

# NORTHWEST FOREST PLAN FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2023  
EDGEWATER HOTEL  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON**

**Introduction:** The Northwest Forest Plan Federal Advisory Committee (the Committee) held its second meeting November 14-16, 2023, in Seattle, WA. The Committee was established July 7, 2023.

**Objectives:** To address committee business; to engage with and integrate subcommittee work to date, and to refine the path forward.

**Attendees:** The FAC members, staff, contractors, and the public that attended are listed in Appendix A.

## TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2023

### Welcome

*Kathleen Rutherford Riggs, Facilitator*

*Annie Goode, Director, Pacific Planning Service Group, U.S. Forest Service*

*Liz Berger, Designated Federal Official*

The facilitator called the room to attention. The Director briefed the room with safety and emergency instructions. The Director reminded the group that the meeting was public and was being livestreamed, then introduced the Designated Federal Official (DFO). The DFO welcomed the group and introduced herself as acting Regional Forester for the Pacific Northwest Region and Designated Federal Official for the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) Federal Advisory Committee (FAC).

### FAC Agreements/Recommendations

- A Land Acknowledgement was not initially included on the agenda. A Land Acknowledgement will be added to Wednesday morning and will be included in all meetings moving forward.

### Public Comment

A former Forester shared a public comment. There is too much wood on the ground, too many crowded trees, and too many dead trees on the fire line. The dry, dead wood provides more fuel for fires. Eliminating surplus wood is costly and there are no primary processing facilities within economic or affordable options for hauling logs to facilities in central Washington. The mill closed when the National Forest did not meet their program timber harvest under the original NWFP. The surplus wood is

resulting in more private landowners building homes, creating a population increase that increases fire risk and fire suppression costs. Commenter recommended supporting timber management programs with enforceable and achievable harvest goals.

Speaker from Conservation Northwest provided comment. The FAC should retain the NWFP's strengths while addressing weaknesses; revisions should protect old trees in moist and dry sites and increase resilience to disturbances. The plan has been less successful at addressing social objectives. The revisions must also address the immediacy of the changing climate. The plan needs to increase proactive use of beneficial fires, including cultural burns to address fuel loads and to increase resilience in dry forests. Partnering with Tribes for this burning will greatly increase success.

Speaker from the American Bird Conservancy shared a comment. Commenter recommended the FAC incorporate the Northern Spotted Owl critical habitat rule from 2012, perhaps strengthening the rule to protect all remaining owl habitat. It is also important to recognize climate mitigation benefits to the plan of not logging mature and old growth forests and allowing forest regrowth in the reserves. Additionally, adding protection for the threatened Marbled Murrelet through a Climate Mitigation/Marbled Murrelet Recovery sub-alternative could be developed. The speaker also expressed concern over the short timeline of the proposed plan amendment and lack of endangered species recovery as a critical issue. Of greatest concern is the impact of political interference and ongoing efforts to weaken the plan and the underlying ESA protections. The American Bird Conservancy does not recommend changing portions of the plan pertaining to dry forests, citing it is crucial that the dense patches suitable for owls be maintained as reserves and managed as owl habitat in the future, including diameter limits on thinning, and added restrictions on post-fire logging in case of disturbance.

Speaker from Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, & Ecology (FUSEE) provided comment. FUSEE advocates for Community outward approach; there is a role for fuel breaks outside of towns. In terms of wildfire resilience, FUSEE believes that absolute fire exclusion in LSRs is not viable nor sustainable. Commenter recommended protecting old growth and LSRs with fire, not from fire, by utilizing intermittent burning and cultural burning. In terms of "climate-smart forestry," FUSEE recommends working from the ground up and not ground down. The speaker also intended to comment on socio-economic rural development and workforce needs; however, was out of time. FUSEE recommends Tribal Engagement be included in all subcommittees and seek Tribal inclusion in the entire amendment process.

A representative of the Sierra Club shared a comment. The speaker expressed support for the retention of a LSR system and the ACS and encouraged the FAC to deliver recommendations to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) since BLM-managed lands southern Oregon were part of the original plan. The speaker expressed support for: protection of mature and old growth forests; recognizing inventoried roadless areas; that the aquatic conservation strategy should be re-examined; and that the FAC should fully explore co-management of federal lands with Tribes as part of the plan revision.

The mayor of the town of Darrington shared a comment. The mayor urged the Forest Service to provide true definitions in the plan. There are several forests in the region and during windstorms, old growth and other trees that fall over roads become firewood. The speaker recommended the Forest Service investigate utilizing salvaging as a tool. It takes months to remove trees. It would be useful to define in plain language what plan terms mean so on-the-ground practitioners can work in a positive and efficient way. Darrington used to have 170 Forest Service workers in the community who added to the

complexity and diversity of the community. Now, the town is down to eight employees who do not live in the community and who impact the whole of the forest community.

