

# *Payette Forest Coalition*

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Meeting: June 30, 2009  
McCall, Idaho

## SUMMARY NOTES

1. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (Dave Torell), the convening agency for the Payette Forest Coalition, provided welcome and introductions.
  - Goals of this effort include:
    - o Seeking a vision that we all have in common by pulling together a community based effort to work with the Payette National Forest (PNF) to move forward in a very proactive manner to address the landscape level needs of the forest and to bring about industry, revenue, and effective stewardship.
    - o Pulling together public and private partnership and funding – need to pool resources and look at seeking grant funds together.
    - o Timeline goal is to define and recommend a project by December, 2009 so PNF can use for NEPA process. Then, hopefully in the latter part of 2010 implementation of recommended actions would occur.
  - The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) is tasked with forming Southwest Idaho habitat conservation partnerships and to create a vision and strategy for how to accomplish that.
  - By looking at existing plans, we can find commonalities (economic, job creation, stewardship).
2. Jim Doran, Coordinator for the process and facilitator of the meeting, described what “project collaboration” means in the context of Forest Service management of public lands.
  - Every place has a unique history
  - This is a problem solving effort
  - The process is intended to bring together a wide variety of interests
  - Please stick with the process
  - Let your interests come out - interest-based resolution is the goal
  - Be honest, put your issues out on the table
  - There must be a willingness to compromise
  - If a group of people can come together to create a common vision, a lot can be accomplished
  - What do you want done, and how do you want to do it? Those are the underlying questions
  - Creative conflict can only get resolved by people talking together
  - This is not an academic exercise – there is a balance between focus on larger issues and on-the-ground implementation (doing something)
  - This is a pre-NEPA process. Before PNF gets too far down the path, let’s put the issues on the table in a collaborative way
  - Guidelines are in place
    - o Not looking at “old growth”
    - o Not talking about extensive new road systems
    - o Driver is what is good for the ecosystem of the forest
    - o Biomass / job creation is related
    - o Your interests are important

- This collaboration is not formally sanctioned by the forest service in that it is not a PNF-driven effort. The coalition will make recommendations to PNF. The PNF has stewardship project ideas, but they are not exclusive. Other projects can be considered.
  - Decision making process will be determined later – let's get to know each other first.
  - This coalition will be forest-wide. It's a large area, but process won't need to be reinvented for each project area.
3. Woody Biomass Utilization Partnership (Morris Huffman) described how the Woody Biomass Partnership was formed and its efforts to provide a renewable source of energy for local businesses.
- The Woody Biomass Partnership started via efforts in Adams Co. to utilize woody material downed by a 2006 tornado.
  - Four counties – Valley, Adams, Boise, Gem – came together to explore woody biomass opportunities and formed the partnership. Idaho Dept. of Commerce provides funds to help staff the partnership via Sage Community Resources.
  - The Woody Biomass Partnership is focused on small material excess to create an industry for its use. This involves development of a market for the material. Heat and power units are in the process of being developed. So, there is a need to develop a reliable supply of woody biomass material by working with the PNF.
4. Payette National Forest (PNF) presented an introduction to goals and possible projects (Bob Giles).
- Goals:
- Restoration of forested wildlife habitat
  - Job creation, healthy communities (socio economic)
  - Renewable energies (i.e. biomass)
  - Learning how to collaborate with groups like this
- Project possibilities:
- PNF is approx. 2.3 million acres (about 1 million is roadless)
  - This collaborative group will not be looking at wilderness area
  - Center part of PNF is inventory roadless, does not have access for logging & biomass
  - May be fuel reduction opportunities near communities like Yellow Pine, Stibnite, Warm Lake, etc.
  - PNF is short on specific types of habitat (i.e. for white headed woodpecker)
  - Area is short on large diameter trees
  - Where large trees exist, forest canopy density is very high
  - Need to create habitat that is less dense but with large trees
  - Thinning is best way to accomplish habitat goals
  - Plantations (areas that have been cleared then planted)
    - o Priority would be to look at oldest plantation areas (earliest plantations were planted just after WWII)
    - o Takes 40-60 years to grow large wood
    - o There is an immediate need for thinning in the PNF plantations
    - o About 30,000 acres (not contiguous) that are at least 30 + years old
    - o Non-uniform thinning would be used to move more toward a "natural" habitat
    - o Generally, areas are well roaded for access
  - Second growth areas
    - o Some saw logs available now, more available 20 years after thinning
    - o Thinning needed for habitat
  - Riparian zones

- Right now, standard is to leave 300 ft buffer without thinning, but other strategies could be discussed as a group
- Old growth stands
  - May need thinning and/or cutting but large projects can get complex
  - Perhaps this is an area that can be looked at down the road
  - Now, PNF is generally letting old trees stand

[LUNCH BREAK]

