

POLALLIE COOPER STEWARDSHIP CREW MEETING

April 24, 2013

Attendees:

Rick Ragan

Richard Larson

Erik Fernandez, Oregon Wild

Matt Hegerberg, Private Timber

Whitney Olsker

Joy Archuleta

Gary Asbridge

Leo Segovia

Christina Wessler (notes)

Rick: For this meeting we will be reviewing the maps that the FS brought today, and scheduling some field trips to review the area this summer.

Let's look at these composite photos compared to the maps and review. I would like to look at the area to the SE. But our priority is to protect the private land and to create a fuel break for The Dalles Watershed

Erik: That far eastern patch had more consensus, as well as the one around Tilly Jane. There were issues in the central area closer to the river that we had discussed last time.

Rick: There may be concerns in there, but I would like to go out and see the area. In the late 90s there were landowners coming forward to ask for protection from wildfires. Specific areas are up for debate, but I think we should do something.

Erik: The blue area on the map is going to become FS land in the future, and we should keep that in mind.

Rick: What Ed had sent in says that the area around the 3511 Rd has concerns of westwind fires moving through, and concerns about not treating the corridors if an eastwind fire comes up. One of these areas was around the Triple C warming hut. It needs to be thinned at minimum. It is too tight in there now to be good for recreation.

Matt: The area to the SE opens up, but along the ridge there is no understory, and there is a lot of dead and down. Maybe you could come across and put some roads in. Ground based operations. What is coming up is dying out at 20 ft tall. It is predominately Douglas-fir, with some large ponderosa pine.

Rick: I know there are also some homestead sites in there. Chinkapin is thick in there. One of the access issues was in the SE corner of Cooper Spur private land by the creek. There were no roads into this area.

Matt: There were old boundary tags, but was it harvested?

Whitney: No. There were sales planned (Kilt, Clan and Tartan) but none were harvested.

Rick: Just to review, the Omnibus bill includes a land trade between Meadows and the FS for some land in this project area. This has been in progress for the last several years.

Erik: The land exchange has been complicated by all parties involved. This area may be a good candidate for restoration.

Rick: The land exchange will provide easier access.

Richard: Can we cover any of this land in the EA?

Whitney: No, we cannot propose treatment on land of different ownership.

Erik: How about the green section of the map south of County land? It would be good to get some treatments in there.

Whitney: The treatments in there are under 80, so they will be a mix of fuels reduction through thinning. Half of it is within Crystal Spring influence.

Matt: How receptive is Crystal Springs to treatments?

Whitney: The Omnibus bill allows for fuels reduction within Crystal Springs. It does allow for thinning as a fuels treatment. We cannot actively do other projects which are outside of a fuels purpose and need.

Rick: So you cannot mix HFRA with other purpose and need.

Whitney: There is a large lodgepole pine component which will be a fuels issue.

Matt: What about east of the highway?

Rick: We had talked about treating along benches and experimenting with treatment on the slopes. We had discussed the historic treatments, for which we need data. Also, we discussed where the pockets of large trees might be.

Whitney: There are many opportunities on the hillslope with pockets of large PIPO. The majority of the large flat block selected during the last meeting is younger material. As you move north on the hillslope along the highway has pockets.

Erik: How would you do that on that slope?

Matt: It will need specific equipment and will be difficult.

Whitney: My goal would be to release the pine, maybe not even doing a matrix thinning. In the steep ground, having economically viable projects and reducing fuels is difficult.

Rick: Along the Dog River trail is where the large stands are being encroached by grand fir. I would hope that we could remove the fir.

Whitney: The logistics become difficult when we run out of road.

Rick: Last time we discussed at least trying treatments on a few areas without treating the whole hillside.

Erik: The trails on that slope are also well-used and popular. Those constituents should be factored in.

Whitney: With our timelines, we would like to treat as much as we can now, since we don't know when we would return to treat more.

Rick: A guarantee for adaptive management would be nice. That way contracts could be adjusted as factors develop.

Erik: Assuming the land exchange went through, that could also provide opportunity.

Rick: There are many unknowns at this point to decide where to treat.

Erik: There is general consensus to the west of county land, and we still have questions on the far eastern slopes before we get into the field – we can't provide recommendations until then.

Whitney: We can create large blocks of area to survey and do field visits. We can get recommendations as you review and evaluate the areas.

Rick: The FS hasn't proposed anything beyond the area. We are to the point where we are in agreement about most of the area. We should define our next step. We need info (such as stand exams) for the question areas, and do site visits. Our objectives are forest health and fuels reduction.

Erik: If we can frontload our suggestions and field visits ahead of your surveys it would make your work more efficient. Could we plan a field trip in May to visit the PIPO restoration areas?

Gary: Rick, are you asking for stand exams to be done before we meet again?

Whitney: We know the rough volume for the area near county land and around Tilly Jane from cruises in the 80s. For the area to the east I will not have stand exam information until the end of summer, based on workload. The area is opening up much faster this year, so we can plan a field trip at the end of May, but I cannot guarantee having much data before then.

Rick: Whatever you can get to us before the next meeting will be great. We can expand and contract these broad project areas as we go along.

Whitney: We will survey a large area initially, which will show large potential burn blocks that we can pare down.

Rick: What about the treatments in the hemlock stands around Tilly Jane?

Leo: We want to clean up that material and protect the cabins. It is the last green area up there after the last few fires.

Gary: We are planning to clean up hazard trees from the Cloud Cap gate up the road. There is NEPA in place to remove them for fish logs. NEPA is not needed to drop the hazard trees.

Erik: The piling and burning around Tilly Jane – that is within the green?

Leo: Yes, we would remove the dead and down fuels hazards in the historic area. We would not be treating along the road.

Rick: I would like to plan that for further along so we can have more discussions about the concerns.

Gary: That would be in July.

Erik: To return to the May field trip, could we visit that flat around Surveyers Ridge and other areas over 80 around that eastern side?

Rick/Whit: If we visit the western areas first Whitney will have time to gather data.

FIELD TRIP FOR MAY: Site visit to the western area first. Doodle poll will be set for the 13th to the 31st, beginning at either 9 or 10. Meet at Hood River and hand out hard hats. We will need a count at least three days in advance.

Richard: Could we do a CE for the Tilly Jane area?

Whitney: No, that would require a historic management plan.

Erik: The area around the 44 road to the east. Could we introduce fire in there?

Leo: Yes, we would like to thin and then do an underburn in the fall. We can treat in pockets depending on the fuels and conditions. The historic pattern of fires suggests that the areas south and west of county land could be hit by fires again soon.