

Limestone/ Silver Project Collaboration Meeting December 5, 2016, 09:30 a.m.

Camas Center, Usk, WA

Attendees:

Forest Service Employees:

Gayne Sears (District Ranger), Michelle Paduani (Environmental Coordinator/ Interdisciplinary Team Leader), Jerry Bednarczyk (Timber Management Assistant), Katharine Napier (Silviculturist), Monica McMackin (Silviculturist), Mike Borysewicz (Wildlife Biologist), Rob Lawler (Hydrologist), Cody Montgomery (Fuels Specialist), Sarah Brame (Soils Scientist), Terri Contreras (GIS Specialist), Tessa Chicks (Writer/ Editor-notes)

Collaborators:

Ray Entz (Director Wildlife and Natural Resources, Kalispel Tribe), Tiana Luke (Conservation Northwest), Dick Dunton (NEWFC), Maurice Williamson (NEWFC), Paul Sieracki (concerned citizen), Matt Scott (Vaagen Bros. Lumber Co. and NEWFC), Todd Baldwin (Kalispel Tribe- Forest and Fish Projects Manager), Steve Parker (Stevens County Commissioner), Gary Nielson (President, TCMRA), Merrill Ott (EWATV Search and Rescue)

Michelle Paduani- Since not everyone was at the last meeting, we're going to go over info from last meeting and answer some of your questions.

Katharine Napier- Last meeting, we went over direction and process and project. Collaboration helps with future analysis and where we are headed with this. When we first looked at what going to treat, we looked at using this categorical exclusion. So going forward we will go with what is required by NEPA, if it's a CE, if more analysis requires an EA or if we have impacts that need to be mitigated we would need an EIS.

First we looked at how it could fit into Farm Bill CE, and the reason why looking at CE. This project has met all the requirements so far to be a categorically excluded project. When we analyze, we will look at whether we need to do an EA or EIS. Under the Farm Bill, the governor of each state designated watersheds that meet Farm Bill direction. Also has to have area that is experiencing decline due to insect and disease. Data from 2010 show the effects and impact from insects and disease and various pathogens. And also show future risks of decline. Data is from aerial survey every year. Comes from National Forest Health and Risk assessment. The Limestone/ Silver project area is located in area with high risk of mortality, which is defined as > 75 % risk of mortality. It also show a high risk to future mortality.

The other requirement of the bill is that it needs to be developed with collaborative process. But we do that anyway. Our analysis is completed with an external and internal process. We still have to do collaboration.

And treatments are not to exceed 3,000 acres.

We also are still required to meet direction and policy as regulated by 1988 Land and Resource Management Plan, which includes promoting tree growth, reducing insect and disease levels, etc.

Paul Sieracki- The bill also states that you have to maximize old growth. I haven't seen any options to maximize dry site and restore old growth.

Katharine Napier- We will go over that- we do have maps and slides. We will answer that question later. If we don't answer it fully, ask us more.

Did anyone have questions about the Farm Bill?

Michelle Paduani- To answer the question about why we have a large area, and why only do 3,000 acres. And the question about can we do two CEs, since it's in two counties, two watersheds. The direction from the Regional Office (RO) is not hard and fast, so we can do two CEs. Obviously, the indirect effects can't overlap. But the biggest reason for not doing two CEs is that we had only about 5,000 acres that we could even treat within existing project area. A large area- about 2/3 of project area- is Inventoried Roadless Area, and another reason is access. This project has been on the books for 10 -12 years, and we've been asking for access, and started the process several times, but haven't gotten much leeway. We can't build roads with the CE. If we had two 3,000 acre projects to treat, we still couldn't without building roads. Can build temp. roads, but that would be a lot.

Katharine Napier-There's also issues with right of way access. It was asked last time about the topography- it is pretty steep. Past activities in the area also preclude treatment in some areas.

Maurice Williamson- Have these activities to undertake access, have they been persistent and consistent? Have previous attempts been haphazard and nonconsistent? Or, were they made with good conscience, and you're not just backing off?

Gayne Sears- When we knew this was an out-year project 3-4 years ago, we talked about gaining access across lands. And we had been working with land zone- the group that does right of way and boundary work for Okanogen and Wenatchee and the Colville -service center. We got them to start preliminary discussion with the landowners. We do have a meeting with them on Wednesday, and can double check. What you say has validity- because of staffing that we have- there are other projects that become higher priority work. We have been working on it- but it's not simple.

Maurice Williamson- The land zone- have they had discussion about how before the comparative ease of temp. road use permit vs. easement. Is land use or is region being uncooperative?

Gayne Sears- It's not uncooperative- it's policy. We go after permanent full easement across any other lands.

Maurice Williamson- But it's not the law?

Gayne Sears- I don't believe it's the law, but it's very strong policy. I haven't had that conversation in awhile.

Jerry Bednarczyk- It's basically policy to not give temp. access, but only to give permanent access. We can get it, but it requires showing a lot of proof. It's not easy to get temp. access. Even that is very time consuming.

Matt Scott- Who is big player, the landowner?

Jerry Bednarczyk- There's lots – private, some industry, state; even state is tough.

Katharine Napier- There's lots of small landowners.

Maurice Williamson- At some point you're just going to have to do it. I'm not criticizing. But the agency has to get its head out to try to do if they are going to manage the landscape and be stewards of the land. It's frustrating to see projects continually adjusted to avoid difficulties.

Gayne Sears- I hear that. Wednesday we meet with land zone. We meet twice a year and look through the list of work on their plate to see what is out-year, since it takes two to three years.

Maurice Williamson- I'm not a proponent of this, but you do have right of imminent domain.

Steve Parker- I make a motion to invite Maurice to that meeting. This is an issue, a good issue. I'm not applying imminent domain.

But is that we can't plan more acres, or is the info from congressional people is that you can plan, knowing that will get some drop off?

