

Minutes

Crook County Natural Resource Committee

March 13, 2019

Committee members present:

Steve McGuire, Frank Porfily, Lynne Breese, Ston McDaniel, Teresa Rodriguez, John Dehler, Trent Smith, Mike Lunn

Committee member absent:

Andy Gallagher

Public present:

Phil Paterno, Lisa Clark, Kevin Keown, Seth Crawford, John Breese, Cliff Kizer, Jerry Brummer, Barb Franano

Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Vice-Chair Lynne Breese @ Crook County COCC Open Campus Building, Prineville

Pledge of Allegiance

Review of Minutes: Trent moved to approve minutes. John seconded. Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment, attending public introduced themselves.

Old Business:

Bylaws Review: A review of the entire document with changes made during the February meeting. Andy proposed the addition of Committee guidelines (Section 11, F). Ston moved to accept the insertion. Mike seconded. Motion passed. Ston moved to accept all changes to the draft Bylaws as presented. John seconded. Motion passed.

New Business:

Kevin Keown, Ochoco National Forest presented a Forest Service update. Ochoco Summit Trail projected and was litigated in District Court. The Forest Service was ruled against. The FS still needs to decide whether or not it will appeal.

A torrifaction (a process for turning wood into a charcoal like product) project is being worked on by 4 private and non-profit businesses and organizations to build a torrifaction plant in John Day. The Ochoco NF is a participating agency. The business model will use woody biomass generated by forest restoration projects. The torrified product will be shipped to Prineville where it will be placed in railcars for shipment to the Port of Portland and shipped overseas. Regional meetings are being held. The Committee discussed the project, expressing interest in learning more. Potential problems could be long

term supply of biomass from restoration and cost of moving small diameter material to processing facility. Biomass material provided by the FS would come from NEPA approved projects. Estimated demand is approximately 85000 bone dry tons at full capacity.

Kevin talked about the Two Chiefs Project (Chiefs from USDA NRCS and USDA FS). The Ochoco Forest along with other federal, state and local agencies submitted a proposal last fall to include an area south of Big Summit to the Brothers, Oregon area (including the Maury Mtns.) Project if funded would provide approximately 10 million dollars over 3 years for conservation work on private and public lands. The Forest expects to hear within the coming weeks.

Walton Lake Campground status is still unknown. Forest is working on a schedule for completing the planning process

Black Mtn EIS public comment period has closed. Forest is now beginning to respond to those comments. The Black Mtn project area is located in the Northeast corner of Big Summit Prairie and includes proposed commercial harvest, aspen stand restoration and forest health projects.

The Blue Mtn Resiliency Project includes 247,000 acres of Ochoco NF. NEPA is a part of the project. It was announced that the Forest had withdrawn the forest plan revisions for the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa National Forests, a 15 year project. Status of forest plan revisions for these 3 forests is unknown at this time.

Lisa Clark, representing the Prineville BLM District provided an update for BLM. The Trespass Resolution project east of town now has a completed EA. The area is covered by the Brothers-La Pine Resource Plan from the late 1980's. There is a need to amend portions of that plan in order for the BLM to move forward with implementing one of several alternatives. The resolution could include from 1 to 17.5 acres. There will be a notice published in the Federal Register within the next couple of months.

The BLM is moving forward with the analysis of the Crook County Road Departments Pit permit. The process will renew 8, 10 year use permits for gravel. Scoping for this project was closed on March 8th.

Grazing permit renewal is moving forward on 3 allotments near Paulina. The allotments cover 42,000 acres of which 20,000 acres are public lands administered by the BLM. There are 2 permittees involved in the renewal process and the EA will include possible range improvement activities.

Teresa Rodriguez led the group through a discussion of the documents on Coordination vs. Cooperating Agency. Discussion focused on Coordination being found in federal statutes while cooperating agency is not. Cooperating agency status is controlled by the lead planning agency (federal) and participation in this process is by invitation. Phil Paterno, county resident, asked to comment and shared he thought the Coordination documents being discussed were biased and one sided. He asked if the Advisory Board had seen the BLM's document on working with local governments. All the Board responded that they had and that they believed the suite of tools available to the County would best assure that the County and its policies were best implemented. Ston pointed out that coordination has been grossly underutilized by County governments. Relationships built with federal agencies will determine how we move forward.

Committee member updates

Tim shared that the County had accepted the invitation by USFWS for cooperating agency status on the Deschutes HCP review. Tim talked also about the County's concern regarding the news that the Prineville Reservoir Resort will be closed for 2019 and the concessionaire may give up its contract with BOR (7 years left). The group discussed the loss of up to 70 camp sites on the reservoir and agreed that there should be no net loss of these camp sites. The Resort provides the only, on lake fueling station and the County Sheriff's office has used the Resorts boat dock for storing their boat during the summer boating season. Other concerns raised included the increased dispersed camping pressure on the reservoir's shoreline and the possible negative impact that could have (garbage, erosion, etc).

Steve shared with the group that he is the chair of the Crook County Natural Resource PAC and he has been sharing minutes and activities of the Advisory Committee with his group. The Board thought that was a good idea and reminded everyone that the minutes are public record and available to all.

Public Comment

Acting Chair Lynne asked if there was any additional public comment. Jerry Brummer, County Commissioner thanked the Advisory Board for its work and shared that the Forest Service and BLM are now making quarterly updates directly to the County Court during their Court meetings. These meetings are also open to the public.

No other business before the Board, meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Next meeting will be: Wednesday, April 10th @ 1:00 p.m., Conference Room – Crook County COCC
Open Campus building, 510 SE Lynn Blvd. Prineville