5. Participant Input – meeting participants described their values, interests and goals for the coalition. They also described what “deal breakers” are for them and what they feel they bring to the “table” of coalition process. Comments are presented in the chart below:

Bring to the table:	Values / Interests	Goals	Deal Breakers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Connection to state/federal decision makers</li> <li>- Ecological perspective</li> <li>- Experience in similar collaborative efforts</li> <li>- Many years in forest industry work</li> <li>- Conflict management experience</li> <li>- Variety of resources (funding, partnership development, etc.)</li> <li>- Economic development background</li> <li>- Passion for hunting, fishing and recreating in the public lands</li> <li>- Listening to local people</li> <li>- Familiarity with the forest on the ground</li> <li>- Local working knowledge</li> <li>- Taking these ideas back to the forest for implementation</li> <li>- Communication to recreational users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Getting work done at the landscape scale</li> <li>- See how we can help</li> <li>- Interested in holistic restoration</li> <li>- Vary market and supply for biomass</li> <li>- Build mission of landscape scale conservation efforts</li> <li>- Resource management practices in small towns</li> <li>- Community –based conservation</li> <li>- Concerned about the condition of our forest, increased wild fire potential</li> <li>- Creative problem solving</li> <li>- Organization focuses on land management</li> <li>- Develop something good for wildlife and for people that live and work here.</li> <li>- Look at alternative solutions</li> <li>- Keep traditional occupations alive</li> <li>- Preserving winter range habitat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active management to address forest health issues</li> <li>- See that this effort is successful</li> <li>- Agreed upon solutions</li> <li>- Everyone can participate</li> <li>- Create a model for other areas of the state</li> <li>- Ecologic restoration</li> <li>- This as a flagship effort to move forward for the ecologic health of the landscape</li> <li>- Truly appreciate various interests and needs</li> <li>- Sustainable economic development</li> <li>- Protection of land and wildlife from long term loss</li> <li>- Sustained yield and industry</li> <li>- Positive experience at collaboration</li> <li>- Maintain protection of natural resources</li> <li>- Habitat restoration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No discussion of saw log removal</li> <li>- Need science-based restoration</li> <li>- Growth and yield issues</li> <li>- No clear project recommendations to PNF</li> <li>- Allow ourselves to be distracted by personal agendas outside of the scope of this effort</li> <li>- If nothing comes out of this process</li> <li>- If participants don't stick it out throughout the process</li> <li>- Dilly dallying</li> <li>- Lack of respect</li> <li>- New roads</li> <li>- Adverse impact on listed species</li> <li>- Diverse opinions are not welcome</li> <li>- Lawsuits and threat of lawsuits</li> <li>- Lack of adequate funding</li> <li>- If whatever we produce is a poor</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding of what it's like to lose natural resources</li> <li>- Information conduit – can gather, synthesize and share info</li> <li>- Willingness to get things done</li> <li>- Knowledge of wildlife management practices</li> <li>- Provide info about the forest</li> <li>- Good idea of what can and can't be done in the forest</li> <li>- Knowledge of logging history and capabilities today</li> <li>- Small business operations</li> <li>- Patience for the process</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Noxious weed abatement</li> <li>- Give input on impact of project on recreational users</li> <li>- Connection to timber funding for schools, etc.</li> <li>- Opportunity now to fix problems (fuel loading, alternative energy, jobs, etc.)</li> <li>- Learn from others and focus on solutions</li> <li>- Balance of wildlife preservation and new job creation</li> <li>- Letting local people help define what happens to our NF</li> <li>- Start with a small project that can be completed</li> <li>- Like to see PFS moving forward on projects</li> <li>- Help grow the economy in Idaho, especially in rural areas</li> <li>- Enhancement and conservation of wildlife habitat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Getting something done!</li> <li>- Preserve quality of life of area</li> <li>- Maintenance of infrastructure and buffers between public and private land</li> <li>- Uphold custom and quality of the area</li> <li>- Inspire new industry while improving forest health</li> <li>- Look at speeding up process for PNF</li> <li>- See progress and accomplishment on the ground</li> <li>- Get natural resource management practices “back on track”</li> <li>- Learn lessons from everyone</li> <li>- Evolve into long-term stewardship plan</li> <li>- Expand forest industry opportunities</li> <li>- Economic gain via woody biomass</li> <li>- Open dialogue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- example and doesn't move forward</li> <li>- If we don't learn from the past</li> <li>- If we slide back into our own “gullies”</li> <li>- PNF does not or cannot utilize recommendations of this group</li> <li>- Lawsuits that undermine on the ground restoration work</li> <li>- If mechanical harvesting is out of the picture</li> <li>- Degenerates into non-collaborative effort</li> <li>- If we lose the spirit of optimism</li> </ul>
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Next meeting:

Last week of July or first week of August – New Meadows Senior Center (?)