

**Payette Forest Coalition
Meeting Notes
January 19, 2023**

Desired Outcomes

- (1) Identify temporary way to fund PFC's administrative functions.
- (2) Discuss updates from Forest Service on the Granite Goose proposed action.
- (3) Reach consensus on key points to include in a comment letter for the Railroad Saddle draft Environmental Assessment (EA).
- (4) Review and discuss the new supportive objection template letter for use on future projects.

PFC Administration, Chris Clark

MAIN POINTS

- Contract for PFC administrative services (Dennis Murphy, PFC website; JoAnn Fly, scribe; Paul Litow, facilitator) expired December 31, 2022. Forest Service has funds but the mechanism for distributing them will not be in place for at least three months meaning contractors cannot be paid. Average cost is \$2500/month for these services.
- Options discussed: 1) the Coalition continues to meet with members taking on these responsibilities until funds and new agreements are in place, or 2) Coalition members and other interested parties pay for these services until that time.

KEY MESSAGES

- Interest expressed to do the latter. Funds would be channeled through Southwest Idaho RC&D (RCD) which has been providing these services. This will maintain distance between service providers and contributors as well as financial integrity (RCD goes through rigorous third-party audits). RCD's administrative fee is 10% of the amount invoiced each month.
- Idaho Forest Group has committed \$2500 which will pay for January services.
- Others indicated interest to contribute. Some will need to check with their Boards/organizations for approval first. A cost proposal showing a how funds would be used would be helpful for that. RCD is a 501(c)(3) so contributions are tax-deductible. Agreement that commitments are needed by month's end so that February meeting planning and work can proceed.

ACTIONS

- Chris Clark (Christopher.clark2@usda.gov) will provide a cost proposal to those interested.
- Chris and Bill Moore (RCD) will set up the contribution process.
- Michael Gibson will send Bill and Chris information about the grantmaking process as he learns more.
- Those want to contribute will indicate their commitment to Chris by January 31.

Granite Goose proposed action, Jenni Blake and IDT

MAIN POINTS

Vegetation

Forest thinks the proposed action (PA) follows PFC recommendations although it did mention PVGs' locations will need to be ground-truthed (because GIS was used for project design). Proposed treatments include Rx Fire and:

- Commercial thin in PVGs 1-6 with a focus on retaining large tree and early serals and creating low to moderate canopy closure.
- Regen harvest in PVGs 5-6 include regen harvest.
- Some regen harvest in PVGs 7-8 aiming for <20% canopy closure. Primary focus will be on wooly adelgid and removing dead/dying timber in impacted areas.
- Shaded fuel breaks along streams and fuel breaks below Brundage and around infrastructure, including along powerlines.
- Patch cuts <=40 acres.
- White Bark Pine is now a listed species. Forest believes it can treat stands and create new habitat using treatments that mimic wildfire.

Watershed

- Proposed treatments include meadow restoration, two aquatic organism passages (AOPs) on Brundage Creek, wetland protection, channel re-alignment, hill slope and streambank stabilization.

Travel management

- There are 287 miles of roads and undetermined routes within this landscape. Process the Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) uses to ultimately determine which are needed or not for current and anticipated future needs is: 1) Look at existing roads and routes, 2) determine which are needed for logging and other treatments, fire suppression, recreation, grazing allotment access, mining, etc., 3) assess the risk unneeded roads/routes pose to watershed health. The IDT has completed the first two steps; the third comes later in project development. Current thinking is 191 are needed, 135 are not.
- Once needed roads/routes are determined, the Forest will know how many miles of gravel resurfacing will be required. Where roads pose a risk to watersheds but are needed, measures such as re-routes would be used.

