

**Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative
Implementation Advisory Committee**

Thursday June 13th, 9:00 – 10:30AM, Supervisor's Office
"Coming together for healthy forests and communities"

Attending: Kris E., Katie K., Chandra L., Susan O., Rob M., Fergus M., Kyle S., Sarah D., Michael C., BJ K., Jean C., Tim J., Don H., Laurie P., Phil C., Tyson B-R., Sarah A-P.

Intro:

The IAC has been working on a charter this year to formalize decision-making process for giving FS recommendations on restoration, stewardship, GNA. In March the IAC provided recommendations for collaborative process for implementing GNA on the District. Previous stewardship projects project \$2.1 million in retained receipts. First tranche, Burnt, 380K in late 2019-early 2020.

Normally would still be talking about restoration projects but today we will talk about the Forest trust fund committee proposal for RR sharing. Plan to bring in FS specialists, Walama Restoration to talk about their projects next meeting. Short term goal to create watershed-wide spreadsheet with restoration projects, NEPA status, cost, leverage funds, etc. Will be tool to operate off of in years to come.

All-collaboratives meeting last month – unexpected proposal that FS would keep 60% of retained receipts, 20 for admin, 40 for forest-wide projects. Came as a surprise, people were caught off-guard, surprised it hadn't come to collaboratives first. Asked by end of this week to have written input prior to forest leadership team meeting next week. SA has meeting with Tracy and discussion with steering committee planned too.

Review "Stewardship Recommendations form Forest Level Trust Fund Committee, June 2019" (sent yesterday via email). Discussion yesterday of why this proposal came up, what it means. Forest wants ability to do cross-forest sharing and have a pool of fund to tap for "emergency" opportunities.

Right now, most stewardship is done on the south end of forest (MFRD, MKRD). North end tried to do stewardship a couple of years ago, bid rate was low, push back from industry. Learning curve, picking good sales (not IRSC), internal information sharing for how best to do stewardship contracting.

Proposal includes designated facilitation and capacity building fund that would come out of the 20% Admin.

3 years ago Forest stewardship goal was 25% of timber harvest. Uptick to 30%, but also trying to increase harvest and adding GNA.

Retained receipts – stewardship can include embedded projects where purchaser is expected to complete those tasks and build in the costs, otherwise retained receipts are on the back as revenue for restoration. Paid out after all IRTC contracted work is complete.

New proposal: 40% goes to forest-wide fund that forest supervisor would have authority to distribute

- Need to re-tool boundaries to where forest is one stewardship area, assess what adjoining private lands are included
- Wyden authority - Set up process to review Wyden projects and forest receipts
- Don't want to keep a huge account that money is not being used – spend receipts within 2 years of being generated

Q: Money can already be shifted between forests? Yes. That's the wake-up that the forest service had when they were able to receive funds from Hood last year to work on lower fork

- Some money needs to be paid back? Funds from Gifford Pinchot need to be repaid

Discussion of forest RR sharing proposal:

Comment: Seems that handing 40% of the available funds to the discretion of the forest misses the point

- Multiple collaborative members have shared that concern

Acknowledged work of Collaboratives and partners.

Demonstration of where things can be spent

- Nod to oak savanna restoration
- Watershed council plans that we heard of in Feb. exceeded well over 10 million dollars of work. Still waiting to learn of FS priorities (roads, streams, fuels, botany, recreation, etc.)

There's a process to collaborate – first learning what priorities are, then having discussions. Needs to be a phased approach. Projects are going to generate revenue.

- Forest says it doesn't mean the money won't come back to the district.

For that forest-wide pot, suggest that there is input from the collaborative/groups working across the district

- The Siuslaw has a somewhat similar setup where stewardship groups get together and make suggestions/ground truthing for priorities
- That would go a long way toward putting us back in a spirit of collaboration

Comment: Collab's purpose is to bring in different voices. Expectation is that opinions are all going to be listened to. Working, not being paid, to come up with plans and an expectation at the end that it would be worth it. This proposal diminishes that and comes in too late after system is already established.

IAC has participated in 27 meetings over last three years, average of three hours long, four field trips. Rigdon another 26, ten of them field trips, plus monthly planning subcommittee meetings. Also SWFC steering committee, biomass/air attainment, and policy work SWFC does.

