

Minutes

Crook County Natural Resource Committee

March 9, 2022

Committee Members Present: John Dehler, Lynne Breese, Tim Deboodt, Mike Lunn, Frank Porfily, Casey Kiser, Steve McGuire, Cliff Kiser, Jace Rhoden

Members absent: Trent Smith, Ston McDaniel

Guests present: Kevin Keown (FS), Stephanie McKinney (BLM), Eric Klann, City of Prineville,

Public Present: Mike Ervin, John Breese, Gayle Hunt, Rack Rabenberg, Mike Woodley, Wendy Woodley, Dave Neilsen, Sharon Neilsen, Don Vogel, Kim Vogel, Stan Hickman, Nanette Hickman

Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chair Steve McGuire @ 4H Building.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of previous meeting minutes: John moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Mike Seconded. Motion passed.

Agency Reports: Kevin Keown (FS) reported that Anthony Botello will be serving as acting Supervisor on the Ochoco National Forest until late June. Shane Jeffries is on detail to Region 9. Anthony has been the Deputy Supervisor on the Wallow Whitman National Forest.

Vegetation management planning continues on the Forest. The Mill Creek project will have a draft NEPA document out this spring for public comment. The North Fork Crooked River project is in the process of developing proposed actions (alternative for analysis). Project areas next on the priority list are the Trout Creek Watershed and the Mountain Creek Watershed (north of Scott's campground).

Kevin reported that the Lemon Gulch NEPA process is on-going. The FS is wrapping up the analysis of the alternatives and is anticipating a release of a draft NEPA and preferred alternative sometime late spring or early summer. Walton Lake court appeals are moving forward with Court briefings being scheduled. The Big Summit Wildhorse Territory project is still waiting for horse handling facilities which have been ordered but not yet delivered to the forest. No gatherings are scheduled yet.

The Forest is now in the 3rd year of the Joint Chief's project on the Southern part of the Ochoco's and northern Maury Mtn area. This year, FS is planning additional thinning and piling projects (approximately 2000 acres), along with scheduled riparian projects in Williams Prairie. National Resource and Conservation Service (NRCS) is working with private landowners in the project area on similar conservation activities.

Mike Lunn asked about the torrefaction project in John Day. Kevin didn't know any new information but had shared that the project is still moving forward and the plant facilities are being tested.

Frank asked about scheduled timber sales on the Forest. Kevin provided a list that includes most of what is scheduled:

GRS Salvage (Grandview danger trees)
Core
Base DxP (Integrated Resource Service Contract)
Langer Stewardship
Peak TS
Muddy Decks
Road 4240 Decks
Dome Timber Sale
Honi Stewardship
Lobo Decks
Rd 4260 east and Rd 2 to Beaver Creek Rd.

Stephanie McKinney (BLM) Assistant Field Manager, Central Oregon Field Office, Prineville District shared that the State office is still working on the updates to the BLM's Sage Grouse Habitat Management plan developed about 5 years ago. They might be ready to share something with the County's NRAC at the April, 2022 meeting.

Stephanie was able to share an updated report about the communication towers on top of Grizzly Mtn (previously reported by Jeff Kitchens (BLM)). There are 19 active operators with leases. BLM will be working with these operators to see what the long term goals and needs are for this location. BLM will also be addressing the hazardous fuels treatments on the mountain.

Presentation:

Eric Klann, City Engineer for the City of Prineville presented an update on the City's BioMass Project referred to as "PREP", Prineville Renewable Energy Project. The project proposal (under study) is a 25 megawatt power plant that would produce renewable, baseload power. It is a co-generation facility producing both steam and electricity. Uses of the steam could include drying lumber, and hydroponic food production. A possible, useable by-product coming from the facility is bio-char. The project is being designed as a pilot project with opportunities for other communities to build their own co-gen plant. Project partners include the City of Prineville, Crook County, TRM Energy Solutions and Wellon's (dry kilns).

The Project is a reflection of the City's and its partners passion for improving forest health and creating working wage jobs. Fuel (wood) sources are being secured (bondable contracts) for the next 20 years. Purchase of the power would be to large electrical users who have a willingness to purchase renewable energy at a rate that makes the plant feasible.

The project currently under study knows that it will need to address air quality concerns. The project intends to be carbon neutral, that with the incorporation of the newest technology it will scrub 99% of the PM2.5.

Project includes the utilization of wood (forest restoration projects, western juniper residuals and timber harvest residuals) and agricultural waste (ex. Nut shells). With the presence of the City of

Prineville Railroad, shipping in material as a back haul is a very large potential. Wood construction debris, landscape materials (tree trimmings) are also potential sources of fuel.

The facility as planned would utilize approximately 30 bone dry tons (BDT) per hour (1 truck load).

Timeline for the project is once the feasibility study is completed and accepted, if approved, the project could be generating power within 2 years of the signing of power purchase agreements.

Steve McGuire asked about the Prairie City facility and why did it get shut down. Eric responded that their PPA were not sustainable. Priced too high.

Casey Kiser (Committee member and City planner) provided an update on the City's efforts to create a vision and management plan for the Hudspeth property. The City purchased the property and plans to utilize the 305 acres of water rights (OID) for mitigation associated with its ground water pumping requirements. The purchase also allows the City to extend Peters Rd and Combs Flat Rd and create a new north/south access point on the east end of town. With the opportunities to develop open space opportunities with the associated 160 acre property that is federal public lands managed by the BLM, the total area is 620 acres of open space.

Cliff Kiser reminded the City of the mosquito breeding grounds associated with the wetlands on the property and the need to monitor and control these populations.

Good of the Order:

Steve thanked Lynne for all the work she has done to organize a visit by Dr. Tom DeLuca, the new OSU Dean of the College of Forestry later this spring.

Frank asked if OWRD had released any decision on the BOR/USFWS water right application for releases of stored water from Bowman Dam. Tim reported that as of yesterday (Tuesday, March 8th) they had not released any decision notice.

Public Comment:

Kim Vogel, representing some of the residents of Mill Creek and the FS permittees asked for time on the April 13th, 2022 agenda of the County's NRAC to speak to continued concerns regarding FS planning on the Lemon Gulch Trails project. Kim also mentioned a public meeting hosted by "Don't Bend Prineville" to be held Wednesday night, April 20th @ Carey Foster Hall, Crook County Fairgrounds. Cliff Kiser asked if the FS would be present at the April meeting of the NRAC. Tim responded that he would make sure to invite them and encourage their in-person presence.

April agenda will include a presentation by BLM on their sage grouse habitat plan updating process and the Lemon Gulch Trail project.

John moved to adjourn the meeting. Cliff Seconded. Motion Passed.