

FREMONT and WINEMA RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes for Field Trip September 25-26, 2003

RAC Members:

Mary Baker
Anita Ward
Bill Duke

Hank Mrczkowski
Don Gentry (26th)
Chuck Wells (25th)

Forest Service:

Karen Shimamoto – Forest Supervisor
Bill Aney – Designated Federal Official
Nina Hardin – Technical Assistant
Jerry Haugen – Operations Research Analyst

Project Proponents:

Orlando Gonzales – Bly District Ranger
Jim Leal – South Zone Fish Biologist
Faye Weekly – USFWS Ecosystem Restoration Office
Dave Ross – USFWS Ecosystem Restoration Office
Ken Paul – FS, Fire Management Officer
Steve Mooney – FS, Forester
Ed Brown – FS, Resource Planning Staff Officer
Jayne Goodwin – NEPA Coordinator
Terry Simpson – Wildlife Biologist
Carolyn Wisdom – Silver Lake District Ranger
Susan Puddy – North Zone Silviculturist
Rich Pyzik – North Zone Fish Biologist
Lisa Swinney – Inter-agency Public Affairs Specialist
Midge Thierolf – Ron Wyden Staff Member

Buckmaster Creek Restoration – See F-1-004 for project description. Bly's District Ranger Orlando Gonzales led RAC members to Buckmaster Creek where they met with FS employees Jim Leal, Leda Hunter and Jill Ralston. This was a 2002 project that was completed this summer. Local contractor John Richmond, Dog Lake Construction, did the work. In Buckmaster flat and Horse Canyon Creek head cuts have lowered the water table. Creeks could provide habitat for short nosed suckers. Headouts have been repaired by placing rock in headcuts and placing sod over the top of rock. This is a new method being tried by Bly Ranger District, if it works should stabilize headcuts. In addition to this, they raised existing rock check dams and installed one new check dam in both Horse Canyon and Buckmaster. There is a major headcut located above Buckmaster that has been causing some of the problems in Buckmaster Flat. The problem headcut is on private land owned by Jeld-Wen. FS and RAC expressed interest in contracting landowner and working jointly to repair. Junipers have been placed along streams and in stream. This will help with the erosion along banks and limit livestock access. Currently about 600 cattle use areas as part of an allotment. Horse Canyon has more cattle use, FS and permittee are working together to monitor grazing. Photo points have been established for monitoring, and pictures were taken before and after work was completed.

Brownsprings Creek Restoration – See E-K-401 for project description. RAC members were introduced to Faye Weekly Fish and Wildlife Biologist and landowner John Kronenberger. They viewed Brownsprings where it flows into the Sycan River. Creek has down cut 6 to 8 feet to meet the Sycan. Down cutting problems started in the 1930's. Problems that have resulted include loss of sinuosity, and the channel has widened to 10 feet with depth of 1 foot. This loss of flow had allowed algae to grow unchecked resulting in poor habitat for fish. There are currently fish in creek, redband trout and short nosed sucker. Fish and Wildlife have contracted with the consulting group "River Design." Faye and John laid out plans to remove current fish barriers. RAC members reviewed drawn plans. Plans call for removal of gated outlets and road fill; these will be replaced with squash pipes (flat bottomed culverts). Landowner working with Fish and Wildlife will remove pump station from creek and create a stilling basin to pump from. Drove upstream from barriers to look at portion of creek where landowner hopes to create a step pool system fed by springs that are located within creek. After work is completed, willow planting will be done along stream banks and riparian area. RAC asked about cattle use. After work has been completed a fence will be built to exclude cattle from riparian area and creek, Bill Aney will help Faye to secure local contractors. RAC members strongly feel this is a good project and want to come back on a follow up visit.

Chiloquin Community Fuels Project – See W-02-013 for project description. RAC members stopped for lunch at Chiloquin Ranger District. Midge Thierolf from Senator Wyden's office met RAC at the District. Acting District Ranger Ken Paul, Steve Mooney and Kevin Moore spoke about ongoing fuels reduction project. Purpose of project is to lower fire hazard around community of Chiloquin. Planning began in June 2002, since then approximately 2100 acres have been treated using RAC and National Fire Plan monies. 95% of mechanical treatment has been completed. Steve handed out cost breakdown for treatment. Costs as follows; slash buster \$235 - \$250 per acre, hand piling. Brush cutting and chipping \$615 - \$700 per acre, pile burning and under burning \$40 - \$350 per acre. Contactors are not local but the slash buster operator is local. They have tried to use local resources but costs are very high at this time. There are now 4 Klamath outfits that have slash busters so the future may have local contractors. Unsure why local crews costs are higher but felt reason may be because not enough work within local area your round to support start up costs, equipment etc. Discussion moved to small sales. There is a fee use for firewood and poles and posts. Trees being thinned have no market value at this time. Chip market down. Good response from community about project. Viewed work behind Ranger District. Discussed the need to follow up with under burning in the near future. Bitterbrush responds well to underburning treatment with vigorous re-growth. Deer use bitterbrush as winter/spring forage. At this time areas treated have new growth ranging from 8" to 36". District has established photo points to show areas before and after. Kevin gave Bill Aney CD showing different stages and areas of treatment, which is available to RAC.