Recreation

- Numerous proposed actions including install a trail bridge over Goose Creek, expanding trails and trailheads at campground sites, install restrooms on the eastern side of Bear Basin, establish a small parking area on the SW side of Bear Basin, close a 1 mile trail in Bear Basin to equestrian users to address safety concerns~~close a 1 mile stock and equestrian trail in Bear Basin (user conflicts there)~~, create six miles of motorized trails near Rock Flats (loop riding opportunity), install educational kiosks at the Ecks Flat shooting area, close (gate) roads there where users are at risk (i.e., those which lie within the line of fire); create more parking space at the Ecks Flat gravel pit and install educational kiosks (also used by recreational shooters); create 35-40 designated dispersed campsites along travel corridors, replace the restroom at Brundage Reservoir and move it to the west side of the road for easier accessibility, install another restroom

at the reservoir's outlet, improve two boat ramps at Brundage Reservoir, increase size of Gordon Titus parking lot to 3.5 acres, extend the winter closure (over-snow travel) at Brundage from November 1 to March 31, implement a summer closure and smaller winter closure at Bear Basin.

- The Forest is looking at undetermined routes near Last Chance campground for conversion to three miles of motorized trail and a mile of non-motorized single track near Bear Basin.

KEY MESSAGES

- A PFC member recommended that the FS reach out to the Brundage Reservoir Board. Jenni Blake has since contacted them and documented their minimal concerns.
- Request that Forest wait to decommission roads until after timber harvests. FS stated this would be its approach and that it will use some undetermined routes for logging and other treatments.
- Equestrians would appreciate more space to ride along Bear Basin and the lake.
- Question whether FS is trying to segregate users to avoid conflicts between the variety of users (e.g., horses and bicycles). Answer is yes.
- Interest expressed to see the maps for proposed closures at Brundage and Bear Basin.
- Concern again expressed about Brundage's proposal to close public areas in order to expand its space.
- The Wallace Lane parking expansion proposed by PFC lies outside the project area.
- Straw poll indicates support for proposed action based on what members know today and no major sticking points are evident.
- Release of proposed action expected around January 31 or February 1. Facilitator reminded members that voting on the PA will be limited to those who voted on the project's recommendations. He noted that upon review of who voted he was only able to identify 9 out of 13 members who cast votes (not everyone signed the sign-in sheet). He has now confirmed 11 of the 13. There are three members who cannot remember whether they were present or voted. He asked for the Coalition's guidance. General agreement that since the three are long-time, informed members they should be allowed to vote. Facilitator stated he will use a roll call vote from now on.

Commented [KKKF11]: I don't think this was specifically the message from the PFC member, more that they just want to make sure that equestrian use is not completely limited and other options than the 1 mile segment are still available.

ACTION

- Scoping projected to begin at the end of January/February 1. Jenni will alert Facilitator when the proposed action is released.

Railroad Saddle EA, Dana Harris and IDT

MAIN POINTS

- Dana's presentation will be posted to the [Project Document Library](#) under RR Saddle. The draft EA is on the [project's webpage](#). There is also a [Story Map](#) outlining the project and its proposed treatments.
- Dana apologized for not providing PFC with two meetings to consider the draft EA and explained why that happened. She can be reached on her cell phone at 208-514-5809 if members have questions about the project.

Roads and Recreation

- In-depth discussion about roads and routes requested by PFC in its proposed action comment letter is on page 13 of the EA.
- Process FS used to determine which roads will remain is a balance between what is needed to manage the landscape for the next 20-30 years and achieving ~~perfect~~ watershed health ~~(which is unrealistic)~~. IDT 1) looked at existing roads and routes and determined which are needed for management actions, fire suppression, recreation, grazing allotment access, etc., 2) assessed the risk those left pose to watershed health, and 3) assigned a management level or designation to those which will be kept. There are 353 miles of existing roads in the project area. This project would reduce that to 216 miles. Decommissioning options vary depending on the risk to watershed health posed by an unneeded road or route and range from letting them revert to a natural state on their own (~37 miles) to obliteration. There will be some [existing] road recommissioning and use of undetermined routes for future re-entry treatments. There was a question about changes in road density, and the FS confirmed that road density would be reduced from 9 miles of existing road and route per square mile to 6 miles of existing road and route per square mile
- Project includes ~~options for dispersed camping~~, replacing 4 AOPs and removing 1, road surfacing, road reroutes away from RCAs, seasonal closures, and a road-to-trail conversion (i.e., remove its designation as a NFS road and reclassify it as a trail) that creates a loop. Forest noted there is another trail meeting this loop which could be used as a connection to other trails in the future (this is outside this project's scope). Dispersed camping was discussed with recreation during the road needs analysis.
- Roads ~~Some roads~~ that will be closed will be quickly accessible for fire suppression.
- Forest has coordinated with grazing permittees to ensure they have access.
- EA does not discuss effectively blocking entry to roads (e.g., methods other than gates) which is something PFC recommended.

