



# Blue Mountains Forest Partners

## Our Mission

*“Blue Mountains Forest Partners is a diverse group of stakeholders who work together to create and implement a shared vision to improve the resilience and well-being of forests and communities in the Blue Mountains.”*

## Operations Committee Meeting Agenda

### Meeting Overview:

- **Date of Meeting:** June 20, 2019
- **Time:** 4:00 – 7:00 pm
- **Location:** John Day Airport Conference Room
- **Facilitator:** Mark Webb
- **Minutes Scribe:** Susan Jane Brown

- **Call to Order: Introductions, changes to the agenda, agenda approval (all):** agenda moved approval, seconded, approved unanimously.
- **Approval of May 2018 Full Group minutes (all):** minutes moved approval, seconded, approved unanimously.
- **Ops’ update (SJ):** Ops received a financial report from the executive director and a preview of the July meeting with visitors. Discussed the Elk 16 aspen treatments and the need to fence the area to suppress browsing by ungulates, as well as an interpretative sign explaining the treatment and its purpose. Discussed possible forest plan amendments and the Forest Service’s proposed rulemaking for its NEPA procedures.
- **Wednesday field trip update (Mark):** 3 stops: first stop was a juniper treatment to enhance mahogany, where we discussed the benefits of this kind of treatment; second stop to discuss the challenges of the road system and necessary haul along critical habitat streams, and possible restoration of waterways and the cost, given the constraints of budgets and revenue from timber receipts. There was a lot of aspen at this stop and throughout the project, so we discussed possible opportunities in restoring aspen in the Bark planning area; last stop was a vista view into the Philips-Snyder area, where we discussed wild horse conflicts with our vegetation treatments, invasive species treatments, connectivity, and possible forest plan amendments.

What’s the status of wild horses on the forest? Next week the scoping notice will go out on herd management on the Malheur, document will be an EA, hope to make a decision this time next year. That would be followed by site-specific NEPA to gather horses across the herd management unit; BLM and USFS will take different approaches at this stage. Situation is complicated by the fact that the USFS shares jurisdiction with the BLM for horse management.

- **Forest Service project updates (Blue Mountain & Prairie City RDs):** Austin scoping will go out soon, and the USFS can present on that in July or August (79,000 acres). Ragged Ruby EIS



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will be out shortly thereafter. Bark field trip yesterday and open house last week; project is 84,000 acres. Cliff/Knox: drafting EIS now, specialist reports are underway. Upper Bear is in the initial phases, with the project initiation letter coming out soon (~56,000 acres).

- **Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) discussion (Caleb Sturgill, ODF):** Program revenue from GNA projects are held by the state, even though it is federal money. This means that the money can sit for awhile before it is spent. The Forest Service decides how that money is spent, although it is a conversation with the State. Funds cannot be spent on roads, salaries, road/trail construction or maintenance. GNA gives the state more time to spend the money and additional capacity to treat acres than the Forest Service. Funds can be spent on or off forest, but generally on forest.
- **Presentation & discussion: Veg program – how project work/activities are identified and prioritized (Gerald Dixon):** The “Vegetation Board” is comprised of several disciplines and works at all levels of planning. This team deals with sequencing of the implementation of treatments. The team asks the planning teams to address timber targets, 30/70 split between open and stewardship sales (30% includes SBA offerings), and critical restoration activities identified by the districts (leveraged funding is part of the consideration in identifying priorities) and then addresses how to package the work to get it implemented. Want to ensure that each package is balanced. Also provides out year data gathering and monitoring information to the ID teams. Essentially the Veg Board coordinates all that it takes to get a timber sale out the door, from identifying the need to hire temporary field techs to packaging units into a task order. This forest is doing so much work that an entity like the Veg Board is critical to making sure everything runs as smoothly as possible.

Discussion followed. How does this address the implementation of units, and what gets packaged together? Sometimes packages make sense, but others have scattered units across the landscape, which is inefficient for operators – why does that happen? Has to do with funding and wildlife or other resource considerations, timing/sequencing of activities, and that it takes time to integrate all of the work across the forest. There is no real “implementation record” that explains how units and work should be implemented in what order. Would it be helpful for BMFP to memorialize in writing what types of activities are priorities for implementation? Maybe, but there are so many considerations that go into the decisionmaking process, that BMFP’s preferences would be one data point (but the USFS still would decide).

Concern that what is being packaged together isn’t what BMFP discussed in the field or in our zones of agreement – we don’t see why or how the decisions to put certain activities together, or delay the implementation of other activities, are made. What is in the NEPA and our discussions is not always what appears in prescriptions or on the ground. Sometimes walking the ground, which doesn’t always happen when NEPA is being done, reveals considerations not present in the analysis. Sometimes units are dropped due to market conditions, which can change and the units could be repackaged together.