Michelle Paduani- I was told from the Regional Office, in the beginning stages, we can look at 5,000, but once start looking at our proposed action, we're not supposed to look at greater than 3,000. So, we can plan to look at more, but can't propose to treat more.

Ray Entz- You can plan dynamically, have other back up units, to meet the 3,000, but not make a decision that is more than 3,000.

Gayne Sears- From the Line Officer perspective, and the advice from RO, the Forest Service hasn't applied this CE much. I see where myself as decision maker or my supervisor, would it be a risk we are willing to take. I think we would consider going there. We have to have support to go there as well. There is potential, so we will keep talking about it. At some point, will be really close to 3,000 acres.

Michelle Paduani- It's not all due to access that we're dropping acres- some of it is due to logging systems, etc.

Todd Baldwin- I've identified an old road bed, haven't hiked whole thing, but it goes into area, and looks like it would be easy to open as a temp. road. It might be something you could look at. As far as support, you could look at gaining more from Stevens County. *ACTION ITEM

Katharine Napier- Since that comment was brought up, we can look at the map now and that would be helpful for us.

Since first looking at a CE in this area, we wanted to maximize this effort and what is going into it as the best for forest health, to gain for the future, and also support the economy of the county.

Gayne Sears- The categorical exclusions that are put forward, I like to look at as more tools in the toolbox. And that is one way it is desired to see how this tool will work, so that we can look at the application of how it works. Sometimes if we don't use it, sometimes tools go away. We also have to be careful how we use them, so they don't get taken away.

Katharine Napier- There are some limitations of treatment, this project area really fits this need at this point in time, because if there were priority watersheds here, we could maybe do larger projects in the future, with an EA.

Dick Dunton- You might discuss with group on Wednesday about the opposing policies of DNR- how it does not want to grant jurisdiction on easements. Some policies have to give. DNR doesn't want this.

Maurice Williamson- About doing two CEs –what level of watershed or HUC? Would it take to include more than one CE under current interpretation?

Katharine Napier- What does classify as a watershed- HUC 6? Is that correct Rob?

Rob Lawler- HUC 6 is good-sized watershed like the entire Pend Oreille River Valley.

Katharine Napier- Monica, can you look? It does say size of watershed in Farm bill.

Maurice Williamson- Have what you have analyzed, can it be considered for two CEs, since you analyzed the size considering watershed?

Michelle Paduani- There's no law, policy, or regulation that says we can't do two CEs, because of watershed; it's because of effects overlapping. But the reason is access, treatment of acres, logging systems.

Maurice Williamson- I thought I heard that was against policy.

Michelle Paduani- They call it a rule of thumb? As far as getting CEs taken away from us- No law says we couldn't do two- two counties, two watersheds.

Maurice Williamson- I think you're being paranoid. The Farm bill is a law. The Washington office is causing you or the region to be too conservative, like on other forest using D by pre. I agree with Gayne, that if we don't use it, we might lose it. But if you can find more in your effect analysis then you should pursue.

Mike Borysewicz- I think the big question- is there actually 6,000 acres to treat without building roads and holding to CE authority?

Maurice Williamson- Why would you have to maximize on each CE? If going to get 4,000 acres on two CEs- why not? Why not be aggressive within practical common sense and policy?

Katharine Napier- There are high priority stands out there. The modeling program, which is about 70-80% accurate, shows the need to treat based on stand exam data. Do we have 6,000 acres –yes it shows it. But, the logging systems, topography, access... Our initial analysis showed 5,000 acres, and that got shaved because of logging systems.

Gayne Sears- Maurice, can we hold that question? And first show some maps.

Monica McMackin- Farm bill- where it mentions watershed area –towards beginning of section 602. Designation of Treatment areas... “...the Secretary shall, if requested by the Governor of the State, designate as part of an insect and disease treatment program one or more landscape-scale areas, such as subwatersheds (sixth-level hydrologic units, according to the System of Hydrologic Unit Codes of the United States Geological Survey), in at least one national forest in each State that is experiencing an insect or disease epidemic.”

Merrill Ott- Is that HFRA sec 603(c)1 – is that a reference to HFRA?

Katharine Napier-Yes, it’s an amendment to HFRA, the addition of section 602 and section 603.

Gary Nielson- What about my road use question?

Michelle Paduani- The Farm bill does not make references for road use changes. I talked to the environmental coordinator for the forest and staff officer for engineering. We are still debating what level NEPA to be done for road use changes, especially for already open roads. It’s been done various ways in the past- so they are trying to figure out how to do it. But in this CE analysis, we won’t be able to change road use. That doesn’t mean that couldn’t find another way to get that road changed by another means. When I find more about that, I will let you know. I haven’t gotten specifics yet. *ACTION ITEM

Gayne Sears- It also brings up Forest Plan issues.

Katharine Napier- This is a map of our proposed action with 3,000 acres, what we have proposed right now.

The yellow polygons are the units that have identified as needing treatment, or that we have access to. The hashed area is the Inventoried Roadless Area in the middle. Gray is private. The potential wilderness area is approximately 37,600 acres. The total project area is about 53,600 acres.

Light gray is state. Dark grey is private.

Katharine Napier-This map is showing LIDAR data. With it we can see roads on the landscape that aren’t on the system. It also shows digital elevation data and topography. It’s categorized; red is >40%, and everything else is varied from 0 up.

LIDAR data is powerful. It’s some of the best elevation modeling we can get. It helps with logging system planning. Jerry can get skyline corridors planned before, so the crew can go out to ground truth it.

We can see old road beds and old road templates. This one goes along the contour. Old “jammer” roads from past logging activities or after large fires. A lot didn’t make it into the system for various reasons.

Maurice Williamson- Black is system roads only?

Katharine Napier- Black is open, red is have no legal access.

Even if lands on CNF showing as high priority treatment, sometimes we just don’t have access. This doesn’t mean they don’t need silviculture treatment.

Maurice Williamson- You’ve investigated all those roads at this point?