Vegetation

- Page 98 addresses PFC's request about range permittees and Rx Fire planning.
- Page 115 addresses the Coalition's comment about legacy tree removal for aspen regeneration (i.e., language added so Forest is not precluded from doing so).
- Unknown whether Option 2 or 3 in Forest Plan will be used to treat RCAs—Forest will need to ground truth them to tell.
- Elk security considered and creation of NIDGS and white-headed woodpecker habitat is planned.
- FS added opportunities for commercial firewood collection, post and pole, tethered logging, and ~~white bark pine~~ NIDGS treatments (to be done with consultation).
- FS is working with through the necessary steps for whitebark pine consultation.
- Treatments are specified for MPC 5.1 and 5.2 lands.

KEY MESSAGES

- Question why commercial treatments are not being used on more acres in PVGs 1-5 and 5-6 to open up canopies and change the mix of tree size classes. Concern expressed that current level of treatments will not move the landscape toward resiliency

and desired conditions. Answer is twofold: 1) there are three suspended timber sales within this landscape and FS did not want to delay, interfere or create conflicts by doing treatments within those sale areas; 2) the [certified](#) silviculturist had to balance multiple needs (e.g., watershed health, wildlife habitat, [logging systems, and Forest Plan standards and guides](#)) in designing prescribed treatments. Dana asked that Rick Tholen and the Veg Committee connect with her if they have further questions.

- [Wildlife Specialist](#) reports [from specialists, including wildlife](#), will not be available with the draft EA.
- The draft EA does not make it clear that Rx Fire will be applied across this landscape (> 24,000 acres) over 20-25 years. As written, there is an impression that it will all happen at once. This is problematic because smoke is a hot-button issue. Can this be made clearer?
 - At a broader scale, how can the Forest and PFC effectively communicate the need for Rx Fire? Talking points, fliers, and other approaches are needed. Suggestion made to hold more public meetings and town halls about Rx Fire around the area to inform and educate the public. FS already plans to hold spring and fall town hall meetings in New Meadows.
 - Is there available funding for smoke monitoring equipment? Yes: Equipment was used on the Four Corners Fire last summer and the Forest intends to use it again this year for Rx Fire. Those interested to learn more should reach out to Dave Vining at david.vining@usda.gov.
- General agreement that members have not had sufficient time to review the EA and decide what comments are needed today. Member agreed a second meeting will be required before the comment period ends February 9th.

ACTIONS

- Wendy Green, Garret Visser, and Michael Gibson will draft a RR Saddle comment letter for PFC's consideration by January 31 and the Facilitator will post it to the Forum for review and comment.
- The PFC will meet virtually at 9:00 am February 3 to vote whether to submit it to Forest Service.
- Dave Vining and Lin Davis will connect about Rx Fire talking points.

Supportive objection template letter

- Members agreed the letter meets changes recommended last fall. Thanks to Frank Schwartz and the Steering Team for putting it together.

News and Updates

- Jim Wassmuth, Evergreen Forest Products, reported they worked on 5 sales this winter and really appreciate the work PFC and the Forest did to make this happen. All buyers have harvested close to 1700 loads since November 1.