What role do the zones of agreement play in developing projects? They play a role in the NEPA analysis and prescription development that is analyzed in the NEPA document, and help the



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USFS build the proposed action. ZOAs also help to identify areas of common ground and social license.

- **Presentation & discussion: ARBO – what the aquatic programmatic is and how it relates to accelerated restoration on the Malheur NF (Forest Service):** ARBO = “aquatic restoration biological opinion.” The “biological opinion” covers about 14 different categories of activities to improve water quality, function, and process and provides Endangered Species Act coverage for those activities. The Forest Service on the Malheur developed the programmatic environmental analysis (NEPA) that covered these activities that include fish passage, large wood, channel restoration, stream bank restoration, dam and legacy structure removal, juniper removal, fencing, beaver habitat restoration, noncommercial vegetation removal in riparian areas, and other activities. If specific project design criteria (PDCs) are met, then no further NEPA analysis is required (PDCs are available on the forest’s website). For example: riparian vegetation treatments includes preparing the RHCA for prescribed burning, which includes noncommercial conifer thinning. ARBO is an efficient tool to accomplish aquatic restoration outside of larger projects, so we don’t have to wait for large project decisions. Cumulative effects of these actions are included in the large project NEPA analysis. The region has used the Malheur’s approach for a regional programmatic analysis for aquatic restoration.
- **Other issues (all).** Dave Traylor would like to discuss membership. Mark would like to get an email or phone number for Dave and we can schedule an interview.
- **Friday field trip: Monitoring field trip to Camp Creek and East Fork of Beech Creek to visit instream work and the impact from this year’s high water. Will also be looking at tipping units.** Leaving the SO at 8 am Friday morning.
- **Adjourn**



# Blue Mountains Forest Partners

## **Blue Mountains Forest Partners Vision, Guiding Principles, and Grounds Rules for Collaboration**

### Our Vision

*The Blue Mountains Forest Partners represents a broad constituency of stakeholders interested in healthy forest ecosystems, economic vitality and quality of life in Grant County, Oregon. We provide the US Forest Service with proposals for management of National Forest lands, and we support the utilization of forest resources and related opportunities to strengthen local economies.*

### Guiding Principles

- *To promote forest restoration in Grant County, integrating ecological, economic and community needs that have been developed and/or prioritized through collaboration.*
- *To improve our ability to work collaboratively and participate actively in these issues, finding common ground for our work. Our process will be open, inclusive and encourage participation of diverse stakeholders; our meetings will provide a 'safe' space for discussion and sharing of ideas.*
- *To overcome gridlock in forest planning and implementation. The success of our work is tied to long-term sustainability of forests and communities.*

### Ground Rules for Collaboration and Meeting Participation

***Members and nonmembers alike are expected to abide by these ground rules***

- *Respect each other in and outside of meetings.*
- *No backroom deals.*
- *Personal attacks will not be tolerated.*
- *The personal integrity and values of participants will be respected.*
- *Stereotyping will be avoided.*
- *Commitments will not be made lightly and will be kept—agreements will be honored.*
- *Disagreements will be regarded as “problems to be solved” rather than as “battles to be won.”*
- *Participants are representative of a broad range of interests, each having concerns about the outcome of the issues at hand. All parties recognize the legitimacy of the interests and concerns of others, and expect that their interests will be represented as well.*
- *Participants commit to keeping their colleagues/constituents informed about the progress of these discussions*
- *Participants commit to stating interests, problems, and opportunities. Not positions.*
- *Participants will air problems, disagreements and critical information during meetings to avoid surprises.*
- *Participants commit to search for opportunities and alternatives. The creativity of the group can often find the best solution.*
- *Participants agree to verify rumors at the meeting before accepting them as fact.*
- *Respect the facilitator and meeting agenda.*

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#### Sign-In Sheet: Full Group, 20 June 2019

Name	Organization	Email Address
Mentel Bob	BMEFA	
Dave Taylor	Citizen	
Caleb Sturgill	ODF	
SCOTT ORR	WMAF	
Amanda Lindsay	MMF	
Fane Murray	MMF	
Bob Foxworth	MMF BMRD	
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Curtis Perry	Citizen, John Day, Oregon	
Katy Nelson	Gov Brown Adv Bd OYC	
NATHAN PAGE	USFS, NE OR. Ecology	
Gerald Dixon	Malheur SD	
Seak Bush	Malheur SD	

Name	Organization	Email Address
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Rick Minsler	BMEP	
Susan Jane Brown	WELC	
Tyron Restone - Riggs	RICE	
Glen Johnston	Buckland Logging	
Dore Harschal	Grayback Forestry	
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