

Northeast Oregon Forests Resource Advisory Committee

PUBLIC MEETING

DATE | 09:00 AM – 04:00 PM (PST)

MEETING MINUTES

Each SRS RAC is established pursuant to the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 as amended, 16 U.S.C. sec. 7125, hereafter referred to as the SRS RAC Act as amended; codified in Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334)., and in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, as amended, 5 U.S.C. 10.

In accordance with the established provisions, the Northeast Oregon Forests RAC convened for this public meeting on May 8, 2025, 9:00am to 4:00pm. The meeting was held at the La Grande Ranger District Office Conference Room and was open to the public/to join virtually via Teams Meeting ID: 246 104 370 412 Passcode: C6T5gx2v

A [Federal Register notice](#) was published on March 10, 2025 providing general information and public participation details for the meeting. Pause on News Releases.

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ACRONYMS

- **DFO** – Designated Federal Officer
- **USDA** – United States Department of Agriculture
- **NEOF** – Northeast Oregon Forests
- **RAC** – Resource Advisory Committee
- **FS** – Forest Service
- **SRS** – Secure Rural Schools
- **MAL** – Malheur
- **UMA** – Umatilla
- **WAW** – Wallowa- Whitman

MEETING AGENDA

Item #	Topic
1.	Call Meeting to order, Welcome and Introductions, Review of Day (30 mins - DFO/Chair/Lead Coordinator)
2.	Review of Title II Project Criteria (30 mins - DFO/Lead Coordinator)
3.	Operating Procedure/Budget Update (15 mins – DFO/Lead Coordinator/Chair)
4.	Break (15min)
5.	Malheur and Umatilla Projects (60 mins - Forest Coordinators/Project Leads)
6.	Lunch (60 mins)
7.	WW Projects (60 mins - Forest Coordinator/Project Leads)
8.	Break (15 mins)
9.	Recommendations for FY 25 Projects Cont. (45 mins - DFO/Chair)
10.	Closeout (30 mins) and adjourn

MEETING ATTENDENCE

Quorum was met per Charter.

Committee Members			
Name	Category/Represented Industry	Attendance	Attendance Type
Teena Ballard- Chair		Present	In-Person

Zach Williams		Present	In-Person
L.Brent Kerns		Present	In-Person
Stephen Munkers		Present	In-Person
Mike Gorman		Present	In-Person
Ted Davis		Present	In-Person
John Williams		Present	In-Person
Rishard Nichols		Present	In-Person
Jerry Moore		Present	In-Person
Travis Henslee		Absent	
Gary Humphreys		Absent	
Todd Nash		Absent	
Paul Andres		Absent	
Rob Klavins		Absent	

USDA Staff			
Name	Position/Title	Attendance	Attendance Type
Chase Bloom	DFO	Present	In-person
Amy Franklin	Lead/Malheur Coord.	Present	In-Person
Jennifer Bush	Partnership Coord.	Present	In-Person
Chris Dennis	Umatilla Coord.	Present	In-Person
Amber Ingoglia	Partnership Coord	Present	In-Person
Acacia Probert de Portillo	Volunteer	Present	In-Person
Tara Ward		Present	Virtual
Mathew Smith		Present	Virtual
Jessica Brunson		Present	Virtual
Shaun Oliver		Present	Virtual

General Audience	
Name	Position/Title
Lindsey Ciepiela	Eastern Oregon Trail Alliance
Mike Hansen	
Gussie Cook	
Marci Schreder	
Tonya Nichols	Public

PUBLIC COMMENTS

N/A

MEETING MINUTES

Welcome

DFO welcomes and conducted a round robin of introductions.

Opening Remarks DISCUSSION/UPDATES TOPICS

DFO reviewed qualifying proposal criteria. Meant to benefit the local community. Funds apply to Federal Lands or close by. Review of ethics.

Request from RAC members regarding increasing monitoring of projects from previous years.

RAC would like additional information on how many youths were hired by the youth crews and what work was able to be accomplished with the Title II Funds.

Mike Gorman requested a presentation to the Morrow County Commissioners.

DFO spoke on eligibility, “If a project is not going to occur on Federal Land, it must have clear direct or indirect benefits to resources on Federal Land to be eligible for Title II Funding. Clear direct benefits can be to Forest Service infrastructure, forest ecosystem, land health, water quality, or fish and wildlife habitat.