Comment: Collaboratives looking to Duane and Molly who have been planning with us, and it looked like they weren't being transparent and honest. Knowing FS politics, this was a surprise to them as well, but it looks like a lack of transparency in the agency, but that was not the intent.

Comment: little mention of recreation in the document, only mention was dispersed camping; nothing about restoring trails/human activities, tend to get left out if they're not mentioned; after 3 years of meetings, feeling very unheard when these interests aren't included.

At the forest level, are they really going to be meeting all needs, or are these pet projects? (proposal looked like an example list, application process?)

Will an application process create more work? We want to be 3 years ahead in our planning, have full project list, types of revenues from SC and GNA, have \$ allocated

- Not efficient to create a pool of funds and have people come in then with their applications

If not using an IRSC, at least acknowledge/honor that collaboratives have come up with a list of priorities – this proposal centralized and decouples funds from where they're generated.

- for example, with Rigdon those receipts should go to the Rigdon restoration work rather than going to a pool, 2.5 years of planning has gone into Rigdon restoration.

Need to consider that leadership positions that will be changing – need a system that isn't dependent on the people sitting in the seat.

Need to consider efficiency; these are tools; there's a component for creating local work, and that is not honored in this proposal; how do you keep Lane County involved if receipts are going to Linn?

- no mention of benefit to local communities, which every stewardship group has worked to define for themselves. Needs to be acknowledged at least as a bullet point.

When we talk about restoration, seeing that our interest is being honored, want to see that restoration envelope include trail not just for recreation potential but also intertwined with restoration in terms of re-routes; at what point is this trail brought in as a consideration? Is there a means by which we can focus on this trail as a vital part of this restoration project?

- recreation is the means by which people get out in the forest and learn and care about conservation; unfortunately these mechanisms don't make that easy
- what are all of these meetings for if the decision-makers don't know what our priorities are?
 - Sarah A – we're trying to honor the spirit of stewardship, and that's the message carrying forward to Tracy

Beware of reverse incentives, embedding everything doesn't work, limits scope of restoration efforts; would rather push back.

FS is not appreciating the level of knowledge brought by collaboratives; maybe Sarah or SWFC member should be pulled into FS meetings instead of just having FS come to our meetings? There's hesitancy around that; IDT with Rigdon is a new approach and it's working well to have collab sit in on that committee; need to be using tools for efficiency; need FS to value expertise and efficiency opportunities that exist from using collaboratives effectively.

Question: under the 20% admin, there's the word "monitoring." Monitoring is a huge part of restoration, and looking at this breakdown, monitoring isn't going to get much funding. Monitoring is something we can do as a collaborative and make recommendations on to funnel knowledge into future projects. It's appropriate to use receipts for, but should be called out as a specific pot of money separate than admin.

Is this IAC open to cross-forest sharing?

- If cross-forest sharing is needed, it should be something that comes from the collaboratives and the Districts.
- For example, if McKenzie collaborative group came to a meeting and introduced a need to borrow from SWFC funds and had a plan to pay it back, the group would be open to that. Common goals to work together.
- We can probably find some agreement to advise on these funds so that places that don't have a collaborative but have vital restoration needs are in the mix.

On the North end of Forest, a lot of effort to get collaboratives going. Issues around lack of capacity. Watershed council leaders trying to wear both hats, this is a big obstacle in both Detroit and Sweet Home.

- Sarah A – if Sweet Home wants to start a new group, would be happy to sit down with whoever the coordinator is going to be and help them out. Maybe something at the forest level?
- Phil – emphasize that there are places where collaboratives are not possible because there are specific stakeholders that obstruct it

More discussion with pros and cons – not hearing that anyone likes this proposal

- Should we talk about what admin needs are and maybe revisit cost sharing in a year?

- The proposal seems salvageable and there is value in forest-wide projects, but we need to have input and be able to make recommendations
- The whole reason collaboration works is trust, but this has driven a knife into that

Q: Is feedback just a “no” or are we suggesting different numbers?

