

Welcome

Phil welcomed the group and the meeting attendees introduced themselves. The meeting agenda was reviewed and no changes were made.

The November Steering Committee meeting notes were approved by consensus.

The Work Plan Workshop meeting minutes were approved by consensus. These notes will also be approved by the Executive Committee in February as both the Steering and Executive Committee attended the Work Plan Workshop.

Monitoring Subcommittee Report

Draft Charge

Pam Hardy, who will convene the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Subcommittee (MAMS), drafted a charge for the Steering Committee to review (*see Attachment 1*). The work performed by MAMS is a response to the miscommunications that led to the Euro 5 controversy and is an effort to prevent similar situations from recurring.

Concern was expressed whether reviewing the associated NEPA was too much to ask of a subcommittee.

- Pam replied that the DCFP and other collaboratives have historically done this and it didn't prove too difficult to complete. It's usually not a question of reading the entire NEPA document, but rather specific sections as needed.
- It also might be possible to dedicate existing staff capacity to support the monitoring work or to hire additional staff as needed.

The charge presented is a draft and will go to the MAMS for edits before coming back to the Steering Committee for final approval. This conversation allows the Steering Committee to provide advance input about their expectations for the Subcommittee. Feedback included:

- "Shared learning" should be added to the draft charge.
- MAMS should attempt to define what constitutes a large tree and an old tree.
- DCFP goals should drive the monitoring.

DCFP 10-Year Monitoring Report

Kristen McBride provided a brief overview of the DCFP 10-year Monitoring Report and the methodologies, processes, and recommendations that stemmed from that report. The monitoring efforts reviewed included fire, invasive species, aquatic ecosystems, wildlife and biodiversity, and many others. (*The presentation can be accessed through [this link](#)*).

First Meeting Plans

Pam reviewed the plans for the first Subcommittee meeting. A chair will be elected and the charge will be reviewed and finalized. She noted that what tasks are pursued is dependent on what skills and capacity are available.

- MAMS will identify opportunities to rebuild trust with the community.

- External partners and stakeholders such as Central Oregon LandWatch, Worthy Garden Club, and others will be invited to participate in order to begin conversations, address concerns, and build relationships of trust and mutual learning.

Additional recommendations included:

- MAMS should not focus solely on large trees. Other monitoring topics should be pursued as well including but not limited to:
 - Riparian restoration
 - Invasive species treatment effectiveness
- MAMS should work closely with Outreach to disseminate findings in a manner accessible to the general public.
- MAMS should work with Kristen to determine the appropriate US Forest Service (USFS) representatives who will attend the meetings.

Outreach Subcommittee Report

Outreach Coordinator

Jodie Barram, Outreach Subcommittee Chair, announced that Anne-Marie Daggett was approved as Outreach Coordinator by the Steering Committee via email, and she accepted the offer. Her start date will be dependent on when a contract can be finalized by COFSF. It is anticipated that she will start at the end of January. Jodie and Jacob will be the key points of contact for her onboarding process. Her initial tasks will include:

- Meet the Steering Committee Members
- Access and become familiar with the website, social media and other platforms
- Work with Melanie to advance the website update
- Prepare for prescribed fire season (Spring 2023)
- Create an outreach plan for the 2023 campaigns (campaigns are to be determined)

This is a shared position with Deschutes Trails Coalition and Discover Your Forest; DCFP will have approximately 68% of Anne-Marie's time. The rationale behind this is that there is a large amount of overlap between the messaging of the respective organizations and there is some anticipated coordinated messaging and efficiencies that will come with this arrangement.

Melanie spoke on the website update project and shared the draft site plan. She solicited assistance from the Steering Committee members to draft content for the site. Feedback on the draft site plan included:

- The website should include accessible information for the public and also contain technical information like the Zones of Agreement, the 10-year Monitoring Report, and others.
- Include a page with Steering Committee member pictures and bios.

A draft of the website will be shared during the March Steering Committee meeting.

Restoration Planning Subcommittee Report

Glen, Restoration Planning Subcommittee (RPSC) Co-Chair, provided an overview of the Core Habitat project:

- In the last 50 years, the world human population has added around 5 billion people and 69% of species abundance has been lost.
- The RPSC is focusing on a project to improve wildlife habitat in the DNF through defragmentation. The goal is to increase core habitat and permeability throughout the landscape in concert with USFS program priorities.

