

Northern Blues Forest Collaborative DRAFT Minutes

May 22, 2019

Location:

USFS La Grande Ranger District Office

Attendance:

Paul Anderes (Union County Commissioner)
Jessica Sabine Brothers (Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition)
Brianna Carollo (USFS)
Kathleen Cathey (Senator Wyden's Office)
Nils Christoffersen (Wallowa Resources)
Jeff Costello (Facilitator)
Brian Goff (USFS)
Pam Hardy (Western Environmental Law Center)
David Hatfield (USFS)
Steven Hawkins (USFS)
Brian Kelly (Greater Hells Canyon Council)
Kerry Kemp (The Nature Conservancy)
Carl Kiss (Wallowa County Resident)
Rob Klavins (Oregon Wild)
Todd Nash (Wallowa County Commissioner)
Jon Paustian (Oregon Dpt. of Fish and Wildlife)
Rex Storm (Associated Oregon Loggers)

Announcements

Rob will be on sabbatical for the next 8 weeks.

Rob & Todd met to discuss "the article" about James Nash – encouraged by results.

Next 6 Months of Collaborative Meetings: 06/26, 06/27 (Steering Committee Leadership Training),
07/24-25, 08/28-29, 09/25-26, 10/23-24, 12/04-05

Field Trip Tomorrow, 05/23/19 (Kahler Monitoring/Data Gathering):

We will meet at 10am (instead of 9am)

Key question: Are we collecting the correct data, given collaborative concern?

Problem: We're supposed to be measuring before & after, but it's taking a long time to get Tx's done.

Suggestion: Look at Tx's that have already been done, even if they weren't our Rx, and see how those are coming out compared to what we would have expected.

Sheep Creek P&N

We attempted an email vote & there remain concerns.

There is lack of clarity re:

- Who is a member & who should vote?
- Importance of strict adherence to our Ops Principles

Rob's Primary Concerns:

- Email vote is not in the Ops Principles. Feels like a breach of trust.
- The document sent to vote on was different than the one we had agreed on, in March
- There are differing recollections of the extent of the agreement in March
- It's not right to have the FS draft a collaborative document
- Felt that his concerns were not being understood (especially difficult in May, with his heavy workload)
- We ought to clarify process
- If anyone would like to see a copy of Rob's letter, sent out before the meeting, contact Jeff Costello

Cmt: Operating Principles state efforts will be made to allow everyone to be present for major votes.
Membership & voting rights depend on attendance at 2 out of 4 last meetings.

Request that we reaffirm who is/isn't a member of the collaborative
Request that we have people re-sign the Operating Principles.

Widespread agreement: Bill Gamble has done a great job, despite our collaborative difficulties. This is not the FS's problem. General agreement that they're on the right track, even if we don't have agreement on the details.

Cmt: It's a concern that we don't always see good intentions in each other's actions.
There was an intent in the room that day in March to adhere to the values of the Ops Principles.
It was not an attempt to sideline.

We could use more generosity of spirit.
We could use more attention to solutions.

Cmt: there were changes in the P&N after the March mtg. The people who proposed them thought they were small enough that they wouldn't be a problem. Not all agreed.

Were Rob's concerns addressed? Mike Billman, Carl Kiss, and Rob Klavins met for 2.5 hours about the 70+ cmts that Rob made on the P&N. But they didn't all suggest specific, more workable wording.

Carl Kiss: My intent was to help Rob be more effective. I rely on the environmental community to tell me when the substance is wrong. 70+ cmts are hard to absorb when not prioritized. It's not clear that the new FS version has many substantive differences. Not aware of any that have been pointed out.

Key Questions we should answer before moving on:

What are we going to tell the FS about the P&N?

What commitments are we making to improve process?

We've learned a lot in this process. Gratitude to Rob for acknowledging that.

Concern that both sides are not being treated evenly.

What are we going to tell the FS about the P&N?

Suggestion: Tell FS that there is no consensus, but that we're close, and that there is not value in pursuing that right now. If any collaborative members, meeting guests, members of the public, or FS staff wish to see the result tallies of the emailed vote to support/not support the final draft of the Sheep Creek Purpose and Need Statement, it is recorded and available upon request.

Q: Does that leave unresolved issues for the future?

FS: You'll have a lot of continuing opportunity to influence this project.

Cmt: The FS generally states in their NEPA that it was informed by the collaborative discussions, and not with consensus of the collaborative. They've heard these discussions going forward. Maybe that's sufficient. We've learned a lot in this process.

Conclusion Regarding the Sheep Creek Project: There was a 2-year collaborative process. Collectively, our comments helped inform the Purpose & Need. We trust that Bill's team has heard our concerns and we appreciate their work. We encourage the FS to move forward with the project. We're going to leave it at that. [All present voted in favor]

Process Discussion:

If we don't figure out the details, we're going to keep this thorn in our side.

This was probably too big an item to do by email.

Should comments be as a group, or as individual constituents? Do we need to formally comment, in order to maintain standing?

