

Minutes

Crook County Natural Resources Committee

February 12, 2025

Committee Members Present: Bill McCormack, Frank Porfily, Mike Lunn, Lynne Breese, Calista Songstad, Tim Deboodt, Melinda Kestler, Steve McGuire, Kim Vogel

Members Absent: Casey Kaiser, Andy Gallagher

Guests Present: Stephanie McKinney (BLM), Amanda Roberts (BLM), Susie Hermrick (Crook County Commissioner)

Public Present: John Breese, Cliff Kiser, Prineville Review (via zoom).

Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chair Steve McGuire

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes: Lynne moved to approve minutes of the January 8, 2025 meeting. Frank seconded. All members voted yes, no one voted no. no abstentions. Motion passed.

Agency Updates:

Stephanie McKinney (BLM) provided the updates for the Prineville BLM District. The Deschutes Resource Area worked with ODF&W to do maintenance on the exclosures along Bear Creek (Bear Creek Rd.). For the Central Oregon Resource Area, the BLM has 3 signed agreements for the Camp Creek Community Allotments permit renewal process and 1 yet to be signed.

Stephanie reported that 389 horses from the Murders Creek Area have now been gathered with a target of 400 total to be captured and transported to either Burn or Modoc holding facilities. This gather is a result of lost forage due to the Rail Ridge Fire. Horses will be returned with resource concerns are lifted. The BLM is not providing any supplemental feed resources for the horses that are not being gathered. Horses in the holding facilities are being cared for. BLM will stop gathering horse on March 1 if they have not yet reached their goal. After March 1, the horses start to foal.

BLM is also working with permittees whose allotments were impacted by 2024 wildfires for temporary closures. Some permittees have signed agreements, BLM is working with others to complete the process. BLM is also working on salvage logging projects. They are planning on about 100 loads of logs to be salvaged. More information will be shared as the projects move forward.

Mike Lunn asked about the federal buyouts offered by the new administration on the impacts on the local District. Amanda Roberts, District Manager, Prineville District reviewed the Federal offer by OPM and said that the District won't know the impacts until the deadline for employees to accept the offer has passed. Mike asked about a hold on filling vacant positions. Amanda told the Committee that there

is a current hiring freeze in place with the exception of fire and law enforcement positions. The exception is for seasonal fire hires.

No one was present from the Ochoco National Forest but the Forest did provide a written report and that report is attached to these minutes. Tim reported his conversation with Shane Jefferies. Shane has accepted a new assignment within the Forest Service (Regional Fire position) and Holly Jewkes (Forest Supervisor) and Kevin Larkin (Deputy Forest Supervisor) from the Deschutes National Forest will be serving as interim Forest Supervisor for the Ochoco NF.

No report from Oregon State Parks

Committee position update:

Tim reported that the County is currently advertising 1 vacancy for the Committee. The period to accept applications closes February 28 @ 5:00 p.m. Following the closing, Tim will share with the Committee the applications, chose a time for review prior to the Board of Commissioners meeting on March 5 and make recommendations for Commissioner appointment at their March 5th regular meeting.

Good of the Order:

Lynne shared that the Post/Paulina Rangeland Fire Protection Association had met on February 11. BLM/FS and ODF were all present. A review of the 2024 wildfire season occurred and the outcome identified was a need to improve communication between all agencies and the RFPA. Fire crews and fire administration from out of state just didn't know the local people.

Tim announce the passing of Dr. John Buckhouse, Rangeland and Watershed Professor from OSU. Tim shared that if you enjoy Oregon's high desert and all it has to offer, then Dr. Buckhouse's career touched you in a positive way.

Mike Lunn talked about the value of the long term Bear Creek story. There is a rich history in collaboration and results that should not be lost.

Public Comment:

John Breese (Post/Paulina RFPA) emphasized the working relationship and agreements between the RFPA and the BLM. He shared the history of RFPA's and the cost of firefighting and that the RFPA's do not get reimbursed for their costs by the State or Feds.

Kim moved to adjourn the meeting. Frank seconded. All members voted yes. No no votes. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.



**Crook County Natural Resources Advisory
Committee**

Ochoco National Forest & Crooked River National
Grassland

February 12, 2025

Fire Updates

Rail Fire:

The forest is currently gathering data to support a Burned Area Rehabilitation funding proposal.

Wiley Flat Fire:

Planning for Hazard Tree abatement along MVUM roads within the Wiley Flat Fire area will begin scoping in March. Additionally, the forest is exploring a potential 250-acre salvage opportunity near critical infrastructure that will also be scoped this spring with a targeted decision soon thereafter.

Crazy Creek Fire:

A Burned Area Rehabilitation funding request of approximately \$2.8 million has been submitted. The proposal primarily focuses on range improvement and infrastructure repairs. This funding source is competitive, and approval is not guaranteed.

Project Planning Updates

Mill Creek Vegetation Project:

Bids for the first timber sale from this project were accepted on Monday, January 13, 2025. The sale was awarded on January 14th, 2025. Future timber sales from this project area will be coming for bid this spring and summer.

North Fork Crooked River Resiliency Project:

Currently the Decision Notice is being updated based on the changes that were made during the Objection Resolution Phase. The Decision Notice and Environmental Assessment are being reviewed and revised to be consistent with Executive Orders.

Jackson Watershed Fuel Break CE Project:

The project is being rescoped based on public feedback, impacts from the Crazy Creek Fire, and specialist input. The scoping period ends February 17th, 2025.

Crazy Creek Roadside Hazard Tree Abatement Project:

Public scoping ends February 12th, 2025. The District Ranger and Resource Specialists will review the comments received later this month.





United States Department of Agriculture

Wiley Flat Roadside Hazard Tree Abatement and Wiley Flat 250-Acre Salvage Projects:

Public scoping for the Wiley Roadside Hazard Tree Abatement and Wiley Flat 250-Acre Salvage are expected to go out for public scoping in the next few weeks.

Stay up-to-date with forest information by visiting: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/ochoco> or follow us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/OchocoNatForestCrookedRiverNatGrassland>

To have your email added to the Forest's project mailing list, please visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/ochoco/landmanagement/projects> and enter your email in the "Email Updates" box. You will then begin to receive notification of project announcements such as public comment periods. This link also provides information for all current planning projects.



Forest Service