



IDAHO LANDS RESOURCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

Wednesday, June 24, 2015

University of Idaho, Pitkin Forest Nursery Building, Moscow, Idaho

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Lisa Ailport, ID Chapter American Planning Association
Patti Best, Utilities/Energy Efficiency
Elaine Clegg, Association of Idaho Cities
Susan Cleverley, Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security
Kirk David, Idaho Forest Owners Association
John DeGroot, Nez Perce Tribe
Janet Funk, Idaho Tree Farm Committee
Frank Gariglio, USDA-NRCS
Ken Knoch, ILRCC Vice-Chair, City Foresters/Idaho Parks & Recreation Association

Tim Maguire, Urban Forestry Collaborative Groups / Bioregional Planning
Greg Mann, Bureau of Land Management- Fire (alternate)
Kurt Mettler, Coeur d'Alene Tribe
Robert Reggear, Idaho Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Knut Sandahl, Idaho State Fire Marshal
Chris Schnepf, University of Idaho Extension (alternate)
Jim Tucker, National Forest System, Fire Management
Janet Valle, Regions 1 & 4, USDA-FS, S&PF

AGENCY STAFF & GUESTS PRESENT:

Craig Foss, Chief, Bureau of Forestry Assistance, IDL
Gina Davis, Forest Health & Stewardship Prog. Mgr., IDL
Mary Fritz, Program Planning & Development, IDL
Tyre Holfeltz, Community Fire Program Mgr., IDL
Dave Stephenson, Urban Interface Program Mgr., IDL
Archie Gray, Forest Practices Program Mgr., IDL
Suzie Jude, Forest Stewardship Program, IDL
Gary Hess, Private Forestry Specialist, IDL

Gordon Sanders, IFOA (alternate)
Madeline David, Idaho Tree Farm (alternate)
Curtis Elke, State Conservationist, NRCS
Teri Murrison, Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission
Anthony Davis, University of Idaho, College of Natural Resources
Rita Dixon, Idaho Fish & Game
Leona Svancara, Idaho Fish & Game
Chris Simonson, Bureau of Land Management
Russ Babiak, US Fish & Wildlife Service

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS - *K. Knoch, All*

Members and guests were introduced and welcomed to the meeting. Craig Foss provided background on the development of the current advisory council structure.

WELCOME BY THE DIRECTOR OF CENTER FOR FOREST NURSERY & SEEDLING RESEARCH

Dr. Anthony Davis welcomed members and guests, provided background on the University's forestry program, and a brief tour of the new nursery facility.

TREASURE VALLEY & SOUTHEAST IDAHO CANOPY ASSESSMENTS UPDATE

Dave Stephenson summarized a Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) funded canopy assessment project, and provided two examples of projects taking place utilizing assessment data and the work of the Treasure Valley Canopy Network (TVCN), an urban forestry collaborative created through this project. Dave discussed a green stormwater infrastructure project in downtown Boise using Silva Cells, which mitigate stormwater to current EPA permitting requirements and create conditions allowing trees to grow to their mature size, further benefiting stormwater removal, prolonging road longevity, reducing energy and more. This multi-million dollar effort is funded by the Capital City Development Corporation, City of Boise and the Ada County Highway District.

He also discussed Idaho Power's Energy Saving Trees program (also received LSR grant funding), which uses canopy data to target planting locations for a tree planting program with energy customers to reduce energy

use, and calculates the future value of these efforts. Dave anticipates the same kind of success for the Southeast Idaho canopy assessment project currently underway.

Discussion followed on project costs, use of native and non-native trees in an artificial urban environment, economic opportunities for green industry, enhancing riparian areas in urban areas, enhanced road surface lifespan, strategic tree planting, cost-benefit analysis by utilities, origin of planting trees (mostly Oregon) and working with local (Idaho) partners, the need for a 3-year commitment by local growers in order to supply trees.