Rob Lawler- That particular you're talking about is on private land.

Maurice Williamson- Do you know that you have tried to get access over all those roads?

Rob Lawler- I know that land zone has talked about that and tried to get access.

Todd Baldwin- How is there open road on FS when there's no access through private?

Rob Lawler- That's a level 2 road.

Gayne Sears- In the past there might have been a handshake agreement, maybe not as much worry about access. But in order to do commercial activity, we would need access.

Todd Baldwin- It doesn't make much sense. If it's open, someone is using it.

Rob Lawler- We surveyed those roads, once you hit FS boundary, it's pretty much grown in.

Maurice Williamson- It's keeping other folks from traveling the road. If putting block across the road, "open and notorious" from court findings. If ask permission, it's easy to say no, but if they haven't been protecting assumed rights...

Gayne Sears- I will ask that question. *ACTION ITEM

Dick Dunton- It's usually to maintain access, not to block access- that term...

Maurice Williamson- I've heard it both ways.

Katharine Napier- The take home message is there's a lot of steep ground, unbroken ground. Jerry and the crew took a hard look, looking for tractor and skyline, and without going into the realm of helicopter.

Terri, our GIS specialist made a google earth map to make it more interactive.

Gayne Sears- Do we have the data that Paul was asking for about old growth forest structure?

Katharine Napier- Terri has the units on this. i.e., for unit, it has soil compaction issues. This map can be more interactive. It's a great tool because it does have some historical imagery. I have looked back in the 90s to see stands that we don't have in our database.

Gayne Sears- What are the blue polygons?

Katharine Napier- That is old growth associated species, or PMP habitat. Some stream layers. Purple is travel corridors. Green is symbol for peaks- Abercrombie, Hooknose. And the county line shows here.

Michelle Paduani- Since we are looking at the google earth- do we want to zoom in on anything, or are there any particular questions? We can go back to it, also.

Gayne Sears- Let's go back and look at one unit- zoom in and check it out.

Katharine Napier- This is the Hartbauer Creek area, units 12,13, and 14. If we go to LIDAR, we can see old road beds from past harvest activities. We can see rock outcroppings, and see topography. We can see private property, can see old treatments to the north, old plantings that have filled in.

Maurice Williamson- The areas that are blocked out with color. I heard a comment about no old growth inventory- are they MA 1?

Mike Borysewicz- It's MA1, or pine marten, pileated woodpecker habitat. Most of those areas don't contain old growth, because there's very little old growth within the project area. But it contains the best stands within the grid.

Maurice Williamson- Why not treat it to accelerate the growth and the diameter?

Mike Borysewicz- We are directed to provide target habitat for near, middle and long term for those species. If we went in to those target areas for pine marten for example, trying to increase growth, we would immediately reduce overhead canopy by 50% for 20 years. That provides overhead canopy closure in the stand that is unsuitable or marginal for pine marten for 20 years. In the process, we would lose snags because of temp. road corridor, or road corridors. We would lose snags for worker safety. Down logs are used for wood production. Smaller logs are used for wood production. All these things reduce the present suitability for whatever target species. There is value for maintaining unmanaged blocks for habitat.

Maurice Williamson- The assumption is a certain level of removal. Do you have stand exams of them so you can't just do enough to accelerate growth, but not affect crown closure. As far as removal from roads, if system roads in there, would be level 1 roads.

Paul Sieracki- It's about habitat suitability. If it's logged it becomes lower habitat suitability.

Maurice Williamson- I kind of understand, but not necessarily agree with it.

Matt Scott- Are many of those blocks in the IRA anyway? Are we proposing treatment in there anyway?

Mike Borysewicz- Suffice to say, most are in there, because the IRA takes up most of the project area.

Matt Scott- But still have to map it though?

Mike Borysewicz- Yes, it's a paper exercise, but we still do.

Matt Scott- I wanted to make sure we weren't arguing over something for nothing.

Mike Borysewicz- Yes, 3 on the left side are outside the IRA, everything else is within the roadless area.

Matt Scott- Does that factor into the analysis, 70% of are not treated. For potential old growth, wouldn't that suffice for the interim habitat for 20 years?

Ray Entz- It's a space distribution issue.

Mike Borysewicz- The Forest Plan set up a grid across the forest. Every 2 to 2.5 miles is a grid point, within ¼ mile of each, we are supposed to set up a block of habitat.

Ray Entz- We have to remember some are older sites like Scotchman. Once harvested, the time is not addressed, may grow in to those blocks in the future. The blocks don't stay the same over time. A block moves into time better habitat.

Mike Borysewicz- That was the intention of the Forest Plan we are operating under now. Forest Plan revision might be replaced by something else.

Paul Sieracki- Why is unit 8 going into open graminoid area? Graminoid area- rocks and grass and shrubs, for bear...

Katharine Napier-Probably slight mapping area. *ACTION ITEM

Matt Scott- This is just analysis area, not treatments units, right?

Katharine Napier-Yes, we would look at the purpose and need and would cut that part of the unit.

Merrill Ott- What about units that are unnumbered like 8 and 9?

Katharine Napier- That is a wildlife corridor. It's actually part of unit 9.

Tiana Luke- Can you provide this to us?

Katharine Napier- Yes, what format?

Terri Contreras- We have gathered data for FOIA request.

Michelle Paduani- Just the proposed action units?

Katharine Napier- We can provide a shape file. *ACTION ITEM

Gary Nielson- What's the access in 8 and 9- open up closed roads, and logging systems.

Jerry Bednarczyk- I'm not recalling that.

Rob Lawler- I believe the county road from bottom.

Katharine Napier- I believe tractor units.

Jerry Bednarczyk- I can't recall. Looks like not skyline with road at top and the stream.

Terri Contreras- I can turn the roads layer on.

Gayne Sears- Those are existing roads.

Gary Nielson- But not open access.

