



Pinchot Partners

F O R E S T C O L L A B O R A T I V E

February Meeting Notes Wednesday, February 19, 2025 9am-11:30am St. Mary's, Toledo, WA & Zoom

In attendance. * indicates participant attended meeting through Zoom

PP Staff: Janene Ritchie, Sarah Yeoman; *PP Board:* John O'Brien, John Squires, Anjolene Ngari, Fred Norman, Bob Guenther, Ashley Short*, David Owen*, Bill Little; *PP Advisory Group:* Dalton Fry, Amy Boyd, Sheryl Hall*; *US Forest Service:* Diane Bedell*, Theresa Tanner; *DNR:* Justin Tamez*, Andrew Spaeth*; Ben Hagadorn*; *Cowlitz Indian Tribe:* Christina Donehower*; *WDFW:* Elliot Johnson, Deidre Hayward*; Brooke Squires, Lenee Langdon*, Gina Owen*,

Today's Agenda. Amendment to have forest service updates first. MOTION to approve: John O'Brien; CARRIED.

January Meeting Minutes. MOTION to approve: David Owen; second: Anjolene Ngari; CARRIED

Treasurer's Report, Ashley Short. Checking account balance is \$78,696.81. Credit card balance is \$0. Paid fee for annual meeting. Still waiting on an outstanding invoice to DNR for \$12-\$13,000. Janene and Andrew will follow up. MOTION to approve: Bob Guenther; second: David Owen. CARRIED.

Action Items.

- Janene will reach out to people interested in forming a committee around work with Rep. Gluesenkamp Perez's staff - in progress.
- Continuing bylaws and operations manual committee - in progress
- Janene will send out updated draft of NWFP amendment comment letter after subcommittee meeting on March 10. Comments are due March 17th.

Forest Service Updates, Theresa Tanner

- Changes are afoot. Mission and priorities have not changed around timber sales and hazard fuels reduction projects.
- Staffing: seeing changes in staffing.
 - Proposed larger boundaries to Greater Packwood Skate Creek with the intent to improve forest health and resiliency around fire. More positions are unknown. Skate Creek timeline could change.
 - Successful recruitment for primary firefighters and they have a complete hand crew.
 - Office hours may potentially be affected. But still will try to provide as much customer service as possible.
 - Comments from Andrew Spaeth: Across Region Six, 300 Forest Service staff have been fired. Most were in the probationary period. This has widespread impacts to

timber shops, recreation, front line staff, and fuel staff. The bigger issue for the long term is that without people, the work can't get done. Pinchot Partners can't be successful if there is no high-functioning Forest Service partner. FY 25 will also see decreases in timber volume and treatment.

- Amy suggested lobbying on behalf of entities, and share info up the chain that is digestible to the current administration. Anjolene has been working with new government affairs rep to move forward.
- Forest-wide thinning project EA
 - Will be open for comment at the end of February. Next step for the north side would be to identify 3000 acres in a separate NEPA.
 - Regional office is taking critical looks at how they are functioning within the forest and across different forests and assessing cross-forest support with changing workforce.
- There are no engineers left in Randall, a few folks left on road crew. Possibly revising list of construction projects, but the big ones to be aware of are:
 - Huffaker bridge replacement: Bridge will be closed and an alternate route will be opened.
 - Nisqually bridge repair.
 - Patch repair on the 25: Potential road closure and delays around milepost 13. Group discussed concern that the timing would re-close the 25 after just opening it. Forest Service is trying to find the balance and cost difference in completely closing the road vs. closing a lane, but the timing should work so the road doesn't have to open then close again.
 - Skate Creek: There is some work left to do, so delays will be seen. Haven't been able to get a road crew out there, so definitive dates will be shared when known.
- North zone has been cranking out small projects, completing a lot of CEs. Working on 6 new seismic monitoring stations across the forest.
- A Forest Service representative will be presenting at the annual meeting.
- Janene proposed working creatively with future grant opportunities to support. Anjolene pointed out potential funding that the collaborative can apply for opening March/April.