Thomas provided additional information on the project:

- This project is a shared learning process to explore, map, and discuss disturbance across the landscape.
- A subset of the RPSC will draft a preliminary recommendation that will be considered by the RPSC in February and, if approved, will be brought to the Steering Committee in March.
- Once the preliminary recommendation is approved, the RPSC plans to continue pursuing the project by producing in-depth and spatially-specific planning and implementation recommendations on both the project and landscape scales.
- The intent of the project is not to restrict access to the landscape. The RPSC is working with recreation representatives to ensure their perspectives are represented and to convey the importance of core habitat.

Thomas explained the USFS Potential Operational Delineations (PODs), which is a potential mechanism for implementation of the core habitat project:

- PODs map values across the forest and plan wildfire containment (utilizing control lines such as roads or natural breaks) to maximize the protection of various values on the DNF.
- It is important that the RPSC recommendations work with the fire control line planning.
- Core habitat considerations have the potential to be integrated into this planning tool.

Questions and discussion followed:

- The more technical analysis that Thomas will perform will be done on both the project and landscape scale.
- PODs mapping has been completed for the DNF focused solely on wildfire preparedness. Additional values (recreation, habitat, timber, infrastructure, etc.) still need to be included in the PODs.
 - The USFS would like to complete the PODs interdisciplinary crosswalk in concert with the RPSC, and will complete some internal work prior to bringing it to the DCFP.
- COTA incorporates core habitat considerations into their trails planning processes.
- Can funds from the wildfire crisis strategy be used to improve existing road closures through the justification that it would reduce the risk of human-caused ignitions?
 - Integrated resource service contracts would be a good opportunity to leverage some of these funds.

Prescribed Fire Subcommittee Report

Bob presented the goals included in the Prescribed Fire Subcommittee (PFSC) 2019 strategic plan (*see Attachment 2*).

- Many of the goals in the strategic plan are still relevant for the PFSC, such as increasing prescribed fire in the area by four times.

- . The PFSC will focus on smoke management rules and regulations.
- . Flexibility in smoke management on the federal level is needed to allow for an increased pace and scale of prescribed fire.
 - o The City of Bend cannot afford a National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) violation for smoke intrusion from prescribed fire, because that could stop prescribed fire in Central Oregon.
 - o It is likely that any prescribed fire applied within the West Bend project area will cause a NAAQS violation if smoke management regulations aren't changed.
- . The USFS is currently burning, on average, between 5,000 - 7,000 acres per year with prescribed fire, short of the 20,000 acres goal listed in the strategic plan.
- . Maintenance of the social license to continue to apply prescribed fire will be a critical function of PFSC and they will work closely with the Outreach Subcommittee.

Rod continued:

- . The Deschutes National Forest in 2020 and 2021 addressed internal USFS processes that inhibit the application of fire on the landscape in order to try to increase the pace and scale of prescribed fire. This work paused for the 2021 fire season and was not completed.
- . The West Bend project would be a good area to test solutions to internal USFS barriers; however, smoke management regulations are posing a bigger impediment to implementation.
- . A question the PFSC could consider is: What can the USFS do to reduce the amount and impact of smoke from prescribed fires? Some opportunities might include:
 - o More responsive mop-up efforts.
 - o Exclusion of large fuels from the prescribed burn.

Questions and discussion followed:

- . Equity needs to be addressed by the PFSC. Preventing the smoke from entering Bend by affecting another community like Redmond, La Pine, or Prineville is not a solution. (Holly Jewkes)
- . Jodie said that a Wildfire Outreach Workgroup has received a \$150,000 grant for a PSA campaign around smoke management and prescribed fire. That campaign will incorporate many DCFP priorities and as well as equity concerns. Spanish language materials and outreach efforts will be included.
 - o Members of that working group overlap with the DCFP so those efforts will be communicated to the DCFP.
 - o There may be opportunities for the DCFP to assist in protecting vulnerable community members from the effects of prescribed fire smoke, whether that is through messaging and outreach, providing air filters, directing people to smoke shelters, etc.
- . Phil will be in Washington, DC soon and will have an opportunity to discuss specific requests with Oregon's US Senators. He requested that someone from PFSC send him talking points so that he can make some specific recommendations and requests.
 - o Deschutes County has a community response plan in place and has a history of achieving a smoke management exception. This narrative could be effective when speaking with legislators as well as representatives from the EPA and DEQ.
- . Have the internal USFS barriers to Prescribed Fire been addressed?
 - o COVID stopped a lot of that work but now is a really good opportunity to begin solving some of those problems (Kevin Larkin).