Glacier Peak Institute provided comment. The speaker noted a town like Darrington or similar is not represented in the FAC. Social economic system has collapsed and rural communities suffer more than urban communities. The Forest Service in Darrington has been cut by 90% and those hired don't live in Darrington. The speaker recommends bringing back local and independent decision-making to the communities that live in the forests. The NWFP should prioritize that those working in the forests be based in the communities. If not doable, consider local organizations, or Tribes, do the work. The speaker recognized they were running out of time to provide comment, which is a colonial system, and a colonial system disempowers people. There is legal recourse to address species, but none for rural communities. Include a plan of recourse for rural communities. Anyone who supports the NWFP as-is gives themselves power and disenfranchises others.

The National Parks Conservation Association shared a comment. The speaker advocated for big trees, mature forests, and wildlife; these must be protected for future generations. Wildfire and climate change-hazards were not initially considered in the NWFP. The speaker is a proponent of National Park management and the National Parks Service's aim to restore the role of natural fires in parks when and where feasible. In areas where fire suppression has been practiced, the speaker recommends considering where mitigation activities will be most effective, which is likely near communities. When considering amending the NWFP, the FAC should ask three questions:

- Will this likely ensure future generations inherit more forests?
- Is the NWFP the right tool to solve the problem?
- Will this last decades to preserve forests?

## **Opening Remarks, Designated Federal Official Agency Response to Committee Letter and Path Forward**

*Liz Berger, Designated Federal Official*

The DFO thanked the public for their comments and the FAC for their commitment and work. The DFO acknowledged the concern over timeline and thanked the FAC for the letters the co-chairs wrote to the Secretary and Chief. As of Tuesday, November 14, 2023, the response has moved through the Chief's office, with a chance of receiving a response through the course of the meeting. There was discussion of flexibility in the timeline with the understanding of situations outside of control such as a potential government shutdown, response to public comments, etc. If a shutdown occurs, it will not result in a one-to-one tradeoff for days. For example, if a shutdown occurs for two weeks, the timeline will not adjust just by two weeks, it will adjust for longer.

Regarding rechartering, the timeframe is up at the end of 2024 and rechartering will begin early in 2024. The process will be similar to the initial process, and rechartering will allow the FAC to think into the future, especially into implementation. The Forest Service is investing in the planning group; Annie Goode is leading the Pacific Planning Group and every two weeks, Annie and Liz meet with Meryl Harrell, Deputy Under Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) which provides

ample opportunity for communication around the FAC work. Additionally, the DFO met with the FAC co-chairs every other week to hear about subcommittee work.

The DFO shared that the agenda for the November meeting includes hearing from guest speakers from U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The DFO reported on the Oregon Landscape Resiliency Summit which had 120 attendees; additionally, there was a Tribal Summit to discuss Tribal inclusion and engagement.

### **Co-Chairs' Opening Remarks**

*Travis Joseph, FAC Co-Chair*

*Susan Jane Brown, FAC Co-Chair*

The co-chairs thanked the public for their comments and everyone in attendance. They heard divergency and consistency, and the FAC will look into opportunities to bring alignment. The co-chairs acknowledged the work is incredibly complicated and there is a need to focus on how to move forward together. The co-chairs expressed gratitude to the Committee for exchanging ideas and providing invaluable information while taking time out of their lives. The co-chairs acknowledged there is uncertainty and will do their best to provide answers to questions members are asking.

### **Committee Discussion/Check-in**

*Kathleen Rutherford Riggs, Facilitator*

The facilitator reviewed the Ground Rules:

- Listen to learn.
- Assume good intent.
- Respect the range and views of everyone at the table.
- Ask for clarification if there's something you need to understand.
- Look ahead; acknowledge the past without rehashing it.

The facilitator reviewed the agenda and opened the floor to the Committee for any discussion and observations. Each Committee member shared their observations, noting concerns about the need to narrow the scope of the Committee while ensuring important topics are not left out. Several members expressed their frustration and concern about the exclusion of a sixth subcommittee regarding wildlife biodiversity/endangered species. Many shared their continued consternation over the truncated timeline. The group expressed gratitude for the call-out to include a Land Acknowledgement at the beginning of meetings moving forward.

The facilitator led an exercise asking the group to share what support or motivation looks like for each Committee member. Members gave similar answers, such as clarity on purpose and mission, and narrowing of the scope. Some recognized the paradox of needing more time and yet understanding the direness of the crisis, while others mentioned resources for future generations.

### **FAC Agreements/Recommendations**

- A basic outline for Wednesday's subcommittee report outs will be discussed.

- Forest Service to provide timeline alternatives.