Williamson River/Wiest – See E-K-402 for project description. Landowner Mark Wiest and Dave Ross from Fish and Wildlife Ecosystem Restoration Office walked with RAC members to landowners' stream bank on the Williamson River. Stream bank and riparian vegetation is being eroded by wake wash from motorized boats. As discussion was going on, a boat sped by causing a 2-foot wake. We could see the sediment being washed out. Project will stabilize stream bank with rock and log placement. Mark Wiest will be planting willows along banks. He had tried planting willow cuttings before with little success due to cattle. Now riparian area and stream

bank are protected by fence, which landowner has installed. Marine Board will place signs informing boaters of 5 MPH speed limit. RAC members could see what project will look like when completed as Wiest's neighbor across the river has already stabilized their stream bank using similar methods as Wiest has proposed. Williamson River is critical habitat for Lost River and Shortnose Suckers. Wiest plans to monitor project with photo points and bank pins.

Scott Creek Campground Restoration – See W-1-304 for project description. Ed Brown and Jayne Goodwin of Chemult Ranger District and RAC members walked Scott Creek Campground. Project will rehab campground and protect stream from erosion caused by runoff. This summer, YCC from Crescent/Gilchrist worked on setting barrier posts, but were shut down by fire season. Barriers when installed should prevent campers from camping too close to stream and blocking off short cut road to campground. Treated post used for barriers were purchased from La Pine. Boulder work has not started, but when completed will be placed in strategic spots to reduce vehicle traffic. Next year YCC will finish barrier posts and install steps to creek. RAC looked at stream bank, on campground side, vegetation is almost completely absent due to heavy foot traffic, while other side is thick with vegetation. Once work is completed native vegetation will be transplanted along stream banks. This is a historical campground with many families returning year after year as far back as the 1940s.

Chemult Three Buttes Ladder Fuels – See W-1-307 for project description. RAC members and Chemult employees Ed Brown and Jayne Goodwin drove up to review one unit that is part of a large thinning project. Intent of RAC project was to reduce ladder fuels in high elevation late successional reserves of ponderosa and mixed conifer. Unit that was reviewed had been cut and piled. Plan is to burn piles using appropriated dollars to pay force account crew. Discussion about large piles and why not market it for chips. Chip market at this time is down. There is a 70 mile haul distance limit for chips to be cost effective. Chemult holds on to large piles of chipable material for 2 years before burning. RAC questioned hand pile-vs.-machine pile, answer, and different methods due to soil conditions. If you left cut material on ground you could treat 4 times the amount of ground. Thinning and hand piling contracted out to Quicksilver. Machine piling by Kornish Forest Contracting. Forest Supervisor Karen Shimamoto relayed that she had seen this type of thinning in the early 80s in Sisters. Because of treatment in the LSR and Old Growth Stand, when B & B fire that burned through areas this summer, fire laid down in areas that had been treated and acted more like a prescribed under burn.

Round Meadow Restoration – See W-1-305 and W-1-306 for projects description. RAC members visited Round Meadow with Ed Brown, Jayne Goodwin and Terry Simpson from Chemult Ranger District. This was RACs second visit to Round Meadow. Last year work had just started on fence and some removal of junipers. Work continues on fence, when complete fence will be a let down snow fence. Junipers that were removed from fence line are going to be used to create earthen and juniper check dams within the meadow. Klamath County Correction crew is constructing fence with materials purchased locally. Ditch work has started but work has been shut down due to fire restrictions. Kornish Forest Contracting has been contracted to complete filling in ditches. Discussion with RAC members about the intent of the project, long term goal is to restore meadow to its' wetland condition. After ditches are filled and outlet ditch blocked with earthen and juniper dam, expectation for meadow is to change to a perennially wet

