

USDA Forest Service

Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program Advisory Panel Meeting

Peery Hotel, 110 West Broadway, Salt Lake City, Utah

October 18-20, 2011

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Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program
Advisory Panel Meeting: October 18-20, 2011

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MEETING SUMMARY DAY I (OCTOBER 18, 2011)

OPENING REMARKS

William Timko, Deputy Director of Forest Management for the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (USFS), convened a meeting of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) Advisory Panel at 8:15 am on October 18, 2011, at the Peery Hotel, Salt Lake City, Utah. Mr. Timko is the CFLRP Advisory Panel Designated Federal Official (DFO), which is chartered under the Federal Advisory Panel Act (FACA). Mr. Timko introduced the USFS staff and then asked the Panel members to self-introduce; nine Panel members were present. (See Attachment B for a list of attendees.)

Mr. Timko began by thanking the Panel for their dedication and went on to stress the importance of the CFLR program. The program, he said, generates significant interest from the public and from within the USFS. Mr. Timko then summarized the progress of CFLRP to date, highlighting the fact that ten projects are off the ground, but also noting the funding challenges that the program has faced and the uncertainty of the FY12 budget.

AGENDA & MEETING NORMS

Facilitator Marci DuPraw (SRA International, Inc.) gave an overview of the process for the three-day meeting, during which the Panel would discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the twenty-six proposals and seek consensus on which of them to recommend to the Secretary of Agriculture for funding. Ms. DuPraw reminded Panelists that they had agreed to define “consensus” as a recommendation that all participating Panel members can “live with.” She reviewed additional meeting ground rules, and explained the DFO’s central role in conveying potential questions of clarification about the proposals to proposal spokespersons at pre-arranged times during the coming meeting days.

Ms. DuPraw noted that Panel members have certain obligations under FACA, including participation in one hour of annual ethics training. She also noted that FACA Panels must provide opportunity for public comment at their meetings, and explained how that would work for this meeting. On the first and second days of the meeting, time for public comment was included at the beginning of the day, and on the third day of the meeting, time for public comment was included at the end of the day. Members of the public could each have five minutes to speak each day. If more than one person wished to speak about the same proposal, then those individuals could divide the five minutes among themselves.

Lauren Marshall of the USFS then reviewed the content of Panel members’ meeting materials packets. The packets contained a copy of the agenda, travel expense forms, the Panel’s charter, the proposal summary table, a list of suggested USFS talking points, and a draft version of the pre-meeting scoring report.

ETHICS TRAINING

Lorraine Luciano, Branch Chief, Office of Ethics, Forest Service Ethics Branch reviewed the ethics rules applicable to FACA Panel members, as well as ethics rules associated with the Panel members' status as "special government employees." During this training, Ms. Luciano confirmed that Panel members were not subject to a lifetime ban on post-employment associated with the projects under consideration. (See Attachment C.)

RECUSALS

Panel members must recuse themselves if they have a conflict of interest (COI) with a proposal (e.g., if they actively took part in writing a proposal or their organization would be expected to directly benefit financially if the proposal were funded). Panel members may not vote on, score, or participate in discussions of proposals for which they have a COI. Based on Conflict of Interest Forms filled out prior to the meeting, the Panel created a list of individuals who would have to recuse themselves from the discussion of specific proposals (see below). The Panel continued to honor a previously-made agreement that, when one of the proposals below was about to be discussed by the Panel, the recused individual would leave the room. Ms. DuPraw noted that Megan Roessing (USFS) would help the recused Panelists remember when to leave the room, and call them back in when related discussions were over; however, Ms. DuPraw asked the whole group to share responsibility for implementing their agreements concerning recusals.

Julia Altemus

Region 1 – Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative

Maia Enzer

Region 6 – Lakeview Stewardship CFLR Proposal

Region 6 – Southern Blues Restoration Coalition

Brent Racher

Region 3 – Zuni Mountain CFLRP

Scott Simon

Region 8 – Shortleaf-Bluestem Community

PUBLIC COMMENT

The period for public comment opened at 10:00 am, and individuals representing two proposals signed up to make comments. First, Dan Dinning and Ronald Abraham made a five-minute presentation to the Panel on behalf of the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative proposal. Mr. Dinning addressed the specific need for long-term restoration activities in the Lower Kootenai River Watershed and elaborated on the composition and history of the collaborative group. Mr. Abraham

spoke to the history of the Kootenai Tribe, stressed the importance of restoring natural resources, highlighted current efforts to restore the land, and re-iterated the Tribe's commitment to the collaborative group.

