



# 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.”*

## Full Group Meeting Minutes

### Meeting Overview:

- **Date of Meeting:** September 17, 2020
- **Time:** 4:00 – 7:00 pm
- **Location:** The Zoom Room (via video; see your email for the link)
- **Facilitator:** Mark
- **Minutes Scribe:** Susan Jane

- **Call to Order: changes to the agenda, agenda approval, approval of July 2020 Full Group minutes (all):** Pam moves approval of the agenda, Susan Jane seconds, approved unanimously. Dave Hannibal moves to approve the last meeting, Glen seconds, approves.
- **Ops’ update (Susan Jane):** ops received an executive director report from Mark, who reported that our finances are strong, but we will be exploring new funding opportunities in the next several months. We are postponing strategic planning until the beginning of 2021 due to the challenges presented by COVID and the wildfires. Ops also discussed the 21” amendment and BMFP’s comments on them. Mark will be taking on a temporary leadership role as interim director of Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition, with which BMFP has worked in the past.
- **Forest Service project work and other updates (USFS):** No updates from the Prairie City RD. Blue Mountain: Ragged Ruby final biological assessment will be submitted to NMFS soon, with a ROD signed in October/November; no updates on Bark or Austin Idaho, hope to sign Laycock Creek CE decision this fall. USFS is also working on a series of CEs under a multiple bidder scenario, and preparing to award 2 task orders under the 10-year contract. Many employees are working fire in the region.
- **Emily Platt and other 21” rule revision process team members: update; Q&A (USFS):** Forest Service has extended the comment period by 30 days, so the period closes on October 13, 2020. Will be incorporating additional information in the final EA, including on carbon. After the comment period closes, the USFS will analyze the comments and prepare a final EA and draft decision, the release of which will begin the administrative objection process. USFS received about 1500 comments on the proposal. Discussion followed.

Are there any common themes in the comments yet? Too early to say yet, but there don’t appear to be any surprises. It doesn’t appear that there is a lot of difference among the alternatives in terms of results: how did the USFS select the first alternative as the preferred alternative? What seems like a small difference in the analysis would appear as a larger difference where the



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treatments occur, and the new direction would be read in concert with direction that is not changing, which does limit outcomes. Regarding monitoring, has there been any communication amongst the Team21 team and the CFLRP personnel who are also considering changes in monitoring? There may be overlap here that the USFS should consider. Yes, the USFS is beginning to outreach to others who are involved in monitoring to get input into the monitoring program envisioned by the amendment, and is open to suggestions. Regarding the preferred alternative, it appears to allow for the harvest of larger and older trees: is this the case? As a guideline, what sideboards are in place that would still result in late and old forest structure. Because this is still the objective of the guideline, the USFS could not harvest late and old forest and still comply with the rest of the Screens that requires the conservation of this forest type. What is the difference between open- and closed-forest types – is it based on species composition? Often, but a stand is evaluated based on site-specific conditions, and the USFS cannot create a deficit of LOS due to management actions. A HRV analysis will help ensure that we do not go below a historic composition of LOS on the landscape. What would prevent line officers from clearcutting commercially-valuable species (ponderosa pine) and leave the less economically-valuable fir species behind? Other provisions of the forest plan would prohibit clear cutting, i.e., emphasis on forest resilience and fire risk reduction, and the legal requirements of the National Forest Management Act regarding wildlife diversity also limit unrestrained harvest.

- **Proposed BMFP comments for the “Forest Management Direction for Large Diameter Trees in Eastern Oregon Preliminary EA” (i.e., the EA for the 21” rule) (all):** Pam shared the evolution of ops thinking about our comments on the proposed amendment. We looked at our zones of agreement and our practice to see how the proposed alternatives are consistent with our ongoing work on the Malheur. Originally we thought that the proposed action would work for us, but based on the conversations we’ve had with Drs. Norm Johnson and Jerry Franklin, James Johnston, and Trent Seager, we are leaning towards supporting the old tree alternative. This alternative is more consistent with our zones of agreement in terms of protecting old trees (born after 1860), it is easier to understand and implement, will have greater social support from the conservation community, will be easier to monitor, and will have the greatest potential to be implemented on the ground. Other components of the Eastside Screens that are not changing will still protect large tree structure when old trees are lacking, so provides “protection” of important forest structure. As we dug into the proposed alternative, it appeared to us that it would be too unclear and subject to different interpretations, which is not a good way to ensure certainty around getting work done on the ground. The old tree alternative is something that we are already doing on the ground, so we also know that our contractors can implement it. This approach will also give us the ability to protect small old trees and remove encroaching fir of a younger age. Has there been discussion among the collaborative groups about our thinking? Some, but relatively informal: some groups aren’t able to get together in time (or have the agreement) to prepare comments; our ZOAs allow us to act more quickly than other collabs.

Given the discussion, is there any concern from members about the direction we’re going and the alternative we are proposing to support? No concerns raised by the membership.

- **Adjourn**



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## 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.*