Gratitude to Carl for trying to be the arbitrator.

The discussion, debate, and interpersonal difficulties toward the very end of the voting process on the P&N all highlight our need to work on our process and accountability.

When small groups step aside, it can leave others behind. When those others have substantive concerns about what comes out, that's a problem.

When projects take multiple years to conclude, situations change: FS staff, collaborative members, socio-economic situation, ecological science...our process needs to be quicker - in order to stay ahead of ecological, economic, and social changes.

We are dealing with a lack of capacity to do the Stewardship Contracts right now.

There have been issues with shifting concerns/positions & lack of integrity in the past.

Could be helpful to have a "Reconciliation Clause" added to our Operating Principles.

Binary choices are difficult for people in some cases.

Historical perspective: In 2000, Wallowa County tried to bring together diverse views & there was originally a win. They hoped that we could do more this way & take better care of our public lands.

There's no point in having a collaborative, unless it's a net benefit to the forest.

There is a need from the WWNF for this discussion.

The Governor is interested, the WO is interested.

There's a lot of stuff in play, and there should be a local body discussing mgmt of public lands.

If we're not actively contributing to good solutions, why are we spending so much time together? We're trying to help the FS get their job done well with so few resources. We're trying to do that, while improving socio-economic situation of adjacent communities.

Precedent-Setting: If every project is 2-4 years, and there's no precedent, what are we doing? Not getting anywhere?

Reconciliation process: good, but the reason this is happening is capacity. Any reconciliation process shouldn't be burdensome. Bringing Lindsey back will help. It takes a lot of time to do this.

We should try to put less on our meeting agendas, so we can dedicate more energy/time to satisfactorily getting through what we do have on the agenda.

Cmts: We're spending time on things that don't matter all that much.

There is success in the journey.

It's OK for us to have a more consultative role, and let the FS roll with that.

There should be a new joint set of Operating Principles/Rules that are re-signed.

Carl Kiss offered to write a draft of more formal procedures.

Conclusion:

Carl will draft a revised joint set of Operating Principles & will take the input of anyone.

This will include a reconciliation process, expanded signatory page, and new Core Values/Vision/Mission Statements.

We will finish the things we start, even if it requires a whole meeting.

David Hatfield, East Side Resiliency Project

David asked us to read the announcement ([See Attached Briefing & Map](#))

The data & analysis that have been collected will be transferred to the individual forests for incorporation into local projects.

This is happening because:

- Most of the team is retiring by the end of the summer
- The re-write required by the demise of the Forest Plan is overwhelming

Plan: To distill the best data & analysis & give advice on how best to use all of that.

Q: Who's the point person on the WW for this?

A: Not clear yet. For the Umatilla, it will be Brian Goff.

Each LT will discuss what approach they would like to take.

Q: What pieces do you think will be most useful to the Forests?

A: On the Ochoco, we analyzed their ZOAs. Those were applied to all 3 forests.

Riparian options have good analysis – plenty of shades of grey & consideration of social values & reg agency concerns.

Q: Is this add'l workload for current employees, or will Forests take on new employees?

A: It's current employees.

Q: Will the budget of the BMRIDT go to the Forests?

A: No. Existing teams will be working with existing budgets.

Q: Is there a table showing NEPA readiness of the various projects?

A: In NEPA, each specialist writes a report showing existing conditions & predicting effects. But, it was done prior to the revision. We can show the "effected env." and the "predicted consequences" prior to the revision. But now that we're under the 1990 Plans, we have to propose different actions & analyze different factors. For example 1990 required 2snags/acre, but current science requires more for habitat health.

Cmt: EADM process should be rolled out this summer, and should help with "doing more with less".

"EADM is a new tool in the toolkit that will be available to the Forests."

Q: The individual forests will decide on the next process?

A: Yes. Each Forest will initiate new scoping.

The Federal Register Ntc from the BMRIDT project will be withdrawn.

Q: Could we get a final presentation of your analysis and “best of” data, collected to date?

A: Maybe – depends on staff availability.

Q: Aren't there good fire spread maps? That might help prioritize Tx's.

A: Yes. It might be more helpful to hear from the individual Forests about what they think is most relevant to us all...Northern Blues Forest Collaborative can weigh in on this discussion.

Cmt: Such a broad scale analysis might be really helpful in the “big picture” look.

Cmt: This was an experiment in working at a large scale. If you think that was a good idea, let us know.

RVCC Presentation:

“Re-Affirming our Common Purpose/Telling our Story”

Jessica Sabine Brothers

RVCC has dedicated time & resources to helping collaboratives “tell their story”

Example of JS's own story of her husband's intro to the Willows & her own adventures there with him. These stories help us get at the deeper values that bring us here.

We were asked to take 5 minutes to jot down notes on our own story & share them.

Powerful exercise – you had to be there to listen.

Some follow-up questions about the collaborative were done in pairs.

Jessica will be putting those into an Excel sheet, and passing them on to Jeff to help with strategic planning.

Adjourn: 3:05pm