- The USFS will engage the PFSC once they have addressed some of their internal issues.
(Holly Jewkes)

The first PFSC meeting will be on Tuesday, January 17 from 1-3 pm and will include topics such as:

- Decide on a Subcommittee Charge,
- Determine the strategic direction of the group,
- Understand current smoke management regulations,
- Elect a chair, and
- Determine regular meeting times.

US Forest Service Updates

[Project updates can be found here.](#)

General USFS Updates

- Kristen will be starting her new job as The Wildfire Crisis Strategy Project Manager.
 - It has not been determined if she will continue as the CFLRP liaison.
 - There are a large number of USFS people changing roles.
- The USFS will be hiring for a number of positions and could use DCFP's help publicizing those opportunities.

Bend-Fort Rock District

- The Cabin Butte project objection period has closed.
- The Klone project will be open for input by the end of January.

Sisters Ranger District (SRD)

- SRD is working through the consultation feedback for Green Ridge.
- SRD is developing the burn plan for the Melvin Butte Project.
- There is a dam removal planned for Whychus Creek in spring 2023.
 - This is a potential field trip opportunity.
- SRD and partners are planning for new trails around the Sisters area.
- SRD wants to work with partners to organize a Prescribed Fire field trip and education opportunity in the Spring.
- National Cohesive Strategy Conference:
 - At least one member of the EPA believes that smoke management is not a barrier to prescribed fire.
 - Prescribed Fire Subcommittee were given their contact information to follow up.

Attachment 1: Monitoring and Adaptive Management Subcommittee Draft Charge

DRAFT: January 3, 2023

Table of Contents:

- Background: the events leading to the re-establishment of the Monitoring SC
- Other considerations
- 2023 Monitoring SC Charge
- General Monitoring SC Charge
- Additional Items the Monitoring SC might look at

Background

These are the events leading to the re-establishment of the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Subcommittee (Monitoring SC). At some point near the end of 2021 the Euro 5 sale was marked, and that marking included some large trees. The majority of DCFP collaborative members agreed that this marking likely didn't follow the DCFP Zones of Agreement, but the error was discovered too late to do anything about it. Collaborative members responded in a wide variety of ways, some of which caused an erosion of trust.

In the aftermath of that, the DCFP committed to reducing the likelihood that such errors aren't occur again. In the formal DCFP letter to the Deschutes National Forest outlining the collaborative response the DCFP asked the FS to participate in five related efforts:

- A collaborative approach to reviewing Lidar mapping of the Deschutes National Forest to identify where similar large trees are currently growing, overlaying them with upcoming projects, and agreeing how to handle treatment in those important commercial thinning units.
- To provide marking guides and DxD (designation by description) and DxP (designation by prescription) specifications for harvest units within the DCFP landscape.
- More dialogue to discuss the dry pine recommendations and our intentions behind them, and project-specific discussions before any decisions are taken to take large trees.
- To help identify other opportunities for us to work more closely together.
- An update soon of the Forest's response to President Biden's Executive Order regarding the inventory and protection of old growth on public lands.

In order to move forward with integrity, the DCFP needs to establish a Monitoring SC to participate in these discussions, and bring relevant results back to the Steering Committee.

Additionally, in preparation for the December 15, 2022, meeting to establish the 2023 work plan Steering Committee members identified three related topics.

- 82% agreed that the DCFP should "Identify and Monitor Commercial Thinning Units that Include Large Trees"
- 59% agreed that in 2023 DCFP should "Review Marking Guides (DxD, DxP, others) for Commercial Thinning Units."
 - Another 24% agreed that this is important, but said that it could wait to 2024, especially if capacity turned out to be an issue.
- 42% said it was important to "Develop a Comprehensive Monitoring Plan to Address Project-Scale Conflicts or controversies that Detract from Landscape-scale Goals and priorities" in 2023.
 - Another 24% said it was important, but could wait until 2024.
 - An additional 24% said they didn't know enough to say

- One person noted that “There is a national requirement to develop an updated monitoring plan in response to the Common Monitoring Strategy. This will begin in calendar year 2023 and can incorporate project-level monitoring considerations”

Together, these statements, as well as comments made at the December 15, 2022, work plan meeting, form the basis of the work needed from the Monitoring SC.