These benefits must be clearly stated in the project proposal. If the projects’ benefits to Federal Land resources are not clearly identified in the project proposal, the project will not be eligible for Title II Funding”

Addressing Public Comments

N/A

Deliberation/Voting (MATTERS DISCUSSED,
DECISIONS/RESOLUTIONS/MOTIONS AND VOTING ACTIONS/FIRST
SECOND THIRD SO FORTH, ABSTAIN

The NEOF RAC reviewed 26 project proposals. A total of 18 projects were recommended for full or partial funding by NEOF RAC.

Proponents from counties within the Wallowa-Whitman NF proposed projects with total funding requests that exceeded available balances. The RAC decided to cote on project priority to rank all projects and fully fund #1 projects. If for some reason priority #1 is unable to use all or a portion of funds, the remainder of them would move to priority #2, and so on.

Umatilla National Forest Projects: Grant, Morrow, Union, Umatilla, Wheeler & Wallowa Counties.

Proposals were submitted for Grant and Umatilla Counties only.

UM-UMA25-001

- Motion to approve: Brent Kerns
- Second: Zach William
- All in favor to approve, motion approved

GR-UMA25-001

- Motion to approve: Brent Kerns
- Second: Zach Williams
- All in favor to approve, motion approved

GR-UMA25-002

- Motion to approve: Brent Kerns
- Second: Zach Williams
- All in favor to approve, motion approved

Malheur National Forest Projects: Grant & Harney Counties

Baker County had no proposals submitted.

GR-MAL25-001

- Motion to approve: Brent Kerns
- Second: Zach Williams
- All in favor to approve, motion approved

GR-MAL25-002

- Motion to approve: Brent Kerns
- Second: Zach Williams
- All in favor to approve, motion approved

GR-UMA25-003 project number corrected to GR-MAL-003

- Motion to approve: Brent Kerns
- Second: Zach Williams
- All in favor to approve, motion approved

GR-MAL25-004

- Motion to approve: Brent Kerns
- Second: Zach Williams
- All in favor to approve, motion approved

GR-MAL25-005

- Motion to approve: Brent Kerns
- Second: Zach Williams
- All in favor to approve, motion approved

GR-MAL25-006

- Motion to approve: Brent Kerns
- Second: Zach Williams
- All in favor to approve, motion approved

GR-MAL25-007

- Motion to approve: Brent Kerns
- Second: Zach Williams
- All in favor to approve, motion approved

GR-MAL25-008

- Motion to approve: Brent Kerns
- Second: Zach Williams

- All in favor to approve, motion approved

GR-MAL25-009

- Motion to approve: Brent Kerns
- Second: Zach Williams
- All in favor to approve, motion approved

HA-MAL25-001

- Motion to approve: Brent Kerns
- Second: Zach Williams
- All in favor to approve, motion approved

HA-MAL25-002

- Motion to approve: Brent Kerns
- Second: Zach Williams
- All in favor to approve, motion approved

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Projects: Baker, Grant, Union & Wallowa Counties

Motion Ted Davis: Prioritize the list of projects. Fully fund priority project #1. If that project is unable to use the funds/all the funds, then the funds/remainder would be awarded to the next priority project.

- Second: Jerry Moore
- All in favor approve, motion approved.

BA-WW25-001

- Motion to approve as priority #4, with no funds available: Ted Davis
- Second: Jerry Moore
- All in favor approve, motion approved

BA-WW25-002

- Motion to approve as priority #1, for all available funds (\$6,202): Ted Davis
- Second: Jerry Moore
- All in favor approve, motion approved

BA-WW25-003

- Motion to approve as priority #3, with no funds available: Ted Davis

- Second: Jerry Moore
- All in favor approve, motional approved

BA/UN/GR-WW25-001 : Baker County

- Motion to approve as priority #2, with no funds available: Ted Davis
- Second: Jerry Moore
- All in favor approve, motional approved

BA/UN/GR-WW25-001: Grant County

- Motion to approve as priority #1, for all funds available in Grant County (\$11,411): Ted Davis
- Second: Jerry Moore
- All in favor approve, motional approved

BA/UN/GR-WW25-001: Union County

- Motion to approve as priority #1, for all funds available in Union County (\$2,018): Ted Davis
- Second: Jerry Moore
- All in favor approve, motional approved