Rob Lawler- Most of those are open.

Gayne Sears- You mean open, as in system roads. There may be existing closed roads but we could open for this project.

Gary Nielson- The road under 8, there's a lot of road templates in there. Can we look further NE to east of 1. That's the road that Steve and I were talking about, and that road up the hill. The road goes from SE of 10 across the hill and dead ends in the draw. This area looks like it was dozer- thinned in the 70s. You can see some of the trails in there. Older photos like the 1972 flights shows some of the firelines around there. There is another road that comes in, it's grown over, but I'm sure it was a road built into access that dozer thinning. Would be easy road to open up, no water crossings. Open with a cat easy if you do fall short of acres. Looking at the older photos was better. *ACTION ITEM

Jerry Bednarczyk- There are other areas that we could treat as well.

Gary Nielson- Last meeting you said 250 acres short.

Katharine Napier- We are just 1-2 acres short of 3,000 right now. There is a lot of history of dozer thinning. I believe you're suggesting we can open that road and use as a temp?

Gary Nielson- Nonsystem road. Would be a temp road, just use existing road template.

Merrill Ott-Is there a lot of bug kill?

Gary Nielson- There is another road, that shows that gave access while dozer thinning, where it might be good for hauling, I don't know.

Gayne Sears- That's one aspect for planning- try to get preliminary idea where treatment would be appropriate and feasible. This happened a year ago. So we can get some of the existing condition data, i.e., soils, archaeology can get out to the existing units, so that we can get a proposed action. If we add to units, we would need to find a way to get surveys again, in short order. Botany, also surveys are accomplished. I'm not saying it's not a good idea. Just would be something we would have to work around.

Katharine Napier-Are there any other questions? Let's take a quick break.

Katharine Napier- Let's keep discussing the existing condition. Here's a map showing MA 1, and I'd like Monica to elaborate about what the Farm bill says, and respond to Paul's comment.

Monica McMackin- In reference to tree retention- maximizing retention old growth, farm bill language section 602(b)(2)(e)... ..“(e) TREE RETENTION.—The Secretary shall carry out projects under subsection (d) in a manner that maximizes the retention of old-growth and large trees, as appropriate for the forest type, to the extent that the trees promote stands that are resilient to insects and disease.”

Maurice Williamson- Can we have a discussion on what that means? I interpret it differently. Can you leave the large trees for example, in an operation? It is a controversy about the conflicting issue of fire, if you've got crown closure, may lead to additional lethality, if normal ground fire goes through. Where is the trade off? I'd like to hear fire and wildlife about whether to enter those areas. Or is it easiest to not enter those areas.

Mike Borysewicz- Are we talking about old growth associated habitat or SS 6 stands?

Maurice Williamson-Doesn't it all fit together?

Mike Borysewicz- Old growth habitat network is core habit for pine martin and pileated woodpecker. We are supposed to map within ¼ of Forest Plan grid point to try to include best stands. If there are old growth stands, of course we include them. If there's old growth or LOS, we include them, but not every LOS can be included because of spacing and stands. May have LOS outside blue polygons. But with this CE, this authority, we are not allowed to enter old growth.

Maurice Williamson- Does it mean we can still treat within old growth? Just because it's MA1 doesn't mean that it's old growth at this point.

Mike Borysewicz- It does not. There's just not enough old growth on the landscape to include.

Monica McMackin- (Quoted the Farm bill language again.)

Maurice Williamson- Staying out of is not in compliance with that verbiage.

Mike Borysewicz- Then it comes down to eastside screens. If watershed conditions are below the HRV for old growth, we can't enter for timber harvest.

Maurice Williamson- Which stands, is that true old growth?

Mike Borysewicz- LOS includes old growth, but not old growth yet.

Paul Sieracki- What is Forest Service interpretation of acres of old growth in terms of the historic conditions?

Mike Borysewicz- I don't know that we've done that yet. *ACTION ITEM

Katharine Napier- Paul is asking about these areas- we've done stand inventories. Each dot on map is where someone took data. There's a lot of data points. I put it into Forest Veg Simulator, and tree data from these plots can tell us about forest structure. The red polygons show the indication of large diameter trees – up to 8 tpa of 21" dbh tree. These plots that show that possibility of >8 tpa, shows a stand that we need to check out. I haven't looked at the statistics, confidence interval, etc. Maybe polygon might have a large concentration of large diameter trees on one side, but not on the other. Non- red polygons doesn't mean there's not large trees, but just less. Preliminary stand exams, we picked out stands showing most promise of large component of large diameter trees. This is on the Limestone side.

We still need to dig into the Silver side. As of now, this is the best info we have showing where we have large diameter trees. I haven't gone into sampling and statistics side of things. We need to do further mapping to see where other areas are. *ACTION ITEM

Ray Entz- That wouldn't preclude entry under the order, but would be different treatment.

Katharine Napier- It doesn't preclude treatment. Even though it's showing promise, it doesn't mean those units might need insect and disease treatment. It does mean need more field recon.

Paul Sieracki- Insect and disease are part of the process that promotes old growth stands. Need to be careful about going in and sniffing understory only. Provide openings for growth.

Katharine Napier- This is the Insect and disease map. It is one of the processes that provides openings. We need to look at is it truly old growth or just pockets of large trees. How to manage those areas to prevent future insect and disease outbreaks as well.

Paul Sieracki- What tree species are involved in the units? We are looking at broad patches. Is it g. fir, d. fir, ponderosa, hemlock? Or what? *ACTION ITEM

Katharine Napier- I haven't done diagrams yet for species composition. There is g. fir, cedar, pure lodgepole stands. Need to look at historic range of variability to see what should be growing out there. And look at whether it's drier site or wetter site plant association group layer. When doing silviculture prescription based on trees there, and historic range of variability, we look at the site and the understory. This helps us type the stand and what would be the climax species and pathways and determine which trees to keep and how to maintain forest structure. Also whether to keep- or regen because we don't have the right species for the site. Which trees we want to promote growth for to help wildfire for, etc.