## **Committee Business: Operating Protocols**

*Kathleen Rutherford Riggs, Facilitator*

The facilitator introduced Ryan Miller who will be inducted as a FAC member. Ryan Miller represents western Washington Tribes who have a unique relationship with the Forest Service.

The facilitator briefly went over the Operating Protocols, in particular subcommittee mechanics, to be collected Tuesday and Wednesday for discussion on Thursday.

### **FAC Agreements/Recommendations**

- Add Land Acknowledgement as a formal addition to the Welcome and Introductions.
- FAC to review and provide feedback on Operating Protocols, due to Kathleen and Delaney via verbal comment or e-mail by Wednesday, November 15. Final version to be presented on Thursday, November 16. This includes:
  - How to add subcommittee members.
  - Collapsing or adding subcommittees.
- Forest Service to provide direction on what can be shared between subcommittees, partners, and the public.
- Forest Service and planning team to commit to getting committee members materials sooner.

## **Mature and Old Growth Effort**

*Jamie Barbour, Assistant Director for Adaptive Management, U.S. Forest Service*

Jamie Barbour presented on Mature and Old-Growth Forest Threat Analysis Updated (20231114\_MOG.pptx). During the presentation, Jamie shared the inventory released in April and the threat analysis in the process of being released now. Executive Order 14072 directs Forest Service and BLM to do three things for mature and old growth forests:

1. Define what mature and old growth forests is and conduct an inventory.
  - a. This is done and a draft report is published with another one underway.
2. Perform a threat analysis associated with the inventory.
  - a. In the process of completing the threat analysis.
3. Develop a policy that guides the conservation of mature and old growth forests into the future.
  - a. There are discussions happening at the highest levels of the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior, and the White House.

Jamie reviewed the Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) process from both the Forest Service perspective and the Bureau of Land Management proposed Public Lands Rule. Jamie then reviewed threat analysis initial findings and gave an update on the initial inventory. The revised report is expected in early 2024 as they are reviewing the initial inventory for context and content. The inventory will continue to be refined and used to monitor change in mature and old growth forest through time.

The goal of the threat analysis report is to be quantitative and qualitative, dynamic, geospatial, use existing data and products, include trend assessment, and connect to social, economic, and cultural mature and old growth forest values. The approach included various types of analyses in combination to analyze potential threats to mature and old growth forests. Initial findings show that many mature and old-growth forests have high exposure to a variety of threats; projections suggest as younger forests grow, acreage of older forests on Forest Service and BLM lands increase by 5.5% by 2070; and all projections suggest a slowing of forests becoming mature and old growth by 2070.

Next steps are to remain engaged with Tribes and Alaska Native corporations, employees, and stakeholders. The consultation period around growth is an open consultation, so Tribes can collaborate at any time and is not constricted by timeline.

### Discussion/Questions

Q = Question, A = Answer, C = Comment

- **Q:** How does the Forest Service define mature and old growth, and is it defined by presence or functionality?  
**A:** In general, back in 1989, the Chief of Fire Service issued direction to the region to define old growth. The Forest Service started from that list of definitions and made some revisions.
- **Q:** All data shared is from the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA)? Roughly speaking, regional descriptions were used of old growth, so 50% characterized as mature?  
**A:** Yes.
- **Q:** For the NWFP amendment, what is the FAC using as definition for “mature” and “old?”  
**A:** Unless otherwise noted, they are the same.
- **Q:** The FAC is working on an amendment to the NWFP and yet there is a national effort that will eventually end in a policy. How do they overlap?  
**A:** Unsure.  
**C:** This would be a fruitful conversation for the group to discuss.
- **Q:** The FAC needs clarification from the Forest Service. As the Committee continues to deliberate, the Committee needs to know what to be aware of on the national level.  
**A:** The DFO noted that the FAC is going to move forward with these efforts regardless of national efforts – the key point is that the definitions are the same.  
**C:** It is critical that this Committee is in constant contact with the efforts of the national level.  
**C:** The current facilitator sits on ANRP committee, which is cognizant of both efforts.
- **Q:** Can Forest Service speak to the key learnings about fire histories, ecology, and growth and relationship in reducing mortality?  
**A:** This is something with a lot of debate and disagreement. The Forest Service has been looking at FIA plots treated in the past and how they fared over a 20-year period with the entire Forest Service National System. The intent is to look into the inventory and threat analysis.

- Q:** A FAC member asked to view a slide on 30,864 FIA plots measured twice between 2000 and 2020. Does the Forest Service want Tribes to look at western science and say “good” or actually have the Tribes knowledge?

**A:** The Forest Service takes Indigenous Knowledge (IK) seriously and has a team focused on exploring where western science work with IK and how they align.