UN-WW25-001

- Motion to approve as priority #2, with no funds available.: John Williams
- Second: Zach Williams
- All in favor approve, motional approved

WA-WW25-001

- Motion to approve as priority #3, with no funds available.: John Williams
- Second: Jerry Moore
- All in favor approve, motional approved

WA-WW25-002

- Motion to approve as priority #5, with no funds available.: John Williams
- Second: Jerry Moore
- All in favor approve, motional approved

WA-WW25-003

- Motion to approve as priority #2, with no funds available.: John Williams

- Second: Jerry Moore
- All in favor approve, motional approved

WA-WW25-004

- Motion to approve as priority #1, with all funds available (\$3,331): John Williams
- Second: Jerry Moore
- All in favor approve, motional approved

WA-WW25-005

- Motion to approve as priority #4, with no funds available. :John Willians
- Second: Jerry Moore
- All in favor approve, motional approved

Project Number	County	Forest/Sponsor	Project Name	Enter Amount Recommended to Fund	Priority Ranking
GR-MAL25-001	Grant	Malheur NF	BMRD Youth Crew	\$ 160,000	
GR-MAL25-002	Grant	Malheur NF	Malheur Rangeland Monitoring	\$ 24,000	
GR-MAL25-003	Grant	Malheur NF	Monument Soil and Water Conservation District Under-served Lands Invasive Weed Control	\$ 22,000	
GR-MAL25-004	Grant	Malheur NF	North Fork Malheur Campground Toilet Replacement	\$ 38,000	
GR-MAL25-005	Grant	EOTA	EOTA- Magone Trail Network	\$ 121,636	
GR-MAL25-006	Grant	Malheur NF	High Elevation Recreation Access, Dixie Lookout Tower	\$ 143,579	
GR-MAL25-007	Grant	Malheur NF	High Elevation Recreation Access, Roads End	\$ 355,167	
GR-MAL25-008	Grant	Malheur NF	High Elevation Recreation Access, Table Mountain Trailhead #217	\$ 87,164	
GR-MAL25-009	Grant	Malheur NF	Boulder Group Mine Cleanup	\$ 15,000	
HA-MAL25-001	Harney	Malheur NF	Harney Invasive Weed Control	\$ 50,000	
HA-MAL25-002	Harney	Malheur NF	Harney County On-Forest Invasive Survey and Control	\$ 61,600	
GR-UMA-25-001	Grant	WMHCTA	Deferred Trail Maintenance	\$ 2,100	
GR-UMA-25-002	Grant	Umatilla NF	Grant County Road Maintenance Project	\$ 79,306	

UM-UMA25-001	Umatilla	Umatilla NF	Umatilla County Road Maintenance Project	\$ 26,730	
BA-WW-25-001	Baker	Wallowa-Whitman NF	South Zone Wallowa-Whitman, YouthNatural Resource Crew	\$ 6,202	1
BA-WW-25-002	Baker	Wallowa-Whitman NF	Bark Beetle Reduction Town Gulch Fire Area	\$ -	4
BA-WW-25-003	Baker	Wallowa-Whitman NF	Baker County Trident Invasive Plant Project	\$ -	2
BA-WW-25-004	Baker	Wallowa-Whitman NF	Deferred Trail Maintenance	\$ -	3
GR-WW-25-001	Grant	Wallowa-Whitman NF	South Zone Wallowa-Whitman, YouthNatural Resource Crew	\$ 3,928	1
UN-WW-25-001	Union	Wallowa-Whitman NF	South Zone Wallowa-Whitman, YouthNatural Resource Crew	\$ 2,018	1
UN-WW25-002	Union	Wallowa-Whitman NF	Deferred Trail Maintenance	\$ -	2
WA-WW-25-001	Wallowa	Wallowa-Whitman NF	Deferred Trail Maintenance	\$ -	3
WA-WW-25-002	Wallowa	Wallowa-Whitman NF	2026 WMO Vegetation (Road) Maintenance	\$ -	5
WA-WW-25-003	Wallowa	Wallowa-Whitman NF	Wallowa County Coordinated Invasive Annual Grass Management	\$ -	2
WA-WW-25-004	Wallowa	Wallowa-Whitman NF	HAWK – High School Internship/Summer Work Crew	\$ 3,331	1
WA-WW-25-005	Wallowa	Wallowa-Whitman NF	Repair & Maintain USFS Recreational Sites 2026 Season	\$ -	4
			Total Requested and Recommended	\$ 1,315,448	

Administrative Discussions and vote:

Standard Operating Guidelines – proposing established principles for the RAC to refer to in the future.