Maurice Williamson- How determine when want to go toward climax species vs. seral species?

Katharine Napier- Climax species will dominate the stand without disturbance, i.e., no fire, no insect and disease. We look at what trees would occupy the site. For example, based on dry site, ponderosa. But grand fir grows in understory, then grows in, and dominates. Shade intolerant douglas fir and ponderosa will experience competition. With disturbance, douglas fir and ponderosa would most likely survive.

Maurice Williamson- Given there are disturbances, when do you stop encouraging shade-tolerant species?

Katharine Napier- Even though the basis of this is successional pathway, basically letting us know what grows there and successfully establishes. We are not always looking at climax species. We also look at fire regime, looking at more open understory. The natural process of fire, climate change, other influences of the ecosystem, we may not necessarily want to keep climax species across the landscape. That may not always be resilient. Some will naturally go to grand fir as climax. Will have a pocket so stand will not reach climax.

Maurice Williamson- One issue in NEWFC is that when proposed actions, maybe we end up with shade tolerant, if using regen, shelterwood harvest, or seed tree harvest. The direction of Forest Plan seems to encourage structural stage 6 or 7 leading to oldgrowth. Maybe can or can't, but we are concerned you are limiting yourself, but maybe providing new Forest Plan may be different. If we keep with significant portions of forest heading to old growth, but then we can't enter because it is old growth.

Katharine Napier- I think you're saying more stands are heading towards climax. A lot of projects recently- the percentage of project we are treating, have other blocks of land management that we can only do certain treatments in. In reality, we are already limited where we can treat. Can't necessarily treat all the stands on the landscape.

Gayne Sears- Something is better than nothing. We need to keep moving.

Katharine Napier- I'm showing the CNF structure classes figure, a document for classifying structure classes on the CNF.

Anything else to add to the analysis? Cody will talk about fire history, which will help us understand what forest types are there, and why there is a big need for treatment. And why we don't see a lot of LOS out there.

Individual speakers...

SOILS AND DECOMPACTION

Monica McMackin- One of the questions in the last meeting was about the areas where soils surveys found compaction in the units from older activities. These areas are still in compaction stage, above where we would want to compact more. We have talked with soils about mitigations, so we can get back in there to do some treatments. For mitigations, we need to break up the compaction. There were questions last meeting if we turn up the soil as a mitigation, we might be opening the soil, but will bring in non-native weed species. And leaving raw soil causes problems also.

We do have a tool called the grapple subsoiler. Here is a video. It works in 4-foot long sections, and instead of moving soils, it goes straight down, and cuts up and breaks apart soil. We are still left with

plant layer on top. And it breaks it up so we can replant also. It breaks up the underlayer of soil, leaving the plant layer on the top.

Gayne Sears- It's basically a bucket with prongs on it.

Monica McMackin- It's not like tearing up roads. It goes underneath and breaks up layers underneath. This can be a tool to use in those units as mitigation.

Matt Scott- Those units were previously compacted?

Sarah Brame- Yes, 1 or 1.5 feet, with nothing growing.

Matt Scott- On old skid trails?

Sarah Brame- Yes, spaced across the whole unit

Steve Parker- Have we done a cost analysis? What's the price tag on decompaction?

Monica McMackin- That tool is ours already. But not sure, maybe just the contracting.

Jerry Bednarczyk- It would be its own service. Don't know how many miles

Tiana Luke- What's the estimate of the size of the area that would need this?

Sarah Brame- In one unit, every 10 feet, there are tracks.

Tiana Luke- How big is the unit?

Sarah Brame- Unit 13 and 2.

Jerry Bednarczyk- Was it skid trails every 100 feet?

Sarah Brame- One was like that and one was more consistently through the unit.

Matt Scott- Does the CE allow for stewardship?

Jerry Bednarczyk- Yes, we can still do stewardship. But it limits us to forest health treatment. This would still be a service contract.

Matt Scott- So no hydro projects?

Rob Lawler- This project area is fairly light in roads. There's not a lot of crossings. I didn't find any barriers that would fall to a high priority. We have other areas like LeClerc. We have to prioritize our work.

Matt Scott- I'm curious how old those units are.

Katharine Napier- We don't have records in the FS database. Paul Haas (Forest Service-Timber Stand Improvement) mentioned old mining claims. The dozer thinning, we do have records of those. But we can't tell what time of year, or anything.

Gayne Sears- The two units are in the 100 acres range.

Maurice Williamson- What is the proportion, on a unit basis, and according to the Forest Plan relative to those criteria? The proportion of compaction over what landscape?

Sarah Brame- The Forest Plan standards say that we don't go over 20% soil disturbance per unit basis. When we survey, we survey points, and that gives us a percentage.

Maurice Williamson- What methodology?

Sarah Brame- Soil disturbance monitoring protocol- a nationwide protocol that measures compaction, erosion, rutting, forest floor depth, and other physical features of soil.

Maurice Williamson- Some of the most recent stuff I've read is that coarse soils are benefiting from compaction. Have you sorted data that way?

Sarah Brame- There is different research. We didn't find a consistent soil type that was compacted in the project area. Even if did have one specific soil type, we don't know how many times the machine went over.

Maurice Williamson- There's a lot of glacial till-

Sarah Brame- A lot of silty loams and sandy loams. But no correlation as far as compaction values- no correlation between soil type and soil compaction numbers that we were seeing. We can't say that because it was glacial till, for example- doesn't mean that it's more compacted.

Maurice Williamson- You got adequate points to make up for the soil variance?

Sarah Brame- We come up with a percentage with our research. We do 30 points for the unit, and then it depends on what we find then might do 100 or 200.

Matt Scott- It sounds like there are past treatments that need to be addressed. What about using the subsoiler for other units?

Sarah Brame- We haven't figured out all the details. Mostly focus on those units.

