



Joint GPNF Forest Collaborative Meeting

February 19, 2026 1:00-3:30 pm PST

NOTES

[Zoom recording](#), Passcode: C5nmwVG?

Participants:

1. Jon Paul Anderson, High Cascade
2. Colin Beck,
3. Erin Black, USFS
4. Josh Chapman, USFS
5. Neil Chartier, USFS
6. Matt Comisky, American Forest Resource Council
7. Emery Cowan, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards
8. Kirsten Dodge, Destination Management/Packwood Trail Project
9. Christina Donehower, Cowlitz Indian Tribe
10. Ryan Ernst
11. Dalton Fry, Cowlitz Indian Tribe
12. Andy Geissler, American Forest Resource Council
13. Nicolas Granum
14. Jeremy Grose, Green Diamond Management Company
15. Bob Guenther, Pinchot Partners
16. Deidre Hayward, WDFW
17. Chuck Hersey, WA DNR
18. Jessica Hudec, USFS
19. Amber Johnson, WDFW
20. Elliot Johnson, WDFW
21. Lucas King, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards
22. Johanna Kovarik, USFS
23. Ryan Krapp, Mule Deer Foundation
24. Rick Larson, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
25. Asa Leckie, Skamania County Commissioner
26. Andrew Merschel, USFS ORISE, OSU
27. Garrett Meigs, WA DNR
28. Anna Nakae, National Forest Foundation
29. Anjolene Ngari, Hampton Lumber

30. Jody Nickerson-Powell, USFS
31. Fred Norman, Pinchot Partners
32. Ryan Ojerio, WA Trails Association
33. John O'Brien, Pinchot Partners chair
34. Dave Oneil, USFS
35. Joy Peplinski, WDFW
36. Josh Petit, SGPC
37. Mary Repar, Community Member
38. Janene Ritchie, Pinchot Partners
39. Peter Sandifer, Pinchot Partners
40. Trey Scott,
41. Ashley Short, Cascade Forest Conservancy
42. Ryle Smartlowit, Yakama Nation Tribal Forestry
43. Shandra Pilon, Packwood resident
44. Andrew Spaeth, WA DNR
45. Emily Stevenson, Skamania County Noxious Weeds Program
46. Theresa Tanner, USFS
47. Dusty Vaughn, USFS
48. Greg Watson,
49. Jim White, Community Member
50. Sue Wright, Community Member
51. Karen Zirkle, Snoqualmie Tribe

- **Introduction:**

- o Introductions from attendees (name/affiliation)
- o Meeting objectives: (a), (b), (c) USFS updates, and (d) Collaborative Monthly News

- **Presentation: Augmenting the Forest Service's implementation capabilities through G-Z Contracting** (Andy Geissler, AFRC)

- o Note: See accompanying recording and slides for details/clarifications.
- o G-to-Z contracting tool - private sector entities taking over completed NEPA projects through implementation.
 - Go Big G-to-Z project on the Fremont-Winema National Forest - involved Collins Pine and included 45 million board feet of timber removal over 60,000 acres.
 - Project faced challenges due to unknown quantities at the start, but was successfully executed through careful planning.

- Contractors bid on the project despite unknown quantities.
 - Forest Service manages the implementation process.
 - o Stewardship Projects and Contracting Updates
 - Go Big and Tiny projects - progress and challenges.
 - Funding reliability and contractor-Forest Service relationships are crucial for success.
 - Forest Service used IRTCs (Intensive Restoration Timber Contracts) to leverage timber value for sale prep work, including activities like tree topping for wildlife habitat.
 - Contractors like Collins use subcontractors but the Forest Service administers all sale activities and contracts, with best value considerations including local workforce benefits and past performance playing a role in contractor selection.
- ***Presentation: New Fire and Forest Development Histories on the Gifford-Pinchot National Forest*** (Dr. Andrew Merschel, USFS PNW Research Station ORISE, OSU Tree Ring Lab)
 - o Note: See accompanying recording and slides for details/clarifications.
 - o Using tree ring analysis to understand fire regimes and forest development over time.
 - o Methodology of collecting tree cores and analyzing fire scars to reconstruct past fires with precise dating.
 - o Some of this research challenges the traditional model of infrequent high-severity fires, suggesting instead that there are multiple fire-mediated development pathways in west side forests.
 - o Role of Indigenous fire stewardship and the dynamic nature of flammability in these forests over time.
 - o Fire Regime Variability in Washington
 - Findings from a fire history study in southern Washington highlight variability in fire regimes across different sites.
 - While contemporary fires in the Western Cascades are strongly related to climate, historical fires occurred under a broader range of conditions.
 - Examples of high-frequency fires and infrequent fires occurring in close proximity, challenging the notion of a single "null model" for fire regimes
 - Old-growth forests in the region developed through a combination of fire and natural regeneration, rather than the absence of fire.
 - o Western Cascades Fire Regime Patterns
 - Fire regimes in the Western Cascades

- Diversity of historical fire patterns and their impact on forest development.
 - While some old growth structures are a result of fire, the absence of fire in recent decades has led to uniform forest development patterns.
 - Evidence of Indigenous fire stewardship where fire frequency decreased after the forced removal of Native peoples from the region.
 - Graph showing the relationship between fire frequency and climate conditions, emphasizing that historical fires occurred under a broader range of conditions than current fires.
 - [Research Paper](#)
- **Update: USFS Updates** (*Erin Black, Theresa Tanner, USFS*)
- **Update: Collaborative Monthly News** (*Josh Petit, SGPC; Janene Ritchie, Pinchot Partners*)
 - *Pinchot Partners*
 - Annual meeting on March 17th and 18th, to include kickoff of strategic planning process with Amy Besunder facilitating
 - Fungi Fest planning in process, October 9-11, 2026
 - *SGPC*
 - Steering Committee mtg. upcoming
 - March – YN tribal fisheries presentation
 - April - Annual Meeting (in-person only)
 - Thursday 4/16 at WRTC in Carson from 10am-4pm - RSVP
 - May (hybrid Hegewald Center) – 5/14 (not third Thursday due to conflict)
- **Closing:**
 - Next meeting info:
 - Pinchot Partners - March 17 & 18th, 9am-4pm/12pm at the Packwood Community Hall
 - SGPC -Thursday, March 19th, virtual, 1-3:30pm