Operations Updates, Janene Ritchie

- Washington Forest Collaborative Network is banding together to reboot. Janene had a meeting with Collaborative facilitators and they have committed to meeting monthly.
- Pinchot Partners was notified at the beginning of the year that Johana had approved \$50,000 in RAC funding. The status of that is unknown at this point.
- Gifford Pinchot Fungi Festival: Janene was sent proposal for Pinchot Partners to benefit from the festival. It will take place Oct. 24-25. Pinchot Partners gets to choose level of involvement, but the main responsibility would be cash management. Estimated to bring in \$16,500 for the organization. Group suggested that the programming tie into what Pinchot Partners does, and that it is a great opportunity to strengthen community connections. It could also grow and be an economic boon for the community.
 - MOTION: John Squires moves to invite Amy Besunder to a meeting for more info for mushroom festival. Bob Guenther seconds.
- Janene's time off will be Feb. 21-March 2

Programming Meeting

Northwest Forest Plan Amendment draft letter

Things are evolving quickly. Zones of Agreement committee discussed that they don't know if the NWFP will actually continue, but will still submit comment letter. The Forest Service is talking to the FAC this week. More concrete info will come in the next couple of weeks.

- Sections include areas of full collaborative support, items that concern the collaborative, and analyses that were missing or incomplete.
- Include messaging and a statement of support around the importance of the federal advisory committee's collaborative efforts. This is a process Pinchot Partners believes in.
- Add a list of board of directors and people involved in conversations to illustrate that there were an array of diverse perspectives on this.
- Comments on the collaborative support section:
 - Suggestion that age classifications mention something about plantations.
- Comments on collaborative concerns section:
 - Changes to survey and manage are necessary to fine tune language. As it stands, it comes across as anti-survey and manage, and is another opportunity to highlight staffing and funding.
 - Anjolene will add language under concerns about delineation of dry and moist forest types, as well as sustainable timber supply. Will also need input from Andrew.
- Comments on missing and incomplete analyses section:
 - Consider putting language in supporting a revision to NWFP not just an amendment to an amendment. Group discussed concerns that requesting a revision might undermine current points and landscape of not having capacity. There is potential to invest in the current FAC to do the full analysis for a revision. Group suggests submitting a separate letter amplifying that a revision would be better and keep the comment letter the same.
 - Amy will add language under failed Northern Spotted Owl analysis.
 - Funding and implementation needs to extend to include staffing. Potentially add language about restoration means timber which means creating jobs and economic output — investments that grow.
- Group suggests sending the letter to the Department of Agriculture and state foresters, DNR commissioner, congressional delegation, and people outside of just sending it as a comment. If the group is in agreement in sending it elsewhere, the letter would need to be reworked for audiences who are not familiar with NWFP or forest language.
- If NWFP amendment moves forward, the comment letter will be discussed at the next ZOA meeting, then sent to the board for approval. Deadline to submit is March 17.

Roundtable Updates

- Dalton Fry: Fish collection facility to tributaries to Bear Creek and Alder Creek. When fish are released, they reseed the entire basin, but reproduction is only happening where they are releasing the fish. Bringing forward a grant application to restore tribal fish passage with a three-pronged approach in partnership with the Yakama Nation.

- 1. Design for fish passage over retention structure. 2. Improving trucking haul system immediately to get fish released into the main stem of the north fork Toutle. 3. increase the number of fish passing up there to set the stage for fish to know where they are going.
- Elliot Johnson: Lower Columbia SIH Enhancement Group has grant funding and looking for projects — bridges, culverts, etc., anything obstructing fish passage, that can be tied to salmon or steelhead, and in places on the ground above the hydro systems.
- Bob Guenther: Had a meeting with Centralia College and got the go ahead to position the mobile lab at different schools. He is asking folks in Randall and Packwood to see if there is a need for the lab to be brought there.

Meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m. Minutes prepared by Sarah Yeoman

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