FORESTS OF RECOGNIZED IMPORTANCE

Janet Funk reported that during the Idaho Tree Farm (TF) audits this month, many TF plans were out of compliance with American Tree Farm System (ATFS) standards because they did not mention “Forests of Recognized Importance” (FORI). FORI is a new element of the ATFS standards for 2015-2020. Gina Davis will work with the Idaho Tree Farm Committee to address their concern.

PROPOSED SAGE-STEPPE SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA

Dave Stephenson provided a summary of discussions during the development of the first (current) Forest Action Plan (FAP). The decision at that time was to not include the sage-steppe landscapes, but to focus on areas that grow timber. Due to increased emphasis on this landscape from multiple organizations, sage-steppe is being considered for inclusion in the FAP update, as a special landscape area (SLA).

Greg Mann and Chris Simonson from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) provided background about BLM fuels and vegetation management within sage-steppe landscapes. Historically, these landscapes burned every 50-100 years. With the current increase in invasive species and juniper encroachment, it now burns every 5-10 years with high severity. In January 2015, Secretary of the Interior, Jewell, signed an order for the BLM to make sage-steppe landscapes their top priority, with an emphasis in the greater sage-grouse habitat due to its potential listing under the Endangered Species Act. Threats to habitat include degradation of habitat due to wildland fire and impacts from juniper encroachment, development, livestock and recreation. Chris reports there is a sage-grouse tool kit on the National Interagency Fire Center website showing various state and federal agency policies, BMPs, and strategies for fire fighting to protect habitat. Greg and Chris summarized BLM efforts in these landscapes.

Craig Foss clarified this is more than just a BLM issue. IDL is involved with this issue and has received funding through Office of Species Conservation to address sage-grouse issues on state endowment rangelands. Also, there’s a Cohesive Strategy project that will help address the issue in the south central area (Elmore, Camas, Blaine counties) of Idaho. This issue affects all ownerships.

Members suggested the following topics be addressed about the SLA if included as part of the FAP update:

- State why it’s important to collaborate with sage-steppe management efforts.
- List the benefits of managing all lands for reduction of wildfire risks and improvements in habitat, and plant health and diversity.
- Recognize current high risks in SLA that without treatment could pull resources from PLAs.
- State the importance of sharing information and data for planning and action purposes.
- Opportunity to assist in finding markets for juniper slash.
- Water quality effects.

Some members were concerned that SLA inclusion in the FAP update will reduce funding or project emphasis from other forest based PLAs. IDL is cognizant of this concern and the ILRCC will continue to have a voice in the types of projects developed for western competitive grants. IDL emphasized that inclusion of this SLA is more likely to leverage additional funding for the state, than detract from efforts in forested landscapes.

Dave Stephenson clarified the purpose of the FAP is to support the work that all partners are doing. It doesn't mean that funds to do work will come from a particular source, but that the plan will identify where the work is being done and how partners can support that work. The question under discussion is whether the SLA is significant enough to be included in the FAP. Partners noted that inclusion of this area in the FAP strengthens the competitive advantage of partner project proposals from a variety of funding sources. Craig explained that with the previous advisory council structure, the Fire Plan Working Group would have worked with this issue directly. Craig recommends the area be designated as an SLA and not a PLA, because of the way funding comes now to various programs through S&PF, BLM, and others. There is language in the update describing why a SLA is different from a PLA and reasons why it needs to be included in the FAP.

The council voted to approve inclusion of the SLA in FAP: 10 Yes, 5 No, 1 Neutral.

- IDL will include suggested language identifying this area as a special landscape area.

FOREST ACTION PLAN (FAP) UPDATE AND ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT DRAFTS

Mary Fritz summarized the latest draft of the accomplishment report and member comments received to date. The intended audiences for the report are project partners, Forest Service, State & Private Forestry, organizations thinking about project ideas, the interests represented within ILRCC, the National Association of State Foresters, the Council of Western State Foresters, and the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition.