Second, Susan Jane Brown spoke on behalf of the Southern Blues Restoration Coalition proposal. Ms. Brown emphasized that litigation is not the way to restore a forest and went on to say that the area has been litigation-free for six years. This achievement, she said, is the result of working through tough issues as a community comprised of loggers, county officials, ranchers, citizens, and others. Ms. Brown went on to stress the important role that science plays in creating site-specific solutions. Ms. Brown also emphasized the need for jobs creation in the economically-depressed counties in which the collaborative group functions.

INITIAL SIFTING OF PROPOSALS

Panel members undertook an initial "sifting" exercise to determine whether any proposals should be eliminated at the outset because they did not meet the CFLRP criteria, or were clearly too weak relative to the other proposals. The pre-meeting scores would be used as one form of input to this discussion, but not necessarily the deciding factor; no proposal would be eliminated unless the Panel chose to do so by consensus.

Panel members initially spent several minutes discussing the merits of the process and asked for clarification on the organization of the spreadsheet that was projected at the front of the room. The spreadsheet listed each project, sorted the projects from highest to lowest based on pre-meeting numerical scores, and also included the combined number of high, medium, and low rankings received by each project. While the proposals were shown in rank order as **determined** by pre-meeting scores, the Panel chose not to view the column containing the actual pre-meeting scores because these scores were subject to change as a result of Panel deliberations and they didn't want to be overly influenced by the actual numbers at this point in the meeting. During this discussion, Mr. Timko clarified that the Panel can recommend more than two proposals from any one region to the Secretary (although the Omnibus Act states that only two projects from one region can be **funded** per fiscal year).

Ms. DuPraw then asked the Panel members if there were any proposals that should be removed from further consideration. The remainder of the morning was spent discussing individual proposals and, ultimately, eleven proposals were eliminated from future consideration by the Panel. The group agreed to discuss and rank the remaining fifteen proposals.

REVIEW OF REMAINING PROPOSALS

The afternoon session opened with a conference call to several proposal points of contact with questions of clarification; Mr. Timko posed the questions on behalf of the Panel, but the responses were given by speaker phone so that all meeting participants could hear them. No discussion between the Panel and proposal spokespersons was permitted.

The Panel members then began working their way through the remaining proposals one-by-one, discussing the strengths and weaknesses of each. The discussion of each proposal began with a brief oral summary of the proposal by Lauren Marshall (USFS), followed by a few minutes of quiet during which Panel members reviewed their own notes. The floor was then opened for Panel

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discussion. The pre-meeting scoring spreadsheet was projected for reference. Highlights from the Panel's discussion were recorded in the "strengths and weaknesses" portion of the proposal-specific template that had been created pre-meeting so that this information could later be provided to proposal authors as feedback.

The Panel discussed the first seven of the remaining fifteen proposals during the afternoon of Day I, spending about thirty minutes on each. Over the course of the afternoon, Panel members Julia Altemus, Brent Racher, and Scott Simon stepped out of the room when proposals from which they had recused themselves were discussed (e.g., the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative, the Zuni Mountain CFLRP, and Shortleaf-Bluestem Community, respectively). Questions of clarification that the Panel wanted to ask proposal authors were recorded as they came up, in preparation for the Day II round of questions.

DAY I CLOSING REMARKS

In adjourning the Panel for the evening, Mr. Timko thanked the Panel for a successful first day of discussions. During his remarks, Mr. Timko reminded the Panel that the Panel must handle questions of clarification very carefully to ensure equity for proposal authors; he went on to discuss the difference between "clarification" and "supplemental information," and noted that information introduced should be gleaned directly from the proposals. Mr. Timko reminded the Panel that once the meeting was adjourned, there could be no further discussion of the proposals until the meeting commenced the following day; he also requested that members of the public present not attempt to engage Panel members in proposal-specific conversation. Mr. Timko then adjourned the meeting.

