

## **Minutes**

### **Crook County Natural Resource Committee**

**September 11, 2019**

**Committee Members Present:** Teresa Rodriquez, Lynne Breese, Mike Lunn, Trent Smith, John Dehler, Frank Porfily, Andy Gallagher, Ston McDaniel,

**Members absent:** Steve McGuire

**Guests present:** Slater Turner (FS), Beth Peer (FS), Johanna Kavarik (FS), Chris Ryan (BLM), Kyle Hensley (BLM)

**Public present:** Melinda Kestler, Cliff Kiser, Jessica Lay, Mike Ervin, Barbara and D.W. Viue

Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chair Andy Gallagher @ Crook County COCC Open Campus Conference Room.

#### **Pledge of Allegiance**

**Review of Minutes:** Andy moved to approve, John seconded, Motion passed.

#### **Agency Updates:**

Chris Ryan introduced Kyle Hensley to the group. Kyle is serving as the acting resource area manager until the end of October.

**BLM** continues to work on County's rock permit renewals (8 sites), EA is being finalized for 2 wells in the Scott Allotment. This will establish permanent water sources. Grazing AMP updates are continuing in the Rabbit Valley area. AMP updates will address farming trespass issues. The Cabin trespass issue is waiting for approval to do a plan amendment for disposal of land. Teaters road project is waiting of the applicant to finalize their work in establishing a road right-of-way and land exchange with BLM. In the shrub steppe area of the district, the BLM has completed 78,000 ac. of juniper control with another 5000 ac. under contract. Once this work is completed, the focus of tree control will move to the Brothers/Wagon Tire area. BLM is still working on consolidating travel maps for the public (better understanding of where/what types of travel are authorized across BLM managed lands within the District.

Slater brought the group up to date on the Canyon 66 prescribed fire on the **Ochoco National Forest**. Originally planned for 2018, this was a 5000 ac. burn. Planning in 2019 started in early August. Conversations were held with DEQ and local governments (city and county). With changing weather, the ignition date was moved up to September 3-4. Permittee had cows in the allotment prior to burn with 2 pair spotted after the burn in the burn area. Teresa reported that the permittee was missing 27 head throughout the total allotment.

Teresa asked about hunter. Slater reported that the area is now open, bow hunters are back in the area and the fire had minimal impact on wildlife within the area. Lynne commended the FS for the public information effort.

Trent asked about the monitoring for grazing this fall, grazing standards, stubble height, etc. Slater commented that adjustments will be made according to burn response. Ston complimented the FS on pre-fire public updates, he counted over 20 pre-fire posts on FS Facebook page.

Slater announced that the next large prescribed fire is being planned for the Mill Creek area in 2020.

The group welcomed Johanna to the meeting. Johanna is the new, permanent District Ranger for Paulina Ranger District. The Sunflower Allotment update is just beginning. The FS would like to invite the NRAC committee to a field visit to discuss resource issues, particularly road utilization and possible closures. Scoping will begin this fall. Mike commented that he hoped the FS would have to resource decisions (roads and grazing). Ston asked if Johanna had read the County's Natural Resource Plan pointing out that it includes a no road closure position.

Black Mtn Vegetation Management plan: the objection period had closed and the FS received 5 objections. The Bear Creek AMP EA was out and the comment period on that document has closed.

### **Old Business:**

Review of presentations on Hydro project review (Bowman Dam)

Trent commented that on whole, the project would be of benefit to the County. The project may have negative impacts on the upper country if by-pass was implemented (introduction of T/E species).

Andy felt that getting fish above the reservoir might open up opportunities for habitat restoration opportunities for landowners. Funding sources are limited now because of no by-pass. There would be some additional oversight as Trent stated. Also, the feasibility study for fish by-pass over the dam indicates a trucking system would be difficult to implement.

Mike thought that after listening to the presentations, not sure by-pass is worth the effort.

John commented that the State didn't seem willing to give in on the by-pass issue. The expense of the bypass greatly exceeds the value of the hydro project. The opportunity lies in the state perspective that there needs to be a "net benefit" to the fish. What is that net benefit?

The discussion concluded that figuring out what mitigation measures, place downstream of the dam would be comparable to the benefit of by-pass. STon moved to support looking to reasonable mitigation alternatives in favor of placing the hydro project on Bowman Dam. Trent seconded. Motion passed.

**Mining subcommittee:** Ston suggested that the subcommittee needed to get back together. FS has asked for a current Plan of Operation which was submitted by the miner and now the FS has responded to it. The FS is now asking for more information in a lengthy response back to the miner. The miner is now trying to decide what is next. Ston commented that this was moving in a very positive manner but with the recent development by the FS, the process has turned negative. Mike commented that he is disappointed as well. Committee meeting will be scheduled within a week.

**Member sharing:**

Andy: FS/NRCS will be reapplying for the 2 Chief's project (Maury Mtn area)

Lynne: Fire season is almost over

Trent: The County's Wolf committee is available for addressing wolf concerns. ODF&W is hiring a wolf biologist.

Ston: He has seen some impacts around the Prineville Reservoir as a result of the resort closure. Some increased camping around the County boat ramp which is not allowed and increased boat camping along the shorelines.

**Public comment:**

Cliff Kiser urged the committee to make sure when the FS proposed road closures that they state a clear purpose for each closure. Also, with Pacfish/Infish issues to not accept any proposal that puts fish over the dam. He commented that ODF&W used to do annual fish shocking surveys to get population estimates below the dam. He finds it difficult to believe that they don't know fish numbers (from ODFW presentation in August).

Barbara Viue wanted to know what happened to the community input for Walton Lake Campground collected during the summer. Ston/Tim volunteered to find out and let the group know.

Mike Ervin expressed concern about the increased level of regulation now in place, making the process of doing something (mining/grazing/logging) so onerous that you just give up and don't do them anymore.

Melinda Kestler asked if the mining claim was a hard rock claim or a placer mine claim. Mike and Ston clarified that it was a hard rock claim.

Trent moved to adjourn. Ston Seconded. Motion passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.