A key point made at the December 15 meeting is that no subcommittee is limited by the questions asked of it by the Steering Committee. If, after careful consideration, subcommittee members find that other issues are also important to take on and there are volunteers with the capacity for implementation, the Steering Committee encourages such initiative, provided work plans are approved by the Steering Committee.

Other Considerations

In 2014 the DCFP established a Monitoring SC which developed a Plan for a careful investigation of the effects of treatments implemented under the CFLRP (which was new then). It’s an excellent plan, but the social issues have shifted to some extent, and the issues highlighted above are the ones that need to be addressed now.

Since the CFLRP award in 2010 the Forest Service has been required to report whether or not its treatments are in fact accomplishing the purposes of the award. Success of the new Monitoring SC will require understanding what data is already being collected, and complementing it, rather than replicating it.

2023 Monitoring SC Charge

In its first year the Monitoring SC should at minimum

- Identify upcoming thinning units that appear via lidar to have large trees and
 - Review the associated NEPA, as well as prescriptions, and determine whether they appear to be in accord with DCFP Zones of Agreement.
 - Visit a sample of those units to verify that marking appears to be in accord with expectations.
 - Report back to the Steering Committee on what was found.
- Understand what other kinds of monitoring are occurring on the Forest that might aid their work.
- Identify other issues that committee members would like to explore if there were time, money, and capacity.

Overall Monitoring SC Charge

The purpose of the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Subcommittee (Monitoring SC) is to verify that we’re getting the results we expected when we signed the Zones of Agreement; or, if we’re not, to identify opportunities for adaptive management. Our hope is that this will build trust with the community, and integrity internally.

Additional items that the Monitoring SC might take on could include

- Identifying and recording stories about how wildfire interacted with past treatments.
- Reviewing NEPA to ensure that proposed actions appear to align with DCFP ZOAs.
- Monitoring completion of project elements that are rumored to occasionally fall by the wayside such as road closures, aspen fencing, and riparian rehabilitation.
- Highlighting existing monitoring efforts that might be of interest to the Steering Committee, other members, or the general public, but are not being fully appreciated.
- Highlighting monitoring opportunities that could lead to increased consensus if only we had the capacity to gather and analyze the data.
- Monitoring the science of forest ecology, and raising awareness when new information comes to light that either lends significant support to our existing Zones of Agreement, or that might warrant a re-examination.
- Monitoring significant legal and policy developments – such as the Biden Administration’s Executive Order on large and old trees – and making recommendations on how we might respond.
- Identify emerging social concerns – such as climate change and carbon sequestration – and review science, and propose actions.

Attachment 2: 2019 Prescribed Fire Proposal and Goals

Preliminary PFSC Proposal to Steering Committee

Implementation *In the next 10 years, increase the pace and scale of restoration through prescribed fire & managed wildfire by 4x (~20,000 ac) in strategic, high-priority locations.*

1. Engage state & federal elected officials to advocate for increased hazardous fuels funding for burning.
2. Convene DCFP-DNF forum to discuss prescribed fire effects and strategies to expand burn windows & burn opportunities.

Outreach

In the next 1 to 2 years, build effective communication & engagement strategies & partnerships with other organizations engaged in community outreach that collectively serve to inform local businesses, residents & visitors of prescribed fire need & implementation.

1. Create "network map" of traditional & non-traditional partners to approach about interest in wildland fire outreach alliance.
2. Convene identified partners to discuss wildland fire outreach alliance, interest, purpose, value-added, & next steps.

Collaboration

In the next 1-2 years, engage a broad group of stakeholders with interest in WUI burning to collaboratively develop a strategic plan for a local pilot geography to facilitate increased use of mechanical fuel treatments & wildland fire in strategic high-priority locations.

1. Work with DNF to identify community values & resource objectives that overlap in high priority treatment areas.
2. Recommend DNF identify areas where current Forest Plan and/or project-level NEPA decisions are barriers to wildland fire use.

Planning

In the next 1-2 years, engage diverse community stakeholders to provide community input in spatial fire planning that increases community buy-in and support for strategic placement of mechanical treatments & increased wildland fire use.

1. Request that DNF/COFMS engage in collaborative fire planning process to inform mechanical treatments & wildland fire use.
2. Convene collaborative process with necessary stakeholders to integrate community values & resource objectives in fire planning.

