

Warm Fire Partners Field Trip  
October 12, 2006  
North Kaibab RD, Kaibab NF

Participants:

Lois Pfeffer	Crystal Holliday	Gary Hodgie	Chris Winchester
Diane Vosick	Bill Holliday	John Rich	Dave Mertz
Jim Matson	Mark Habbeshaw	Jim Koons	Mike Williams
Rick Moore	Todd Buck	Steve Rich	Scott Clemans
Wally Covington	Andi Rogers	John Jesenko	Ariel Leonard
Brett Fay	Rick Miller	Bill Austin	Brenda Smith
Jill Leonard	Kyra Sanders	Ethan Aumack	Linda Wadleigh
Jeff Waters	Peggy Stone	Ellen Winchester	

Introductions and round robin of expectations for trip.

Mike Williams gave an introduction and overview of the future analysis efforts for the Warm Fire. Trip to look at what conditions are wanted over time, focus on how to get there and understand how people want to participate.

The overall fire recovery is broad. There will be an overall recovery plan that is all encompassing. We want ideas for recovery of the land. Mike acknowledged the ongoing efforts and noted the urgency related to salvage opportunities and the need to reforest to reestablish forest. This initial effort has narrowed down the focus to address these urgent items. The proposed action will be the result of a collaborative effort looking at the needs of the area.

Notation that several other entities were invited to the field trip but were not attending, including: Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fredonia City, County, State Congressional representatives, Center for Biological Diversity and the Sierra Club.

BAER funding discussed and where use appropriate. Later clarification that funding is available for rehabilitation of the fire use area. Request should be done soon.

Questions and answer:

Were categorical exclusions considered? Yes, categorical exclusions are being used for hazard tree removals along the highways, and anticipated for removing hazard trees from forest roads and trails. Not anticipating large salvage efforts to fall within a categorical exclusion category. Inquiry to get a feeling for timing of availability for potential contractors to be able to move on it.

Did the Fire Use area not have BAER activities? Correct. The focus was on the wildfire portion. Concern for pinyon-juniper resource damage, recommend look

at it sooner than later due to cheat grass in area. Forest is looking at funding mechanisms to look at pinyon juniper recovery.

What will be done with the waterholes (~3 dozen) that have high pH from ash and are not being used by wildlife? Notation that range ponds/tanks are planned to be cleaned out in the spring. Maintenance of range facilities falls under the permit.

What is being done about cheat grass migration in the fire use area? Monitoring in place, weeds are in the scope of BAER and the noxious and invasive plants plan includes an integrated approach. It's a high priority to address new areas of infestation.

If salvage, will funds go towards rehabilitation? Salvage funds discussed and clarified that those funds go to future salvage efforts. Stewardship is an option that would direct on-time reinvesting for rehabilitation.

Ariel gave an overview of the post fire assessment. Discussed the fire effects, severity mapping completed and verification of the severity observed via aerial observation and Composite Burn Index (CBI) ground plots.

There are options to address the fire use area, recovery actions could be considered.

Notation the Bridger EA painted a picture of what the area would be like in 5, 10, 20 years and this helped the public understand the anticipated conditions. Grazing after fire discussed. For the Bridger fire grazing was withheld for several years. The Warm analysis will need to talk about grazing use. This approach may be useful for the Warm analysis.

Kyra reviewed safety items. Hardhats available for visitors, seatbelts required in government vehicles, and discussed hazards in the area including stumpholes, hanging trees and snags.

Kick off of field stops and the goal to talk about what we would like to see/expect to see.

1<sup>st</sup> stop: stand with aspen sprouting in understory off HWY 67 and 212

Discussed aspen, anticipated response and desired conditions. Desire access to area without dead standing trees, safety aspect and visuals. Noted the outcome of the Outlet Fire aspen response with standing snags throughout stand. Anticipate areas within the Warm Fire would look similar.

Mexican spotted owl habitat - Need to model the mixed conifer for MSO to verify stands that meet the habitat criteria. Meeting Forest Plan snag and down woody material. How much to accelerate reforestation? May need to burn patches to maintain habitat in the future. Ecological restoration and reference conditions discussed.

Hazard trees discussed, safety issue along forest roads. To address the safety issue, suggestion for removing snags that may fall on roads/trails one tree length on the downhill side and 2 tree lengths on the uphill side of roads/trails. Forest will be looking at hazard tree removals along forest roads and trails to occur in the near future to address the public safety need quickly.

Discussed means to maintain open forest conditions as look at the future. May need a more intensive restoration prescription to use fire more frequently.

