

**Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative**  
Implementation Advisory Committee  
GNA Wall Creek CE Field Tour  
Thursday, December 12, 2019

**Attendance**

M. Brinkley, SWFC; C. Noblitt, Warner Creek Co.; S. Rust, Natures Capital, C. Mather, Caldera Archeology; R. Blew, Sage Consulting; J. Britton, K2 Environmental; F. Mclean, SWFC; J. Dougherty, Natures Capital  
Forest Service (FS): M. Juillerat, K. Isaacson, C. Mitchell  
Oregon Dept. of Forestry (ODF): K. Sullivan, P. Chang  
SWFC Staff: S. Altemus-Pope, T. Maxfield

**1. Welcome**

Introductions

ODF: GNA is a way for the state to add extra capacity across the state.

SWFC: NEPA triangle power point – Environmental Analysis (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Categorical Exclusion (CE) is an expedited NEPA. CE is used when significant impacts on the ground are not anticipated, but it can change if surveys taken indicate an EA or EIS is needed.

Discussion:

Q: 70 Acres is for single treatment?

- Yes, one treatment area. Yes, but can you keep doing 70-acre treatment areas near each other? ODF: Not probably because there are cumulative impacts.
- FS: Doing about one of these a year for a stand that are off by themselves.
- ODF: There are a lot of areas that are non-controversial that are low-complexity that are off by themselves and not easily added into an EA area.
- FS: Want to start with a small and simple project using CE, but ODF can do all components of NEPA under GNA in the future.

SWFC: Projects such as this will end up as part of the small sales program that put small timber sales up for bid for small contractors, who have more of a chance to be successful bidders on smaller sales. ODF: We are making a choice with this project to use a previous GNA sale to fund this CE, but in the future could use the revenue can help all types of planning work across the forest. After implementing this project, ODF will recover its cost for the work, this setup allows ODF to add to the FS capacity i.e. leveraging timber revenue for capacity.

Q: Will the revenue from this project go back into the state's general fund?

- ODF: No, it will go back to the Forest to implement restoration or additional planning. Under a traditional timber sale, revenue would go back to the national treasury under GNA the funds can be invested on Forest into restoration work.

Q: Will ODF build up its staff over time?

- ODF: Yes, but the ODF employees will likely not be doing the entire planning cycle as they don't traditionally have the entire skill set or capacity.

Q: Will this be a more efficient process, because of the steep learning curve of federal environmental protections?

- ODF: Not entirely out of the wheelhouse. Can understand the questions about efficiency, but it is work that wouldn't be getting done otherwise. Overall, it will add capacity. FS is still a point of contact on everything and provides oversight.
- FS: This the first one and is a pilot to see how everything works, will take a hard look when it's complete. We want to try this process on a small scale.
- SWFC: 20 years ago there were 3 different districts that made up the Middle Fork with more employees a much larger capacity. The reason FS isn't able to do more is because of limited capacity. GNA is one avenue to increase the capacity, overtime we will learn how to do things more efficiently.
- FS: GNA helps local communities and state objectives. ODF: GNA projects meet Oregon restoration goals by giving grants to collaboratives, providing technical assistance grants and implementing GNA projects.

## **2. Wall Creek GNA Project**

Nature's Capital, LLC Analysis Team.

Existing Forest Conditions: The two units are from a clear cut harvest from the mid 60s-70s. Relatively young stands. Medium size Douglas Fir dominant. Mid-seral, closed canopy, even aged. DBH 17-20 between the two stands. 46-47% Curtis Relative Density - Trees are beginning to compete with each other because of the stand density. 2495 stand thinned once in 1998. No PCT in either unit.

Proposed Forest Management Activities: Thin from below to 60 trees per acre. Curtis Relative Density index suggests 35% to decrease competition. Thin stand 2495 to 60% and provide cover for spotted owl habitat. Thin 2406 to 40% cover. Retain cedar and hardwood trees. Additional project includes road maintenance on 2400, patching asphalt. Slash piling and burning. 1.2 MBF estimated from both units.

## **3. Forest Resources Discussion**

Wildlife: The project is small in scope in comparison to the range of the animals. There are no spotted owl nests in the stands or within the quarter mile disturbance buffer area. 2495 has more snags, considered foraging habitat for spotted owl. 2406 considered northern spotted owl dispersal sight. Project not likely to impact Pacific fisher, not known to be in the area. Bald Eagle: Doesn't have key habitat features. Falcons: Not likely to impact. Bat: not likely to impact because of low-quality foraging area. Snail: protected though the aquatic buffer. Logging damaged trees will be left to increase habitat. No yarding across streams etc, to protect riparian habitat.

Q: Are there actually locations on the district that are not considered a dispersal site?

- FS: There might be some, but it's a case-by-case basis – harder to find because dispersal habitat essentially means the owl can move through /below the canopy cover.
- FS: Stands under 80 years of age don't require tree vole surveys, this is part of the categorical exclusion.

Aquatics: The FS conducted the stream surveys. Spring chinook, only in salmon creek before the project area. No yarding through streams, riparian buffers: no burning, no harvest, etc. Intermittent streams, some even flow below the surface, but still applying the riparian buffer to these areas. Buffer areas differ class-four: 30 ft, class-three 60 ft. declared by FS.

Botany: Botanical surveys did not find any sensitive or listed plant species.

Heritage: Survey consisted of pedestrian transects W to E & N to E. Looking at bare area from tree root tip-ups and other surface exposures. Did not observe anything. Not a likely place for camps. There are streams present, but it would have been really dense forest off the main drainage. Would have possibly expected to find historic logging debris, but didn't. There were no recorded homesteads in the area.

#### **4. Field Tour**

Group visited both proposed harvest stands and discussed surveys, treatments, and stream buffers. Participants and contractors agreed it was a productive meeting and helpful to everyone to learn about GNA CE projects.