Adjourned at 2:00 pm

Next meeting: February 3, 2023

Next regular meeting: February 16, 2023

DRAFT

MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Project: Payette Forest Coalition

Meeting Date: January 19, 2023

Meeting Time: 10am-3pm

Facilitator: Paul Litow

Place/Room: Idaho First Bank

First Name	Last Name	Organization	E-Mail	Round Trip Miles	Round Trip Hours
DANA	HARRIS	USFS	dana.harris@usda.gov	—	
SARAH	LAU	USFS	sarah.lau@usda.gov	—	
Chris	Clark	USFS	christopher.clark2@usda.gov	—	
Jenni	Isake	USFS	jennifer.b.isake@usda.gov		
Nick	Kunath	IRU	nkunath@idahorivers.org	—	
Phil	Roth	USFS	philip.roth@USDA.GOV		
Kara	Kirkpatrick-Kreitinger	USFS	kara.kirkpatrick-kreit@usda.gov	—	
Cameron	Carsley	USFS	robert.carsley@usda.gov		
Jason	Greenwood	USFS	jason.greenwood@usda.gov	—	—
JEREMY	GREENWOOD	USFS	jeremy.greenwood@usda.gov	—	—
JIM	WASEMOUTH	EVERGREEN	EVERGREENFORESTNM@GMAIL.COM		
John	Lewinski	CITIZEN	chukarhunter1@yahoo.com	—	—
JEFF	JONES	USFS	jeffrey.jones3@usda.gov	—	—

MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Project:

Meeting Date:

January 19, 2023

Meeting Time:

10am-3pm

Facilitator:

Place/Room:

JoAnn First Bank

First Name	Last Name	Organization	E-Mail	Round Trip Miles	Round Trip Hours
Viki	Purdy	Adams Co recorder	purdy@reagan.com	40	1 hr
JoAnn	Fly	JoAnn Fly Bookkeeping	joannfly@yahoo.com	—	—
		USFS			
		USFS			
		ITU			
		USFS			
		USFS			
		USFS			
		USFS			
		USFS			
		USFS			
		EVERGREEN			
		CITIZEN			
		USFS			

PFC Meeting Sign-In (Remote) Jan 2023

1/19/2023 9:59:36	Garret Visser	Idaho Wildlife Federation			
1/19/2023 10:00:05	Larry Laxson	Valley County	llaxson@co.valley.id.us		
1/19/2023 10:00:24	Wendy Green	Adams Soil & Water Conservation District		0	0
1/19/2023 10:02:52	David Vining	USFS/ Payette National Forest		0	0
1/19/2023 10:07:20	Randy Fox	Idaho Conservation League	rfox@idahoconservation.org	0	0
1/19/2023 10:07:49	Lin Davis	Circle C Ranches	lda1@ix.netcom.com	0	
1/19/2023 10:10:30	Dave Bingaman	Valley County Parks and Rec.	dbingaman@co.valley.id.us	0	
1/19/2023 10:10:41	William Moore	Southwest Idaho RC&D	swidrcd@idahorcd.org		
1/19/2023 10:10:47	Emily Simpson	USFS			
1/19/2023 10:10:50	Casey Attebery	U.S. Senator Mike Crapo	casey_attebery@crapo.senate.gov		
1/19/2023 10:10:51	Linda Jackson	Payette NF		0	
1/19/2023 10:10:57	Michael Gibson	Trout Unlimited		0	0
1/19/2023 10:10:58	Alex Ernst	Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Recreation Bureau	alex.ernst@idpr.idaho.gov		
1/19/2023 10:11:18	Adam Hodge	USFS	adam.hodge@usda.gov		
1/19/2023 10:11:38	Brian Harris	Payette National Forest	brian.d.harris@usda.gov	0	0
1/19/2023 12:13:27	Gloria Pippin	Heartland Back Country Horsemen		0	