MEETING SUMMARY DAY II (OCTOBER 19, 2011)

OPENING REMARKS

The second day of the CFLRP Advisory Panel discussions began at 8:15 am. Mr. Timko welcomed everyone back to the meeting, and turned the floor over to Facilitator Marci DuPraw. Ms. DuPraw noted that the Panel had eight additional proposals to review over the course of the day, and referred everyone to the agenda posted in the room. The floor was then turned over to those who had signed up to make comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark Webb spoke on behalf of the Southern Blues Restoration Coalition proposal. During his five-minute presentation, Mr. Webb spoke to the need for ecological restoration and noted that Grant County's economic well-being is dependent upon the timber industry. He also noted the dual challenges of limited funding for restoration work and the need for collaborative efforts in order to avoid litigation.

Dan Dinning again spoke on behalf of the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative. Mr. Dinning noted that multiple wildlife and special interest groups were members of his collaborative group's Board and noted the challenges that collaborative groups face at various points in their efforts. He said that this collaborative has significant capacity and the ability to succeed in an arena that lends itself to litigation.

REVIEW OF REMAINING PROPOSALS (CONTINUED)

Panel members spent several minutes reviewing the questions of clarification developed the previous day, to be asked during time set aside for calls to proposal points of contact; they decided which questions were indeed necessary to clarify an aspect of the proposal, and which questions were in fact requests for supplemental information and thus needed to be dropped. After this issue was resolved, the Panel moved back into the review of remaining proposals.

The Panel went on to discuss three proposals prior to breaking for fifteen minutes at 10:30 am. During the discussion, strengths and weakness were updated in the pre-meeting strengths and weaknesses document. Furthermore, the panel identified two additional proposals that they thought did not have enough support to be recommend to the Secretary; these two proposals were eliminated from further consideration. The Panel resumed their discussion at 10:45 am, and discussed the remaining five proposals before taking a one hour lunch break at noon. Maia Enzer recused herself from the room during the review of the Lakeview Stewardship CFLR proposal and the Southern Blues Restoration Coalition proposal.

ON-SITE SCORING AND PRIORITIZATION EXERCISE

The afternoon session opened with calls to several proposal points of contact with questions of clarification. After the questions of clarification were answered, Ms. DuPraw moved the Panel into

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the proposed process for on-site scoring and prioritization. The Panel spent some time clarifying and refining the steps involved. They agreed that the group would have two hours to re-score the remaining thirteen proposals, and that each would then provide his or her updated scores to Lauren Marshall (USFS). Lauren would then re-calculate scores during the evening; she would email the group the updated scores when she completed the re-calculating process, so that those who wanted to would have the opportunity to reflect on those scores overnight. The Panel would re-convene the following morning to begin the final stage of building consensus on proposals to recommend that the Secretary of Agriculture fund. Panel members with recusals would sit on the side of the room closest to the door to minimize the impact on the process of their coming and going from the room to honor the recusal procedure. The Panel would have access during the consensus-building discussion to the updated scoring spreadsheet, reflecting the updated numerical score, as well as the Panel's overall "high, medium, low" scores. Ms. DuPraw reminded the Panel that they had agreed that the recommendation would be driven by the numerical scores if, for some reason, the Panel could not reach consensus in any other way. With these procedural steps in mind, the group agreed to re-convene the following morning at 8:15 am.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Timko adjourned the meeting.

MEETING SUMMARY DAY 3 (OCTOBER 20, 2011)

OPENING REMARKS

Ms. DuPraw welcomed the Panel for the third and final day of the meeting. She explained that Julia Altemus had to leave unexpectedly the previous evening. Ms. DuPraw went on to say that there was still a quorum present until 1:00 pm, so consensus-building must be worked through by this time. She noted that Julia's revised scores had been included in the re-scoring process, but that the consensus-building would be between those Panel members still present. The group agreed to work through lunch to maximize remaining time. Mr. Timko formally opened the meeting and reminded the group to collectively help each other with the day's recusal process. Megan Roessing agreed to manage recusals over the course of the day.

