



Tuesday, March 21st, 2023 | 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Harney ESD

Participants: Jason Kesling, Sam Cisney, Cameron Duquette, Jeff Rose, Dustin Johnson, Chad Boyd, Andrew Donaldson, Tyler Goss, Travis Hatley, Autumn Muir, Mike Fox, Chris Paul, Marc DesJardin, Brenda Smith, Casey O'Connor, Kaylee Littlefield, Marla Polenz, Rod Hoagland, Josh Hanson, Sonia Hall, Brian Wilk, Mark Salvo

Review Action Items, 2023 Process Changes, Agenda Overview

- Review action items from the November 15 and January 24 meetings
- Approval of November 15 meeting notes
- Highlight of process changes in response to feedback during annual recap in November
- Agenda overview

HCWC's Strategic Action Plan – Status and Next Steps

HDP and contracted facilitators are working on documenting past work and plans for the future into a Strategic Action Plan for the Harney County Wildfire Collaborative. The draft plan integrates outcomes from the January planning meeting and is almost ready for final review.

- Elements that need HCWC approval: mission, objectives, strategic approach
 - Sonia reviewed the comments that the collaborative weighed in on with topics revolving around: biological crusts, elk, crested wheatgrass, wilderness values, and Burns Paiute Tribe history and current perspectives on priorities. Partners had questions on wilderness values, Sonia asked the collaborative if the group would like to have a conversation around the shared values that the collaborative beyond.
 - Questions arose around whether or not the Wildfire collaborative is working on wildfire management in wilderness areas. Sonia pointed out that the wilderness values comment on the SAP is one of the many values that the partners may have in the group.
 - Conversations in the group revolved around wilderness values, whether we should use that word or talk about what it represents, being proactive in those areas to try and protect them prior to a fire. Multiple comments were made about wilderness and either using that in the SAP, the HCWC defining what we mean by it, or what



values are in wilderness areas that we are wanting to protect. Sonia wrapped up that there will be a smaller committee to follow up on this topic. Sonia will also find a way to bring this into the SAP that accurately captures the varied values that different partners manage for in Harney County.

- Metrics: should we have some evaluation for how we work as a collaborative?
 - The first response to the question was: Why? Partners talked about how it helps tell the story and it is more than the “Touchy Feely” and helps HCWC communication. Examples of metrics were acres burned, amount of large wildfires, etc. Marla responded, “don’t come up with metrics for communication”. She voiced to come up with metrics that are going to benefit the group. Conversations ended up around how do you measure prevention work that isn’t needed. Sonia summarized that at a collaborative level, the group was voicing that we don’t need more metrics because we have them at the project level (within each subcommittee) and we can roll those up. A partner mentioned that in the FEMA grants they have set metrics for ex: a dollar of Juniper work is worth \$7,000 in prevention work and those might be looking into for collaborative projects. A partner mentioned that we are trying to build a culture of preventing/fighting megafire, which makes tracking that as a metric very difficult.
- Final SAP review: We are planning to have a final review by the end of March/early April.

HCWC's Strategic Action Plan – Follow Up Topics from Planning Session

Two topics arose during our January planning session discussions that the Coordinating Committee considers worthy of further discussion, action items or decisions that inform future work.

- Planning vs projects – does the Collaborative do both?
 - Sonia framed this as: There are things the collaborative does to enable individual partners’ projects, but there are also projects where the collaborative is the lead. Sonia tied them both together, mentioning the collaborative does both, and where we do the planning and the projects, we tie them together by investing in collaborative projects that focus on the shared goals of prevention, suppression, and/or restoration.
 - Partner conversations revolved a lot around capacity to do projects and coordination of projects. Planning areas and prioritization of projects came up as well as how to do that at a county scale that is feasible. Exporting this “process” was another discussion point and what that looks like.



- Engaging landowners – what more should we do?
 - Josh led off the conversation discussing that the desire to engage more landowners has come up multiple times throughout multiple meetings. He asked the collaborative for feedback on what they exactly meant and what it looked like going forward.
 - One partner mentioned there were 26 landowners engaged on the SOWR project that know why the project was happening and where it was happening. They didn't think that the expectation is for landowners to be present at every meeting. Another partner commented that the SOWR project was in their backyard so it was at the right scale.
 - Comments talked about the transition of areas and how it has gone in different locations and how it has changed throughout the project areas. Partners primarily talked about bringing the partners in at the right stages, but the expectation was not to participate with every meeting. It was mentioned multiple times that we need to have a constant engagement with the landowners through mailings etc. so we don't come up to them when we have a pile of money.
 - Sonia summarized three threads: Consistent communication to landowners broadly (Communication subcommittee's work), relevant specific meetings at the right scale (Pueblos, Crane/Juntura PCLs, etc.), and somewhat fuzzy but the enabling conditions of building relationships with them so we have a way to engage when we need to get their opinion, or they have a way to reach out if they have relevant points to raise with the collaborative.

Subcommittee Updates

As the organizing units where the partners carry out specific work that contributes towards the Collaborative's shared goals, we will have space for each subcommittee to report on progress, request input on specific aspects of their work, or bring proposals to the Collaborative for decisions.