Additional feedback provided by members about the report:

Design:

- A suggestion was made to include an interactive GIS map. This would be difficult for past projects, but possible moving forward as there is now a geospatial reporting requirement for LSR grants. The privacy issue related to GIS layers for projects on private ownerships was discussed. However, it was determined this would not be an issue because of the map scale.
- List the FAP goals associated with each project in the PLA project summary table.

Content:

- Include a paragraph identifying the report's intended audience.
- Idaho Fish and Game reported that rangeland owners found the phrase "*inappropriate* livestock management" objectionable and Rita Dixon can work with IDL to use more politically correct terminology.

Other comments:

- The FAP approval process will be through the Forest Service Regional Forester.
- Janet Funk requested a supply of accomplishment reports to hand out as part of forestry tours she hosts throughout the year.
- Ken requested council member assistance to prepare a summary document for inclusion in the accomplishment report—i.e. the message(s) the council wants to convey. Elaine commented on the volume of new forest and fire management information she's learned and how she's been able to help other members better understand urban forestry; this is valuable knowledge for members so the council can assist with equally distributing funding among various project types. This knowledge also strengthens the work members do in their regular jobs. This is a diverse group that is able to change and to support each other for the betterment of the state.

The council voted on the following report items:

- Include target audience paragraph: Yes, majority.
- Include goals: Yes, majority.

- Accept all changes: Yes, majority.

ILRCC members requested IDL let them know when the final report is posted.

PROJECT TYPES TO PURSUE FOR 2016 LSR GRANTS

Mary provided background on the LSR grant process, the three proposal limitation for states, and \$300,000 funding request maximum per proposal. This September, IDL will submit the following LSR projects: 1) Lower Clearwater—addresses issues in the upper watershed to assist fish in lower watershed, and vegetation management to protect other restoration efforts in the watershed; 2) Forest Tree Nutrition Coop Tree Density Thinning/Monitoring prescriptions; 3) Teton River riparian restoration project for Yellowstone Trout. No council ranking of projects is needed by IDL.

Next cycle projects:

- Mary met with the Boise Coalition in connection with the Forests Service's Clear Creek–Robie Creek project area.
- Urban component project ideas were discussed. It was suggested that projects combine opportunities for recreation with shade and/or fuels treatments.
- Dave reports that he and his Region 1 counterparts are preparing a multi-state proposal building on the human health care benefits of tree canopy, and would like to partner with state Smart Growth organizations.

ILRCC members emphasized the value of the request for pre-proposal (RFPP) process and its importance in ensuring a broad call for project ideas. Some additional ideas discussed were fisheries habitat improvement and multi-state (Pacific Northwest) climate change related to private forestlands, and a follow-up project working with groups like the Intermountain Tree Cooperative or Northwest Climate Center to help identify appropriate tree seed sources under a variety of climate scenarios. It was clarified that LSR grants cannot fund research projects. Mary will go back and look at previous project pre-proposals for potential submissions for the next grant cycle.

The council voted that IDL should broadly distribute LSR requests for pre-proposals: Yes, majority.

2016 WESTERN FIRE MANAGERS GRANTS

Tyre reported a change to the Western Fire Managers (WFM) grants. Opportunities to apply for wildfire grants (HFR & WFSM) have once again been opened for non-Federal partners beyond county governments such as, other local government, non-profits and universities to apply. The applicants must have the capacity to manage all aspects of the fuels projects. Additionally, project proposals must be listed as part of the County Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), or County All Hazards Plan, as these support cooperation among the partners.

Craig provided the recent history of IDLs approach to WFM grants and application process. IDL recognizes there are other benefits that come out of fuels treatment projects that are not the direct objective of the grant. The Western Fire Managers allow 10 applications per state to be submitted for competitive review. This year IDL received 7 applications; four of which will be funded through the Hazardous Fuels Reduction grant 'adjacency' funding from the USFS Regions, leaving only 3 applications to be submitted for FY16 WFM. Tyre also reported that the application for the fire portal will be resubmitted for FY16.

