

Southwestern Crown Collaborative Meeting Notes

June 14, 2017 (10am-4pm)

Swan Valley Connections, Condon

Attending: Jim Burchfield (Co-Chair), Tami MacKenzie, Luke Lamar, Sara Mayben, Michael Stansberry, Arlene Montgomery, Keith Hammer, Andrew Hagemeyer, Rachel Feigley, Dave Cunningham, Maria Mantas, Gary Burnett (Co-Chair), Jon Haufler, Cory Davis, Craig Thompson, Sandy Mack, Donald Long, Sabine Mellmann-Brown, Bill Wall

Jim Burchfield welcomed everyone, reviewed the agenda, and started a round of introductions.

Washington Office of Forest Service field visit

July 26: Dave Cunningham shared a draft agenda and reviewed the expected schedule. We will start at the FNF Supervisor's Office in Kalispell at 8am for a joint FS and SWCC presentation. From there we will have stops at Swan Valley Connections (SVC), Beaver Creek project, Colt Summit project, and arrive at the Double Arrow in Seeley Lake in the late afternoon. A few more presentations and discussions will occur and a social hour. The agenda will be sent to SWCC members for input and participation.

Future field trips and meetings: the July 18 meeting was cancelled due to several conflicts with member's and BSLRP schedule and the proximity to the WO visit. The next SWCC meeting will be August 29 at SVC from 10am-4pm.



Follow-up items from May conference call: Burchfield mentioned the letter sent from the SWCC to the Lake County Commissioners opposing the proposed transfer of management. Arlene Montgomery is tracking the letters sent in support and against. Burchfield also read the letter drafted in support of the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Project. The SWCC had previously voted to send the letters.

Project updates:

Stonewall: project was enjoined by courts due to uncertainty about lynx critical habitat caused by the Cottonwood decision. It requires the USFS to consult with the USFWS on their Lynx Management Directive. A BA is being drafted for the Cottonwood decision. The SWCC will have to wait to see how it plays out.

Blackfoot Travel Plan: decommissioning is starting this week and additional trail and trailhead work is also planned for this summer.

Willow Creek project (same area as former Dalton Mtn project): A pre-scoping open house and field trip were held for this project. This area was designated under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act and an EA (<3,000 acres) would be prepared.

Center Horse: currently in the objections period and they have received 5 objections, mostly wildlife related. There will be an objections panel soon.

Glacier Loon: Supplemental EA coming out very soon. We should review it at that time.

Cold Jim: USFWS rescinded its BO. Consultation may need to be re-initiated or a new decision will need to be released. How much that changes the project is unknown.

Beaver Creek: District moving ahead with laying out units. PCT this year and commercial activities next year. However, there is still a good chance that it will be litigated.

The Rangers have drafted an FY18 CFLR Program of Work. This was provided to the SWCC for review. Burchfield asked that the Rangers give an overview at the August 29 meeting.

Letter of support for CFLRP: With the current administration's draft budget zeroing out CFLRP, the group discussed the potential for sending a letter to the editor and to the MT delegation for continued support of CFLRP. There were questions about whether the CFLRP Coalition was doing something similar. Burnett confirmed that it sounded like they were. The group decided it was still worth the SWCC sending its own letter. Jim will draft and send to members for review.

Stories to feature on webpage: We have an intern coming onboard to help us develop more stories on our webpage. Burchfield asked that each voting member send one story idea to him, including contact info for follow-up and main focus of potential story.

BSLRP Assessment: Davis provided a presentation (see pdf) about the methods used in the vegetation portion of the assessment. The group agreed that a similar discussion around the topics of aquatics and roads would be a good idea for a future meeting. Main topics covered:

- Overview of how Historic Range of Variation (HRV) and Future Range of Variation (FRV) are calculated. Given that HRV is calculated based partly on watersheds outside the SW Crown and across many years (1930s-1950s) it is also important to consider other local data when developing prescriptions. There was also considerable discussion about what is appropriate to use for FRV given the level of uncertainty of conditions in the future (wetter or drier in Swan?). The team will decide what range to use, but caution should be used in interpretation.
- Brief summary of calculated and derived metrics including landscape metrics.
- Examples of attributes that are out of range using Lion Creek. Based on the results, it appears that the current composition of this drainage is still relatively intact. However, current patch density is considerably higher than HRV or FRV suggesting too many small patches.

The group headed to the Lion Creek drainage after lunch for additional discussion in the field and returned by 4pm.

- **Discussions/Comments/Questions Regarding BSLRP**
 - How are we going to consider things other than vegetation, such as wildlife, hydro, roads, etc.? An extra emphasis was given to how we consider travel management in the project area.
 - Sandy suggested we have an aquatics focused session in the future.
 - Develop an explanation of our process that is understandable to the non-science community.
 - When will we see the landscape patterns not just HUC 6 level?
 - How are we going to incorporate old growth?
 - How will we consider hardwood habitats?
 - Conversation on how we will consider the large ponderosa pine legacy trees that are primarily found on FS lands.
 - Better define HRV. There was extensive discussion on HRV being a reference point not a historic baseline.
 - It was suggested to leave nature to take its own course and not treat anything.