- SOWR Subcommittee
 - Brief update to share information on Landscape Resiliency Program (LRP) proposed budget*
 - The SOWR project received an updated budget to increase spending in spring '23. Partners proposed projects totalling 3,650 acres half of which are early phase juniper treatments on BLM and private and the other half are Rejuvra private and state land spraying. There is no known date of when the next funding will be rolled out, but it does seem that the program will be in next year's budget. To what extent is unknown. The most recent budget proposal had \$12 million for LRP in the next fiscal year, but there are conversations about trying to increase that to the previous \$20 million.



- Communications Subcommittee

Brief update and demonstration on the newly launched HCWC's website.

- Marla shared the brand new Harney County Wildfire Collaborative website harneywildfirecollaborative.org. She did a quick tutorial of the website that captures projects, meeting notes, presentations, etc. in hopes to prevent groundhog day on conversations we may have already had. One example that came timely was a presentation on values that were talked about a couple of years ago. Whether or not to use a map was brought up, but the group couldn't decide on what program would work best. The use for a mapping program is still unknown.

- Stinkingwaters Subcommittee

Update to share information and to obtain support and feedback on (a) our timelines and selected goals, and (b) on direction for creating the enabling conditions that allow for successful on the groundwork and an exportable process and model that can be replicated. Request for some assistance to follow through with grant applications.

- There were 17 people at the subcommittee meeting. After a brief SOWR update, the partners wanted a map of where projects have been done in the area recently to try and focus future project priorities. Maps were combined from partners as well as overlaying where NEPA has been approved. This helped drive the conversation about moving the priority PCL to line up with where the majority of the work is being done. This also illuminated that the three private landowners the line intersects are already working with the partners. This new line seemed like a quicker way to achieve a functional, continuous PCL across the Stinkingwaters that would still serve the function of preventing fire from going from west to east and vice versa.
- Kaylee gave a monitoring update that completed the baseline monitoring with photopoints on PCLs and will need some additional funding for continued monitoring. Outreach/request from Subcommittee: How much funding is needed for continued monitoring? Kaylee mentioned that she is needing input from the collaborative because the monitoring is to inform the collaborative.
- Future goals are to monitor effectiveness of treatments i.e. spraying, seeding needs. Also to research perennial bunchgrass needs for resistance and how to define success. Subcommittee came to the full committee on what future funding should be pursued. A partner suggested to develop one PCL at a time to slowly break up the landscape into PODs. In addition, there was discussion of what would come next, with the group liking the suggestion of considering the main west-east PCL as the next priority, followed by the eastern north-south PCL along the Stinkingwaters Access Road and the Warm Springs Access Road. Conversations from the subcommittee were around starting on the major access roads and then splitting those areas up rather than trying to make PCLs for all 21 PODs mapped in



the Stinkingwaters with the primary goal of stopping fire from going west to east and vice versa.

Partner Updates

Our plan is to continue to have space for individual partners to share work they are doing individually that might be of interest to other partners, including how the shared work in the HCWC is helping inform their work elsewhere in Harney County or beyond.

Partners shared work that is inspired by the collaborative's efforts, including:

- A workshop at the Society for Range Management presenting the collaborative's work as a model for strategic conservation.
- A new collaborative getting started in Lake County is organizing much quicker than it otherwise would by building off the operating principles, processes etc. that the Wildfire collaborative has developed
- BLM Lakeview and Vale Districts are evaluating using the PODs/PCLs approach.

Action Items:

- Send out the map of the three priority areas for SWCD on juniper cuts with future funding to come in.
- Sonia will reach out individually to the small group to bring them together to talk about wilderness.
- Send out the questionnaire for the SAP in Meeting Notes.
- Kaylee and Autumn will coordinate around proposed monitoring funding needs and reach out individually with requests for input. Please be responsive.

Consensus Decisions:

- The group agreed that metrics at the collaborative level should focus on rolling up project-level metrics.
- The group gave consensus for the subcommittee to pursue funding to treat the new priority PCLs and other PCLs.

Facilitator:

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Harney County Wildfire Collaborative

The **purpose** of the Harney County Wildfire Collaborative is for the group to reach consensus on specific, achievable, tangible and measurable steps to be taken by all entities (both public and private) to reduce the potential for and the impact of mega-fires in Harney County.

The Collaborative's efforts consist of three process phases: Suppression, Prevention and Restoration. It is understood that all phases do not run sequentially and some degree of overlap and concurrence is expected.

Suppression is defined as the communication, coordination and integration of actions taken to put fires out in both initial attack and extended attack.

Prevention is defined as fire risk reduction by minimizing the potential incident and impacts of mega-fires.

Restoration is defined as establishing and maintaining resilient plant communities that will reduce the risk of mega fires.

All efforts are viewed through the lens of preserving and promoting social, economic and ecological values.

Participants of the Collaborative is made up of any interested stakeholders with a diverse body of knowledge, skills and abilities, who are involved in aspects of wildfire within Harney County. **The Collaborative is open to all interested parties.**