- this as a recommendation that it’s not either/or, but a process that involves collaboratives as partners
- recommendation that more Forest-level staff come to collaborative meetings & understand what is going on,
- better information sharing
- Need some wins first – some projects have gotten started but haven’t gotten to complete the planned restoration projects yet
- trust that values would be protected because we know the people involved, but as people retire (like Tracy), you have to convince new staff to buy in to the values; creates more work; need a system that recognizes the involvement of the collaboratives
- Forest is just another stakeholder and they need to come to the table and share their interests and priorities.

ODF: a different angle to bring it high level: useful perspective to hear that looking around the state at collaboratives and what they see as their work and their mechanisms for impact and influence, the model in Eastern Oregon is really different. This is a place where there’s no opportunity for retained receipts, but collaborative movement is still vibrant. Collaboratives see their mission as shaping and influencing what happens through NEPA. All that they do is make recommendations that influence NEPA, and their goals are reflected in the projects that make it through NEPA and into implementation. Could we bring that approach into what happens here? On the Siuslaw, the amount of collaborative focus on the actual forest management is fairly modest. All about how retained receipts get spent.

- Sarah – we’re doing that. Rigdon has been 2.5 years of that.
- ODF – is there a way in the planning process to pre-program where money is going to be spent?
- Sarah – No, not with everything. We’ve learned that not all desired restoration projects aren’t necessarily folded into NEPA planning document
- Chandra – there’s so much restoration that can be done, getting some into NEPA isn’t a problem, there’s just not enough money to pay for it all, so we’re talking about how to prioritize what gets funds
- What ODF is saying is what we’re doing in this committee; to do projects that might be implemented in 10 years, it won’t happen without that influence in real time

When west side has funds coming in from stewardship but east side doesn’t – at what point does a regional office come in and distribute on a larger, broader scale? There’s money here and not in other parts of the state; need to create a model for using funds effectively in a copasetic way without internal conflict.

- Any time there is a pot that's visible, it creates tension. Someone says it's not being used. Better off having projects already identified and not thinking of it as a pot.
- If you show any excess, it will be taken away; the pot does exist – look at what happened with KV. So much better off if you have your plan in-hand

A priority list is essential for knowing where we're going, but having money specifically allocated is necessary. Burnt is \$1.8 million, can easily allocate in 2 years, leverage other dollars ahead and is a more logical process. Plenty of time to pre-plan with 3-5 years depending on size of sale

- ODF: does FS have a provision that purchaser has to provide half of bid value halfway through contract? No. ODF has that provision.

Sarah A – The Forest is 10% down on budget, don't want to cut positions, do need money. Just want to check that the 20% admin doesn't cause any heartburn.

- No, but would be nice to see breakdown and greater % for monitoring and facilitation
- Make sure it's equitably split, but definitely admin is important
- Makes sense; can continue to discuss percentage-wise

Round robin takeaways:

- Good point about IRSC and embedding creating a disincentive, need to have collaborative influence on the 40% the forest would keep; local workforce/economy aspect
- having input into forest-wide 40% if they go with that is vital for buy-in from any of the collaboratives, has to come with a commitment to collaboration from the Forest Service
- still advocate for co-created process, don't want to attend more meetings at the forest level for a forest process, would like to see collaborative input considered without creating additional work.
- Curious moving forward if we developed something similar to this for GNA – breakdown as we move forward
- Need to wave flag for recreation that we've been representing for a long time, why work for 3 years if it's not included
- Issues around embedding projects reiterated; optional projects also problematic – have to get bids for work that may not get done
- Why even negotiate something no one is happy with?
- The FS got more money from Rock than anyone expected, having expertise in embedded projects helps a lot, Industry reps have been pretty happy with stewardship process
- On the 20% question, would like to emphasize that FS needs a basic amount of capacity now and going into the future – nods around the room
- Hopefully the FS will realize based on the pains of this process that something different needs to happen next time

Next Steps:

- Tabled discussion on GNA – don't know that FS fully understands GNA
- Smaller group – look at the agenda, try to move forward on what the projects are, reconvene in full in September
- Will do a meeting in July, but it will be project based. Would be same date – second Thursday (July 11) – might cancel if we can't get FS people, but we do need to get list together sooner than later
- Will provide update after FLT meets; probably will have another process.