- Teena Ballard Motion: to approve the NEOF RAC Standard Operation Guidelines, dated May 8, 2025.
- Second
- All in Favor to approve, motion approved.

For the remaining SRS funds currently under Title II by congress for FY21 through Fy25 the NEOF RAC would like to recommend and advise the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forest to meet with the counties to discuss ways the remaining funds should be utilized.

Discussion:

Questions about coming up with a proposal to suggest how the counties spend their funds if there are no projects proposed.

Concern about telling counties how to spend their money when there is no specific proposal to review.

Question about whether the money can just be given to each county to decide what to do with it?

Comment on how that defeats the purpose of this Committee. They will have to work with the Forest Service to determine how the money should be spent with the priorities set.

Proposals to set up some rigid framework for each county to work with so the money can be allocated. Can we set agreements across both the UMA and WAW to cover certain categories?

Have County Commissioners work with the Forest Supervisors to distribute funds within the categories set.

- Motion: The NEOF RAD recommends the Forest Supervisors and County Commissioners work cooperatively to develop ways of Utilizing funds by Forest and County. We advise that these funds could go to prior approved projects or projects that are developed between County Commissioners and Forest Supervisors, with an option of including RAC members in discussion, and include projects such as infrastructure maintenance, youth crews, and weed treatments. Both Forest Supervisor and County Commissioners should agree on the utilization of the remaining funds.
- Second
- All in favor approve, motion approved

Closing Remarks

General Discussion:

Concerning no notifications in Morrow County for the application timeline, assured that the past coordinator has sent out email to members.

There has been a lot of change in personnel managing RAC. Hold on news releases.

Wallowa County has taken the proposal and timeline into their own hands, so they can have more control over it – suggestion for other counties.

DFO offers himself or Forest Coordinator to go out to meetings with County Commissioners along with RAC members do they are aware of the process and timelines.

Wallowa County on the Umatilla NF – seems like the funding balance, \$19,873, is lower than it should be.

Hard to know what to fund without knowing our true budget, don't want to overspend on projects, also don't want funding to go back to the treasury; how can the RAC approve certain projects without knowing balances, when authority will be approved, without seeing the proposals – looking for suggestions from the RAC members to approve broad categories of projects.

Is there an avenue to spend funding outside of “approves” projects?

RAC Committee can make recommendations to the Forest for how to spend funds, recommend to Forest on how to spend money without a specific proposal.

Comment on how this would not work in Wallowa County because this money comes from receipts to the county- it is the count's money to determine how to spend the county wants to see proposals and make decisions on them ask proponents to submit scalable proposals, so RAC has flexibility to make decisions on current funding and unspent funds.

Not all counties operate the same; 50% of the funds are to go to roads, but Forest roads generally get touched the least (unless there are homes there), so even without a proposal, the RAC could recommend those funds generally go to categories.

RAC could recommend that Forest Supervisors go meet with County Commissioners and county road departments to benefit Forest Roads in each county.

Mentioned that SRS may never get reauthorized again, so we don't want to leave money on the table.

Can we ask the folks who present projects today if they can use more money to spend back the balance? DFO: agrees that it is a possible way to address the funding with a good project we have been presented with.

SRS was designed to be a reduced amount each time it was authorized, weening counties off the funds over time. This is a focus for Ron Wyden, and he generally has been successful in getting it reauthorized in the past, he may be successful again.

Counties can agree on a split between counties. both counties had to submit proposals and agree on funding split.

This RAC has a good history of funding projects without a lot of detail on proposals or proponents in the room or lengthy discussions.

Rac wants to be sure not to approve future projects; those are for future RACs to make decisions on.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:38P.M (PST).

CERTIFICATION

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

 8/20/25

Chase Bloom

Designated Federal Officer, Prairie City District Ranger, Malheur National Forest

 8/20/25

Teena M Ballard

Northeast Oregon RAC, Chairperson