Salvage logging and stewardship opportunities discussed as a means to reduce the future fuels loading. There are short term increases in small material fuels when salvage, however the long term fuel loading would be reduced. Salvage economics and capacity discussed. Annual market capability estimated at 50CCF/25MMBF. From economic stand point after 1 year - 6" small end diameter; 2 years - 8" small end diameter and 3 years 10" small end diameter for removals. OSHA guidelines for snag removals discussed .

Request for a comprehensive literature review to organize available information related to fire, fuels and salvage logging. Need a synthesis of best available knowledge and follow-up with practitioners.

Various items need to be discussed including: costs, invasive species.

Salvage is an appropriate tool. Need to prioritize locations of salvage.

Stop 2 - past regeneration treatment area where planted seedlings burned and few seed sources remain.

Anticipated mortality discussed. Anticipate the remaining live trees with less than 10% green crown remaining, 12' scorch height and/or basal scorch of 4" or more to die.

Reforestation ideas discussed. Wally Covington suggested planting 2-3 seedlings near the locations of pre-settlement stumps/remnant tree snags, by species. This would set the future spacing arrangement to mimic pre-settlement conditions.

Desire to leave snags in clumps for increased wildlife usage and longevity.

Option for stewardship, designation by description to accomplish the desired results. Contour felling an option.

Access for treatments discussed. The existing roads and skid trails are adequate for ground based treatments in much of the fire area, under 40% slopes. No additions to road system anticipated. Some areas could include designated skid trails, chocker lead to reduce skidding, over snow and frozen ground operations could be considered to reduce effects to soils. For winter operations, keeping the roads open is the biggest challenge in this area. If time constrained for salvage, may limit operability. Disturbed soils create planting micro sites. Use of horse skidding in sensitive areas discussed, operators may limit this possibility. Helicopter operations discussed, economic costs and size of material present considered.

In pinyon-juniper stands ground disturbance and areas with cheat grass results in undesirable revegetation. When seeded with native seed good revegetation results.

Stop 3 - Pond with ashflow evident.

Ideas for this area are to plant with native/non-persistent annuals seed mix and clean out the pond.

Concern is the ash present in the pond now has raised the pH too high for use by animals. Concern expressed to stabilize the area as soon as possible and clean out the pond.

Discussed grazing use/rest and maintenance of range facilities. The Grand Canyon Trust noted they are looking at bringing back cows after 1 and 2 years to measure post fire use effects.

Stop 4 last stop close to HWY 67 in area with aspen regeneration present.

Discussed using landscape approach for species present.

Recreation and visitation discussed with concerns of views.

Revegetation discussed. The area is re-establishing in herbaceous vegetation. Concern with using non local sources for reforestation and concern with spread of non-native invasive species.

Capacity for harvesting local seed sources and current availability of native seed. In the Westside effort, experienced the lack of availability of native seed. If land managers create the need by requesting seeds, the market will develop.

Be clear which objectives done. What is gained through salvage?

Masticating trees an option to reduce large fuels. How could this be funded?

SW aspects may not regenerate well.

Future fire use discussed, consider looking at the annual capacity on restoration and seeding (availability of native stock). Contour felling of trees on slopes to help hold soil and seed bed.

Review ponderosa pine research by Chuck McHugh.

Opportunities for treatments to address visuals. Things to consider: how far into the forest is seen, look at key areas in the foreground to address viewshed impacts. Remove snags in aspen along scenic highway.

Mike recapped the field trip and thanked participants for their time and sharing.

Notes will be sent to participants for corrections and clarifications. Additional ideas for what to do in the area may be sent to Lois Pfeffer at: [lpfeffer@fs.fed.us](mailto:lpfeffer@fs.fed.us).

### **Summary of recommendations/suggestions/lessons from past efforts:**

- Request for a comprehensive literature review to organize available information related to fire, fuels and salvage logging.
- Base salvage logging on economics - not feasible to address every acre, focus on logical areas.
- In considering where to invest in reforestation:
  - Review site appropriateness for species and use native seed sources
  - Look at aspen response, opportunity to restore aspen on the landscape. May consider under planting in some aspen.
  - Where conifer seed sources are absent

- Plant in areas where salvage logging takes place
- Plant in a pattern that will set up future spacing similar to presettlement conditions.
- Do not plant in rows - visual concern
- Work with NAU for landscape data of tree density/canopy cover/basal area/understory data
- Describe priorities, where do we expect areas to burn
- Include rehabilitation in the long term strategy
- Snags:
  - clump rather than leave evenly spaced
  - consider removing snags in aspen stands along scenic routes
- No new roads
- Leave more snags in goshawk foraging areas adjacent to the remaining nest areas.
- Put project record in web location for availability of notes and maps of project

Notes by Lois Pfeffer 10/12/06, edited 10/24/06