Discussion followed that for many agencies and programs, the emphasis is on outcomes that quantify ecological benefits, public values or sustainable future conditions. Monitoring of outcomes is not a fundable element of the fire grants. Craig commented that it may be possible to pool leftover grant funds for use on smaller projects (like monitoring) that might not qualify under competitive grants process.

Lunch Break – Nursery Tour

STATE WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN

Rita Dixon, Idaho Department of Fish & Game (IDFG) is the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) coordinator. She's working with IDL staff on aspects of the SWAP that dovetail with the Idaho FAP. The US Fish and Wildlife Service requires state wildlife agencies to create SWAPs to qualify for additional special funding, and to update those plans on a 10 year cycle. The first Idaho plan, created in 1995, is in the process of updating.

There are 8 required elements evaluated by the regional review team with two that are related to ILRCC; (1) extent & condition of habitats is closely tied with the Idaho FAP; and, (2) coordination of the update with other agencies within the state that have conservation responsibilities. Tribal participation has been limited so far to the Nez Perce Tribe, but future participation by the Coeur d'Alene and Shoshone Bannock tribes is anticipated. Other similarities between the FAP (forests) and the SWAP (species and habitat) include: addressing threats and plans to improve forest health benefiting wildlife and their habitat; and are committed to maximizing the outcomes through cooperation with partners.

IDFG is using a different methodology for the update, which includes a framework called "Conservation Measures Partnership Open Standards." Rita provided a model to demonstrate the methodology that showed what may be potentially affecting a particular species as it relates to wildland fire, recreation, livestock, invasive species, etc. Threats and effective strategies to address most threats were identified in the model.

A draft plan will go before the Idaho Fish and Game commission in July, then it will be available for public comment in August, and submitted to the FWS in October. Once the plan is final it will be posted online at the website [MiradiShare \(www.miradi.org\)](http://www.miradi.org).

BEST FOREST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES PROJECT REPORT

Archie Gray, IDL's Forest Practices Program Manager, summarized a FY12 Idaho/Montana multi-state grant to develop new manuals and videos about forestry Best Management Practices. The field guide and one of two videos developed in cooperation with the University of Idaho Extension Forestry were presented. These materials have been widely distributed and well-received. The field guide and videos are available from Extension at the bottom of the webpage, <http://www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry>

TRIBAL FORESTRY & FIRE

John DeGroot provided information about the Nez Perce Tribe's Forestry and Fire Division of its Natural Resources Department. Its purpose is to provide healthy and resilient forest ecosystems, fire-safe environments, and income to the Tribe from the sale of forest products. Current Tribal land use is 50% cropland, 20% forestland, 7% brush. The Tribe lost a lot of prairie lands that were traditional gathering areas on the reservation with the plowing for agriculture. A lot of Tribal lands and allotments are still in forest while neighboring private lands are in crops. Some of the issues the Tribe deals with are rights-of-way for access lost over time, boundary disputes, and timber trespass that requires the tribe to follow federal rules of triple stumpage. Over the last 20 years, the Tribe has been buying back lands to increase forest lands, business opportunities, increase wildlife habitat, and for fisheries management. John provided a history of the Tribe's timber resources and harvests. The Tribal goal is shifting species composition away from grand fir back to historic levels of ponderosa pine. The Tribe is working through the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to improve forest health through burning and planting. On trust lands, planning goes through NEPA analysis; other Tribal lands planning goes through an internal interdisciplinary team review. The most recent 10-year assessment and report by the Indian Forest Management Assessment Team found that Tribal forests are better treated than federal forest lands and that Tribal forests generally receive 1/3 the funding

than their federal partners. John reports there is now new funding from the DOI Office of Wildland Fire for the Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) program; \$10M will be available in FY15 (and likely again in FY16) for Tribes to partner with other agencies on fuels treatments across landscapes in support of healthy forests. RFPs are currently underway; John will share information with council members. Requirements include having federal partners to complete fuels treatments.