Matt Scott- Decompact previous, and fix those. But for the other units- do 100 feet spacing?

Sarah Brame- We do post-harvest monitoring. But with design criteria, we would hope that we don't get to that level of compaction.

Maurice Williamson- With global warming, and winter logging, we can operate certain units because they are winter specified. Is there a protocol developed that measures the success of current vs. process? The protocol- how we are assessing our current practices?

Sarah Brame- Post harvest, we are going back and looking at our survey from before and comparing results.

Maurice Williamson- You're doing that for current process? Is operationally difficult. What are findings?

Sarah Brame- We have varying results from post-harvest units- from very high percentage to low percentage.

Gayne Sears- I propose when we do a field trip with all the parties that's one of the topics. It is interesting to see the post-harvest results.

Michelle Paduani- We could do that at one of the after action reviews.

Maurice Williamson- I just want to see the data. I don't want to go to the field.

Monica McMackin- One question was that if the mitigation could be done would we still plant the areas. Assuming that we use the grapple subsoiler, we would replant after the harvest. And there was a question about herbicide across the whole unit, and the answer is no way. We would leave the roads and landing site for spraying as need.

Gayne Sears- There would be seeding as well?

Katharine Napier- Yes, grass seeding.

FIRE AND FUELS

Cody Montgomery- Fire burned this whole area between 1910 and 1940. Somebody asked a question about jammer roads and when it was logged. It is my suspicion that it was logged after the fire in the 40s. There's not many large modern fires in that area. One of the more recent fires is in the NW corner. On this map, the red hatches (fires) were covering the vast majority of project area in the 1920s, 40s, on into the 50s. In the north, the most recent modern fire was right on the border- mid 2000.

I don't know the intensity in the stands; it's old data. As far as looking at stand dynamics, it looks pretty mixed.

Gayne Sears- It covers the full extent.

Cody Montgomery- 20s 30s 40s 50s.

Tiana Luke- It covers almost the whole project area.

Cody Montgomery- Yes, about 90%. And it's all older data that we can't get a lot from, except that it was a large area.

Paul Sieracki- How many man-caused acres? Such as miners torching like in Kootenai? *ACTION ITEM

Monica McMackin- I have heard that people might be the cause of some of these fires, for people looking for work. Spokane was one of the hubs where people were congregating.

Cody Montgomery- We had some questions about condition class. Green on this map is condition class 2, which is a moderate departure from historic variable. This is a pretty broad class, it could be just moving into to or at the top of class 3 moving out of the historic range of variability. I do have more data if you like. Red on this map is condition class 3, which has not seen any treatment or disturbance in a long time- all through the drainages as well. It might be skewed in drainages. It's harder to judge what historic condition class they were in. Most of the uplands have been cut, or have fire history. We have a good idea of what condition class we would like to see them in. Blue is condition class 1, which is generally a part of the stand that we are okay with. Other thing this doesn't take into account, especially condition class 2- is the fuel type and the terrain. This is not an indication of fire behavior or fire risk. It is based on what we want the stand to look like. It does not mean low, mod, high fire behavior.

Matt Scott- I'm curious what mean by stand- what want land to look like- what measurement?

Cody Montgomery- I don't know what scale they measure that one.

Katharine Napier- When we look at vegetation on a stand level, we look at what plant association group does it fit into and what condition class it fits into.

Matt Scott- Through NEWFC- you might walk 100 feet and get into another plant association, everybody thinks about scale differently.

Cody Montgomery- I don't necessarily mean a stand of trees. I guess that's misleading- could be brush, grass, montaine meadow. If this were a different class of CE- like a fuels CE, I would focus attention on green and red areas.

Tiana Luke- Doesn't this need to be in the WUI or in condition class 2 as part of requirement of CE?

Katharine Napier- There is and/ or in CE. We didn't put that in the purpose and need. All these stands are within the WUI.

Tiana Luke- Is it your definition of WUI or CWPP definition?

Cody Montgomery- As far as planning the units. Not sure are these are these in the CWPP?

Tiana Luke- I'm concerned with the definition of CWPP.

Dick Dunton- I think the legislation requires them to use CWPP definition. *ACTION ITEM

Cody Montgomery- I can get the CWPP layer.

Some of the stands have condition class 1, which doesn't mean we don't want to maintain. We will treat areas we can get to and that make sense. And get to condition class 1 and try to keep it there.

Gayne Sears- And stay within the conditions prescribed within the CE.

Matt Scott- Do you typically get to condition class 1 once completed?

Cody Montgomery- Yes, for a while, if we can maintain them. There is usually funding for treatment, but not as much for maintaining.

Maurice Williamson- Tiana, and our conservation partners have significant responsibility maintaining credibility with the rest of community. Agree that needs to happen, but if didn't fit within the condition class 1 areas doesn't fit within the bill, then we need to adjust.

Monica McMackin- reading from the bill....“(c) REQUIREMENTS.—To be designated a landscape-scale area under subsection (b), the area shall be—

“(1) experiencing declining forest health, based on annual forest health surveys conducted by the Secretary;

“(2) at risk of experiencing substantially increased tree mortality over the next 15 years due to insect or disease infestation, based on the most recent National Insect and Disease Risk Map published by the Forest Service; or

“(3) in an area in which the risk of hazard trees poses an imminent risk to public infrastructure, health, or safety.

Dick Dunton- Is this under HFRA?

Katharine Napier-This is under Farm bill that amended HFRA

Dick Dunton- HFRA required the FS to use the definition of WUI that is established by the CWPP.

Maurice Williamson- It is logical to have a process to have format necessary so that Tiana can approve it.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST TRAIL

Monica McMackin-To recap from the last meeting, the PNWT runs from Glacier NP to Aberdeen on the coast. It runs through our project area. We are looking at different aesthetic purposes for the kinds of treatments that we do in this area. It is thick in there. There are places that we will be leaving trees to provide a natural screening and beauty, but also opening up so that have views.

