

February 12, 2019

To: AFRC Members

From: Tom Partin

Re: Recap of NCWFHC Meeting and Status of Okanogan-Wenatchee Timber Sale Program

On February 6, Tom Partin attended the North Central Washington Forest Health Coalition meeting in Wenatchee along with AFRC members Kevin Arneson, Boise Cascade and Mike Kaputa and Bob Bugert, Chelan County. At the meeting we were updated on the status of on-going projects on the Okanogan-Wenatchee (see below). Since our January 28 monitoring meeting was cancelled due to the shutdown, I wanted to provide AFRC members with the most recent program information. I have also attached the 5-year plan and map information.

The next Okanogan-Wenatchee monitoring meeting will be held on April 30 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Supervisors Office in Wenatchee. A reminder and agenda will be sent out prior to the meeting.

FY19 Projects

- 1) The Mission project (2 timber sales) did not sell last year for a variety of reasons. The Mission Sale is advertised right now. The Buttermilk Sale is being reexamined because of all the fire lines put in and they are looking at soil disturbance issues. New Methow Valley District Ranger Chris Furr said the Buttermilk Project would be offered again in FY20.
- 2) The Mt. Hull Draft EA will be out next week for comments. There will be two timber sales in the project—one will be sold in FY19 (Mt. Hull) and one in FY20 (Big Mac).
- 3) Swauk Pine has received the concurrence letter from FWS and will be moving forward to sell in FY19. The Wild Blew portion of the project is also being analyzed but not scheduled for sale until FY21. That project could possibly be moved up.
- 4) The two turn back sales from Sea-Sno (Walter Springs and Skywalker) are in consultation with FWS now and should be in the FY19 program, but is dependent on how quickly FWS get through their portion of consultation. We were told they have a large backlog due to shutdown.
- 5) The Little Crow Project (including the Finn Sale) on the Naches District had to go out for another comment period late last year because the District is asking for a Forest Plan Amendment to harvest trees older than 80-years. This means that the sale could be held back until FY20.

Out Year Projects

1. The Upper Wenatchee Pilot Project on the Wenatchee District will out for scoping comments on February 25, with a 30-day comments period ending on March 27. The contractor doing the NEPA work on the project (EAS Consulting) continued to work during the shutdown. There has been some time slippage in the planning and the Forest

has to do another round of owl calling this summer so I don't see the first sale coming out of this project until late FY20 or more likely FY21.

2. The Taneum Project on the Cle Ellum District is moving forward with the Forest doing contract NEPA. The Final EA should be out in late FY19. The first timber sale should be in FY20 .
3. The Twisp Project on the Methow Valley District is about ready to come out for scoping. This project will cover a big landscape however, much of it has been managed pretty heavy in the past or has had fire. It should still be a pretty large project with the first timber sales coming out in FY21.
4. Mike Williams and Rodney Smoldon met yesterday to discuss the possibility of the Toroda-Tonada Project being a cross boundary project of both Forests and also including some DNR lands. This has the possibility of being a large volume project (perhaps even a 10-year GNA stewardship project).
5. Other planning areas that the Forest will be entering include the Mad Roaring on the Entiat District and the Teanaway on the Cle Ellum District. Dates have not yet been set for scoping.

Takeaways from the February 6 Meeting and Suggestions on Next Meeting

We let Mike Williams, Forest Supervisor and Teri Tucker, Natural Resource Director that we expected the Forest to push to hit their 43 mmbf target this year. The Buttermilk sale will be set back until FY20 which is 2.2 mmbf. The real wildcard on other projects is how quickly FWS completes consultation. Teri Tucker asked that we wait until our April 30 purchasers meeting so they can have better information to share with us. If there are new developments, I will send another update.

Glimmer of Hope for the Ok-Wen

The Forest has received our message that projects that treat only a fraction of the acres and removing small volumes per acre are not economically feasible. Current projects are analyzing more of the project areas. For example the Upper Wenatchee Pilot Project which is a large landscape project could yield a lot of volume and is still close to being on schedule. It is also encouraging to see both Forests looking at the Toroda-Tonada landscape for a large GNA project. The area being analyzed on the Okanogan-Wenatchee for this project is from the Canadian border down to the Colville Indian Reservation. The LSR issue that had Little Naches, Swauk Pine and others tied up has been resolved by the LSR working group and new projects are moving forward with clear direction.