CONSENSUS BUILDING ON PANEL'S RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Timko began by giving an overview of the possible funding situation in light of the re-scoring results. He said that if the full forty million dollars become available, there might be sufficient funds to support as many as half of the proposals that made it through to this year's final round of scoring, once the follow-on funding to support proposals funded Year 1 had been allocated. He said that the best possible scenario was that there might be thirteen to fourteen million dollars available to support this round of proposals. Lauren Marshall then summarized the revised spreadsheet projected on the wall, noting that there were thirteen proposals still under consideration, that these proposals were sorted by overall score, and that a cell containing "N/A" indicated a recusal. Ms. DuPraw then invited the Panel to begin their final consensus-building discussions.

Panel members discussed how best to incorporate the high, medium, and low rankings. At the Panel's request, the spreadsheet was sorted first by these rankings, and then sorted again within the high, medium, low framework by numerical rankings. Ms. DuPraw then suggested, based upon a previously-made group decision, that proposals should then be considered within two categories, high and low, to determine whether or not the Panel members wanted to re-sequence within these groups. Eventually, the group settled on keeping the three rankings—high, medium, and low—and there was discussion around the cut-off for each category. The group reached consensus initially in keeping the top two proposals in the high/excellent category, and ultimately added a third project to that category. Over the course of the morning, several other proposals were moved within and between the high, medium, and low categories.

During this same time, several additional process issues arose, including how to incorporate one Panel member's individually-created analysis of Eastern projects into the process, given that Panel members had already re-scored the projects. After input from the DFO, it was decided that those Panel members that wanted to see this individual's analysis of Eastern proposals could have a print-out of the scores (minus the project from which he was recused). The issue of putting forward more than two proposals from one region also arose, and the group deliberated again on the issue. Several Panel members expressed the opinion that in their view, it was important to recommend excellent proposals, regardless of regional considerations, and this was the direction the Panel took.

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By late morning, several proposals had been made regarding removing proposals entirely from the ranked list or moving them within the three categories, but consensus wasn't reached in these instances and so the proposed changes were not made. By early afternoon, the Panel had agreed on the order of ranking, and the Panel focus on reaching agreement on the cut-off points for the three categories (high, medium, and low) and how to frame their recommendation. The group ultimately reached consensus on recommending the top three proposals for funding, but also forwarding the list of the ten remaining proposals in ranked order, should additional funding become available. It was important to the Panel that the Secretary understands that the list represents their consensus view on the order in which they recommend proposals be funded to the extent that funds are available. The Panel also agreed that the Panel Chairs would send a transmittal letter to the Secretary of Agriculture explaining this, and asking that if the Secretary makes a different recommendation, the Panel might have an opportunity to hear the associated rationale.

RANKED PROPOSALS

Recommended for funding:

- ✓ Lakeview Stewardship CFLR Proposal
- ✓ Southern Blues Restoration Initiative
- ✓ Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative

If future funding becomes available, then the Panel recommends funding additional proposals in the following order:

- ✓ Northeast Washington Forest Vision 2020
- ✓ Zuni Mountain CFLRP
- ✓ Burney-Hat Creek Basins Project
- ✓ Missouri Pine-Oak Woodlands Restoration Project
- ✓ Weiser-Little Salmon Headwaters CFLRP
- ✓ Shortleaf-Bluestem Community
- ✓ Grandfather Restoration Project
- ✓ Ozark Highlands Ecosystem Restoration
- ✓ Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Restoration and Hazardous Fuels Reduction
- ✓ Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group Cornerstone Project

CLOSING REMARKS

Brian Kahn, on behalf of the co-chairs, thanked the Forest Service staff for their dedication. Mr. Timko thanked the Panel for their incredible work and their dedication to the process. Mr. Timko
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said that he felt he had a clear understanding of where the Panel wanted to go with these recommendations and acknowledged the challenge of conveying this message to the Secretary and others. Mr. Timko discussed the future of the Panel, in light of the fact that its two-year charter will soon expire. He said that the Panel would most likely be put on inactive status around March 2012; this will enable the Forest Service to resurrect the Panel in the event that it was needed in the future. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:30 pm.

ATTACHMENTS A THROUGH C

ATTACHMENT A: CFLRP MEETING AGENDA, OCTOBER 18-20, 2011

ATTACHMENT B: MEETING ATTENDEES

ATTACHMENT C: ETHICS BRIEFING