Matt Scott- Is that in the purpose and need?

Katharine Napier- The purpose and need is focused around the insect and disease, but this is one of concerns that will use to consider with silviculture methods.

Gayne Sears- It will most likely be in the design features. PNT has an IDT to determine the conditions that a hiker along the trail will encounter. They will talk about the amount the trail will traverse all kinds of landscape, some will be working landscape- not all wilderness oriented.

Matt Scott- The trail goes through Vaagens and private, you have to open someone's gate. I'm fine with the trail. I'd rather it have a working landscape feel. Don't want it to preclude Katherine to do treatment.

Steve Parker- People need to experience variable landscapes to see images of man. And there is the private property issue. We don't want to promote trespass.

On a logistical note- How long are we going? I do have other obligations, with just a little flexibility. Save some things for down the road. Let's go for the material that we need to get covered.

Gayne Sears- Can everyone stay till noon? What have we not covered that we really need to if we call the time at noon? What things we were we asked to address that we haven't?

Michelle Paduani- The botany survey- the surveys were completed. There were two sensitive plants.

Monica McMackin- There were two sensitive plants found. Botany surveyed all the proposed units, and found two sensitive plants that touched into unit 47- blacksnake root, and unit 37- kidney leaf violet. Blacksnake root was found in one other unit also. So those areas would be avoided.

Maurice Williamson- Where were those found relative to what Gary was talking about?

Rob Lawler- These are both on the east side.

Maurice Williamson- Also for archaeology, is it likely that you would find sensitive plants where Gary was talking about. Or cultural sites. Is that going to impede you? Is it practical from an operational standpoint to make them winter logging that wouldn't disturb archaeology or sensitive plants?

Gayne Sears- Archaeology has a screening process where they are likely to find properties. I don't know about plants. We would have to find out most efficient way to go about.

Maurice Williamson- Make sure we are being efficient as possible. Discuss that issue. Only one or two units. *ACTION ITEM

Gayne Sears- We'd have to look at the value for the cost. How important is it to this group that we get within a couple percentage point of 3,000 acres if try to use this CE. Other question, maybe enough out there, but then go to an EA. Not that much more time than two CEs.

Matt Scott- What's the timeline difference?

Michelle Paduani-It would extend. We would need to do more surveys. It would push timelines of other projects, i.e., boulder park. It all really depends on the collaboration. Because it's so new. We thought we would have a decision signed next summer. With an EA- the comment period is longer, objection period is longer. EA –little over a year. CE, maybe six months.

Matt Scott- It would be the following winter.

Steve Parker- It is a good time to use a CE tool instead of trying to expand it.

Michelle Paduani- There's only one other forest in the region trying to use it.

Gayne Sears- What is our comfort level trying to use CE, trying to get close to 3,000 acres. We have a clear idea what are things that we can do to maximize effort to get to 3,000.

Michelle Paduani- With purpose and need of insect and disease.

Paul Sieracki- I appreciate this and prefer EA, and keeping it below 3,000 because the process impacts publics' ability to object on the timber sale.

Gayne Sears- This isn't something we can work out through talking at meetings?

Paul Sieracki- How many meeting are you going to have?

There's fisher habitat, grizzly, we don't know about old growth. All kinds of other concerns.

Matt Scott- If did full EA and kept it at 3,000 acres, and met full requirement. And what happens on the ground is the same with each tool...

Paul Sieracki- Then there is the opportunity to object.

Gayne Sears- Those topic points we could talk about more.

Tiana Luke- Have you looked into the opportunity of accelerated EA under HFRA?

Michelle Paduani- It would skip 30 days of scoping. Go into comment period and objection period if we got comments. As far as accelerated, it might save a little time. But it's still the same analysis.

Katharine Napier-One of the things that came up from the resource specialists was that their analysis is similar, the background would be the same as an EA. The document would be a different format. But the way we are advising our officials, everything would be the same. Still going through stand exams, LOS (Late and Old Structure), wildlife. What we are proposing under CE opposed to EA, i.e., Rob has other priority watersheds that we can do more with the money. There are other resources where we can put

more money and do a larger restoration project with more opportunities. Not to say there aren't opportunities.

There are other priority areas to do good work with roads, other obliteration, or priority watershed. Internally, our discussions have shown that a CE would work, but we're not excluding an EA.

Gayne Sears- Not have objection period. What I'm asking is that we discuss that content and talk through those items, and come to mutual agreement so that the need to object diminished.

Matt Scott- Also helpful- some pictures of what stands look like, what proposed silvicultural treatment is, so that people get idea of what trees cut. *ACTION ITEM

Paul Sieracki- I worked on a project on the IPNF and I don't support the collaborative process.

Gayne Sears- So no matter how many times get together to talk.

Paul Sieracki- You already have the units on the CE. You just go through the process, and then put out the timber sale.

Steve Parker- Congress put the category exclusion in the farm bill for a purpose. Are we in danger of violating the congressional intent in this process?

Michelle Paduani- What the collaboration or the analysis?

Steve Parker- It was an exclusion of a category for a certain reason.

Gayne Sears- Basically an exclusion of an objection.

Steve Parker- High speed too, to do good work in a high interest, high need area.

Gayne Sears- In general CEs are types of projects that have been proven to not exceed extraordinary effects to the landscape. I.e., a small special use permit for a running event.

Steve Parker- We also have certain practices that fit within categories. That's also the reason- fairly small treatment area- not a 30,000 acre timber sale. I want to be careful that we don't overdo this one. I'm in favor of the CE, and using the tool; using it as it was designed.

Maurice Williamson- Would it be useful to go through a process of determination of what could be extraordinary- would that be of any use? Paul for example?

Paul Sieracki- No

Paul Sieracki- For extraordinary circumstances, the FS always denies anything in the effects analysis, so that is a waste of time.