Kurt Mettler, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe Forest Manager, reported that while there are many overlaps between the Nez Perce and Coeur d'Alene Tribes, they are different entities. The Coeur d'Alene Tribe has the same foundational issues through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Tribal members have close ties to the land, have had a permanent presence for over a thousand years and have a profound stewardship ethic. The original 160-acre allotments given to Tribal members were low elevation lands that could be farmed. Of the 80,000 acres currently in Tribal ownership, half is timber and half cropland. The Tribe developed a forest management plan in 2003. Managed timberlands are mostly in allotments on the west side consisting of low-elevation pine; timberlands on the east side are mostly high-elevation north Idaho mixed tree species. Forest treatments include thinning, planting, and pruning. They also work with NRCS EQIP to financially support some of these treatments. The Tribe is currently converting old crop fields back to forest. The Tribe's wildfire suppression program coordinates through the Coeur d'Alene Interagency Dispatch center. The Tribe's fuels management program includes and supports the reintroduction of fire as site preparation for planting. Issues for the Tribe include outside management influences by private landowners and industry that affect their timber management decisions negatively through cumulative effects. Also problematic are trespass by individuals uninformed about Tribal ownership/boundaries, restricted access to members by private landowners inhibiting the 'usual and accustomed' rights to hunt and fish, farming on non-Tribal lands resulting in 'islands of timber' not heavily managed in order to protect wildlife habitat. The Tribe manages long-term for the 7th generation to provide sustainable resources for Tribal members.

BIG BEAR & UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO EXPERIMENTAL FOREST FIELD TOUR PRIMER

Gary Hess provided background information on the Big Bear LSR project. Completed so far are 10 Forest Stewardship Plans covering 1,900 acres, with planned restoration along 4.6 miles of fish-bearing streams through complementary partner projects. With available funding, they can bring 2 additional landowners into the project. No forestry practices have been implemented to date, but riparian stream restoration has begun.

Archie Gray provided information about stops on the University of Idaho Experimental Forest. Tour highlights will include shade rule layout, fuels treatments, pre-commercial thinning for multiple species, thinning in ponderosa pine stands, fire behavior in masticated treatment areas, a long-term pre-commercial thinning study with various fuels loading, silvicultural treatments to increase water yield for fish passage, reforestation efforts—good and bad, and wildfire effects.

MEETING FEEDBACK, WRAP UP, NEXT MEETING

Feedback on today's meeting:

- Regarding the meeting agenda, it would be helpful to note when or if there is a vote needed by council.
- Remember the charge for members to go back to their respective groups to share information gained at the meeting. This includes a need for representatives to be messengers to larger groups in terms of funding opportunities.
- Members shared opportunities to collaborate and emphasized the importance of creating a bigger web of collaborative partners, especially with the State Wildlife Action Plan and Tribes.
- There are shared issues within family forests that do not get addressed within this group. There's a need for focused time on issues outside of ILRCC.

NEXT MEETING

A Doodle poll will be sent out to members for available dates in February 2016. It was suggested that the next meeting could come alongside another meeting like Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership. Suggestions included a wildlife meeting in March, in Boise, and the Idaho Nursery Association meeting, January 22 & 23, also in Boise.

The fall conference for the Idaho Chapter American Planning Association, entitled "Rural Spaces Urban Places," is looking for session proposals, and will be held October 7-9, 2015 in Sandpoint.

Ken thanked everyone for attending the meeting today.

Adjourned 4:30 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Suzie Jude

List of follow-up items:

- IDL will capture needed language identifying the sage-steppe as a special landscape area in the FAP update.
- IDL will let council members know when the final FAP update and accomplishment report are posted.
- Regarding the meeting agenda, it would be helpful to note when or if there is a decision needed by council.