meadow with up to 1 ½ of standing water. Vegetation should change back to riparian type. District will want 2 years and see what existing seed bank produces. They have seen remnants of willows and the hope is they will return. Other plans for meadow restoration include creating shallow pools by digging out fill for ditches; pools could become habitat for Oregon Spotted Frog. Terry Simpson relayed history of ownership and cattle use in meadow. Meadow recently acquired in land exchange with Crown Pacific. Meadow is currently part of allotment NW Antelope. At this time cattle graze meadow. Permittee and Forest Service monitor grazing. Discussed the impact restoration of meadow and fence would have on permittee. Meadow could be used as a swing pasture; a wet meadow has a value as habitat for waterfowl. Raptors and marsh birds such as yellow rail may come back with the return of water. Also higher water table could reduce encroachment of lodge pole pine.

Coshaw Creek Enhancement – See F-04-004 for project description. RAC members drove to Silver Lake District meet with District Ranger Carolyn Wisdom and Silver Lake Employees Sue Puddy and Rich Pyzik. The Interagency Public Affairs Specialist, Lisa Swinney joined the group for remainder of trip. At project area, road along Coshaw Creek has been ripped and re-contoured. Cut junipers were placed within roadbed and culvert has been removed. Road had been badly rutted in the past and caused water to run down the road instead of allowing water to sub surface into meadow. Head cuts in Coshaw Creek and Coshaw Meadow were treated with the placement of junipers. Restoration should occur within 3-5 years with vegetation re-establishing after sediment has filled in. Work was contracted out to C & C Logging. Existing fence will be repaired. Riparian area is within a livestock enclosure. Photo points have been established and photos will be taken over next three years. Rich told RAC about another road that had been decommissioned using RAC money. The FDR 014 has been ripped for about 2 miles along the portion that parallels an intermittent stream. Ripping the road should reduce the head cutting that has been occurring. C & C Logging also did this work.

West Fork Thinning – See F-04-305 for project description. During lunch zone Silviculturist Sue Puddy gave a short summary about project and effects Silver Fire had on project. A total of 496 acres of pre-commercial thinning has been completed using RAC dollars. Plantations were thinned to 18 X 18. Most of thinned plantations received little fire mortality. A few of the thinned stands burned hot but this was due more to aspect and slope. Silviculturist decided not to treat plantations that were scheduled for thinning this year. Decision was made to wait and see what mortality will occur due to fire. Instead this year RAC dollars were used to treat the understory in older stands. Ponderosa pine less than 9” DBH were cultured, removing all trees within 20-foot radius. This reduced basal area in stands to 80-110 BAF, which equals around 20 trees per acre in larger diameter or 120 tree per acre in smaller trees. Treatments will help large tree development for future commercial harvest or old growth habitat. Contractor hired off existing contact, which reduced administrative cost. Contractor was Agony Gulch from Roseburg. Follow up work completed by local contractor Lytle Simms. RAC members looked at 2 units treated this year. Even though Silver Fire went through units, it did not cause much mortality so thinning was still needed. Ended discussion talking about Mountain Pine Beetle.

Paradise Creek Culvert – See FL-03-403 for project description. Rich Pyzik spoke for Michele Reba who is projects’ sponsor. Paradise Creek culvert replacement is a 2004 project. Money requested from RAC is for data collection and engineering design. Engineering design will be

done in-house in 2004. The current culvert creates a velocity that is too great for fish to swim through and therefore is a barrier to 12 miles of habitat upstream. Redband trout use Paradise Creek and it could be critical habitat for Bull Trout. After study is complete decision will be made to determine if bridge or open bottom arches will be used to replace the current culvert. RAC members and Rich talked about what makes good habitat for fish.

School Creek Riparian Road Decommission – See F-3-309 for project description. RAC members reviewed ripped road with Rich Pyzik. Discussed benefits of removing roads that are within riparian areas. Road surface causes compaction, which doesn't allow for water to subsurface through the riparian area. As a consequence, water runs down the road and deposits sediment from the road into the creek. In some places road was as close as 200 feet of School Creek. Approximately 1.8 of road was ripped and re-contoured. Work completed by local contractor John Richmond. School Creek is within cattle allotment used by Harvey Ranch. RAC members and Rich talked about improvements they saw along the Sycan such as buck and pole fence that have been created to keep cattle away from banks of river. They asked Rich about future projects he has. Some projects might be placement of large woody material in stream, channel realignment.

This ended the 2-day field trip. RAC members felt 2-day trip was worthwhile and hope they get to review projects next year.