Maurice Williamson- Can we move past what has happened historically in that regard, and ask this team to define what is extraordinary? And what it will be?

Paul Sieracki- No.

Maurice Williamson- your position...

Paul Sieracki- The document will be written, and put out. The public cannot read the document and can't comment.

Michelle Paduani- We will be scoping, and will have a comment period. We will take those comments into consideration when we are writing the analysis.

Merrill Ott- The reality is it's limited to 3,000, and you're not going to get 3,000, on the button. Given the tool as an agency, using the collaboration process, you have a job to do under the CE that you are proposing. Scoping will receive comments. Do the job. Given the tool by congress. Taking the right approach. If don't treat disease or treat the problem it will only get worse. Can't touch the areas already diseased, and it will spread.

Gayne Sears- If we didn't use CE, do know that the work wouldn't get done.

Matt Scott- Why would change position?

Gayne Sears- Because we are collaborating, we are going through the process.

Tiana Luke- I would be in favor of an EA to be able to RX burn in the IRA.

Michelle Paduani- The next step- so this is our collaborative group. We can keep talking about what you want to see, what we want to talk about. And when. We need to hear from you.

Maurice Williamson- It seems like it's premature about decision whether EA or CE, with info that Gary brought, and lack of certainty among some of us about one or two CEs. We should consider what Gary brought. And resolve issues about how to make CEs more efficient. And winter logging satisfying some of survey work. There are unanswered questions. I wasn't here for the first meeting. *ACTION ITEM

Matt Scott- Would it benefit to schedule a field trip?

Ray Entz- What is the best scenario timeline?

Michelle Paduani- It depends on collaboration. What we decide as a group, and it depends on the analysis. We projected a decision for this in May of next year.

Ray Entz- Then it would go to contracting after that?

Merrill Ott- Would that timeline be affected if we talked about an accelerated EA?

Michelle Paduani- It would be affected. There's a longer timeline for comment period and objection period.

Merrill Ott- Would have collaborative group that might make it work, and not limited to 3,000 acres. Might afford other things in an EA that we aren't able to do in the CE.

Michelle Paduani- It would affect other restoration and other work we have planned in our five-year plan.

Gayne Sears- We would have a scoping period; Then go out with draft EA. An opportunity for comment period.

Merrill Ott- You're required by law for so many days?

Gayne Sears- Final EA and draft decision. Depends on how much we add, and how much more analysis in the field.

Ray Entz- What's the timeline on an EA?

Michelle Paduani- Usually a little over a year.

Ray Entz- The IPNF did something with an accelerated with the Tower fire salvage-

Gayne Sears- I think it was a special category.

Ray Entz- They did a compressed EA- outside limits of CE. From the Tribe's perspective, having tools in the toolbox is important. The Forest is pushed out of the natural range of variability. It's waiting for catastrophic means of management, like a catastrophic fire or disease. Having ways to more proactively treat the forest in a smart way. Process begets process. Applaud you for looking at other tools especially when treating these stands that are important pieces of forest health. In this county there's a lot of dispersed population. I'd rather us not be here in a year and complain about why we let it burn fast and hot.

Paul Sieracki- That's speculation that that's going to happen.

Ray Entz- Vice versa though. It's tough to be a collaborator. It takes commitment. If we are not getting the issues out there, and will be stuck in the process. If you can't make the commitment to be a collaborator to make good outcome on the landscape. Takes good effort to get things done.

Gayne Sears- There are various perspectives and opinions.

Michelle Paduani- It takes hard work saying what you want to say.

Maurice Williamson- I see potential short and long-term projects for CNF to discuss what extraordinary circumstances are. The Council on environmental Quality did it. If we had that as a baseline, it might help our discussion of whether to use a CE. *ACTION ITEM

Gayne Sears- We do have to address those in each CE, and we could bring those to the front.

Michelle Paduani- If that's what we want to do next time, we can do that. We just have a proposed action.

Maurice Williamson- This may be a longer term topic. I don't know how efficient that would be. Farm bill requires collaboration. Does it require consensus or require us to use another methodology?

Michelle Paduani- It's all up to the decision maker. We don't have to come to one decision as a whole, but it's up to the decision maker.

Gayne Sears- We need to decide is this group interested in coming to a consensus or less than. Put that on the agenda for next time. It's up to us. *ACTION ITEM

Michelle Paduani- Another meeting in January? I will send out a doodle poll, probably mid to late January to answer those questions. That doesn't mean you can't send me more questions. I won't leave anyone out.

***ACTION ITEMS**

- *Look into old road bed brought up by Todd Baldwin.*
- *Look into the old road bed that Steve Parker and Gary Nielson brought up for reopening as a temp. road near the historically dozer thinned area.*
- *In reference to road use changes, what the forest is deciding for the level of NEPA to be done.*
- *Look into “open and notorious” clause on open roads that we are not allowed access on.*
- *Fix mapping error on unit 8 where it is located on open graminoid area.*
- *Provide shape files of the proposed action units.*
- *Paul Sieracki’s question about what the FS interpretation of acres of old growth in terms of the historic conditions.*
- *Paul Sieracki asked about tree species in the units. We haven’t done diagrams for species composition yet.*
- *Paul Sieracki asked about the number of historical human-caused fires in the project area.*
- *Tiana Luke asked which definition of WUI are we using?*
- *Discuss the issue of further surveys needed and how to be efficient if we added units in the area of the road that Steve and Gary were talking about.*
- *Matt Scott asked for some photos of what the stands look like, what the proposed silvicultural treatments are, so we have an idea of what trees get cut.*
- *Maurice Williamson asked if we could discuss if two CEs could be more efficient, and if the info about the road from Gary would affect whether we do a CE or an EA.*
- *Maurice also asked about having a discussion about what extraordinary circumstances may be.*
- *Gayne Sears asked the group to decide whether we need to come to a consensus, or if we are okay than less than.*

The meeting concluded at 1215.
