically diverse compared to collecting wild crops, and that they could look at using insecticides, but would need NEPA.
- Whitney Olsker (East Side Silviculturist) – Gate Fuels Reduction Project, Wasco County.

She said the other sources of funding being used to help fund this project were Joint Chiefs funding, NRCS, wildfire crisis strategy, Forest Health (appropriated funds), supplemental fuels funding, and OWEB funding through the East Cascade Oaks Partnership.
- Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Proposals
- Claire Fernandes (Partnership & Special Project Coordinator) on behalf of herself and Rashawn Tama – Invasive Plant Control Project and Next Door Youth Crew Project.

Partner Proposals on the Mt. Hood National Forest

- Steve Kruger (Trail Keepers of Oregon) – TKO Stewardship & Ambassador Program.

He said the funding requested was mainly to fund paid staff, as well as to help host events and purchase tools.
- Sam Leininger (Clackamas SWCD) – Invasive Weed Abatement
- Neal Hatley (AntFarm) – Community Youth Crew Forest Cleanup Initiative Project.

He said that AntFarm uses sharps containers, heavy duty stick-resistant gloves, and training to identify hazards, and assess for safe removal or deferment.

- Alix Danielsen (Hood River Watershed Group) – Upper West Fork Hood River Habitat Restoration – Large Wood Acquisition Project.

She said the entire project would be on Forest Service land. She acknowledged that they're still looking at fish data to see if more fish going out means more fish coming back.

- Andrew Spaeth (Wasco County Forest Collaborative) – Mt. Hood East Zone Forest Collaboratives.

Partner Proposals on the Willamette National Forest

- Chip Coker (Cascade Volunteers) – Staffing Proposal Project.
- Matthew Sterner (Lane County Youth Services) – Lane County Youth Services Forest Team Project.
- Dov Weinman (Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council) – Middle Fork Willamette Riparian Restoration & Recreation/Trails Project.
- Michelle Emmons (Oakridge Trail Alliance) – Tharp Memorial Bridge & Parking Area Resurfacing Project.

She said that the bridge would connect to the Greenwaters Trail on the Willamette National Forest. There were no parking area improvements planned.

- Hania Candelario (Northwest Youth Corps; NYC) – 3 Projects: (1) NYC Youth Crew Trails Work near H.J. Andrews, (2) NYC Weed Abatement and Turtle Habitat Improvement, (3) NYC Prairie and Meadow Restoration at Cascadia Area.

She said that NYC was available to partner with other organizations to ensure coordination between partner crews and prevent any overlap. She also said work would occur at both the Camas Prairie and Cascade Day Use sites on Sweet Home Ranger District.

- Dwight Sheets (Friends of Santiam Pass Ski Lodge) – Santiam Pass Ski Lodge Access Road & Drainage Repairs.
- Stacey Whaley (Linn County Parks and Recreation) – Clear Lake Water Quality Protection
- Greg Reed (Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife) – Advancing Beaver Restoration in North Santiam and Breitenbush Beaver Emphasis Area Project.

CLOSING REMARKS

Meta Loftsgaarden informed the committee that although projects were scalable, not all projects needed to receive partial funding and that it was OK to not fund some projects. She also stated the Forest Service could assist with any follow-up needs regarding proposals. Mark Gourley requested a list of NEPA-approved projects and gave kudos to staff for their meeting preparation and organization. Frank Vehaflic requested to know if partners previously received grants and how they performed.

Jeff Parker read out a summary of the subcommittee assignments by counties and explained that the subcommittee assignments were made based on which counties each committee member was most interested in. Committee members were asked to meet with their subcommittees to review

projects between the end of this meeting and December 2. They were encouraged to communicate early with project sponsors and not to wait until December 2 to ask questions and get information.

Eileen Kitayama said she would email the committee members and send them the link to digitally share the proposals, the slides, and the spreadsheet showing the Forest Service's project rankings. The Forest Supervisors spoke and said they would help make their staff accessible to the RAC subcommittees.

The RAC was reminded that the next meeting was scheduled for December 2, 2025, and at that meeting they would report out on their subcommittee recommendations and cast their votes.

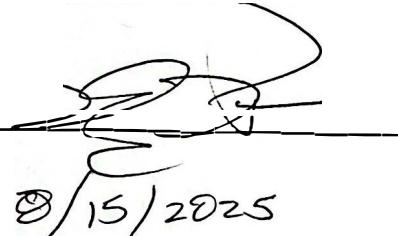
ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 P.M.

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

Meta Loftsgaarden
Designated Federal Officer (DFO)
Hood-Willamette Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) _____

Jeff Parker
Chairperson
Hood-Willamette Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) _____



01/15/2025

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