**C:** The FAC member expressed worry over knowledge extraction and Tribes not being actively a part of the process.
- Q:** Are there different economical values associated with different plots?

**A:** With the inventory, the Forest Service is looking at what is on the plots. Through threat analysis, the Forest Service looks at instances where the plots were managed and how they fared over time. What these don’t show is how biodiversity changed during those times.

**C:** In addition to analysis, each region did qualitative threat analysis looking at different vegetation types and looked into species composition. Some of those local details are hard to incorporate on a national scale.
- C:** The EIS and NWFP speak in general terms of the quantity of mature and old growth forests. The FAC needs to know the disposition of mature old growth forest in the matrix, how much in recurring reserves, and break down by land allocation types/management types so we can understand what is there and know what to do with those lands moving forward.

**A:** One of the challenges is in keeping the spatial scale. For inventory, the Forest Service summarizes information to the fire shed because it is the right scale and analysis is happening, so it is about exposing infrastructure to fire.

**C:** That information exists, likely in books of the history of NWFP.
- C:** The national definition will be broad enough. The FAC has been provided a definitive tool of defining these forests; it either is old growth or not old growth. An index has been developed, which is used effectively by WA Department of Natural Resources to recognize old growth these forests have achieved.
- C:** Young forests do not instantly become mature and mature into old; it is a long-term process and boundary conditions are dynamic and not sharply defined.

**C:** There are slight differences in what we see in California versus Oregon and Washington in definition.

**C:** There are differences in regional definitions, but those differences are mostly ecologically based, so conditions change further south and further east.

**C:** The habitat provided a distinction between these things; a lot of Douglas fir is moist and not dry.
- C:** Based on the inventory done, it is irrefutable that the Forest Service and BLM manage a diverse and old state. It’s up to this group what we do with it.

## Setting the Stage for Discussion of ESA

*Mark Brown, Northwest Forest Plan Program Manager, U.S. Forest Service*

*Jim Thrailkill, Field Supervisor – Roseburg Field Office, U.S. Fish & Wildlife*

Mark Brown and Jim Thrailkill presented on the NWFP Endangered Species Act consultation process overview (20231114\_NWFP\_ESA.pptx). Mark gave a summary of the consultation, shared regulatory requirements, the consultation complexities, NEPA/ESA procedural steps, and the benefits of early consultation. ESA and conservation needs will inform the development of the NEPA Proposed Action. Forest Service will collaborate early and often with the Services agencies (USFWS and National Marine Fisheries Service [NMFS]).

Jim Thrailkill reviewed the overarching forest conservation principles and consultation and conservation considerations. Jim also shared the Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) Recovery Plan and Barred Owl Management (BOM) Strategy. Jim highlighted opportunities for change, emphasizing the restoration of ecological processes, and what the FAC should be thinking about and understand. USFWS supports active forest management, are looking at analytical approaches to modeling and managing fire risk and post-fire landscapes and are in ongoing coordination with Forest Service and other partners regarding BOM. USFWS is asking the FAC to consider in a proposed amendment process how to strategically manage forest habitat to reduce wildfire risk and help provide a collaborative context to approach BOM and NSO recovery.

### Discussion/Questions

Q = Question, A = Answer, C = Comment

- **Q:** What is a consultation agreement?  
**A:** A consultation agreement outlines the structure of teams and how the Forest Service and services agencies will conduct the consultation in Level 1 and Level 2 teams. There will be a technical team, a managers team related to policy issues, and an executive team that will provide strategy and policy interpretation. The executive team has already met.  
**Q:** Are the teams interdisciplinary?  
**A:** Yes.
- **Q:** Does the Forest Service and NMFS do separate Biological Opinions?  
**A:** This is not finalized. All agencies recognize that having separate and distinct Biological Assessments and Opinions can create problems. The terrestrial and aquatic Biological Assessments will stay in contact and collaborate.
- **Q:** Are the subject matter experts all Forest Service staff?  
**A:** There will be staff from the Forest Service, NMFS, and USFWS. TetraTech will be assisting with the ESA.

### FAC Agreements/Recommendations

- Forest Service will keep the FAC informed on ESA Consultation progress and share information.
- Forest Service is meeting regularly with FWS and NMFS, have formed working groups, and attends a monthly Executive meeting.



## From Theoretical to Practical: LSR Assessment Case Study

*Kerry Kemp, Eastern Washington Area Ecologist – Region 6, U.S. Forest Service*

Kerry Kemp presented on the Okanogan-Wenatchee Late Successional Reserve Assessment (20231114\_LSR\_A\_OkaWen.pptx). Kerry acknowledged that the work presented at the FAC meeting was done in a process to work within the existing policy framework to see what can be done to manage risk and changes seen in Okanogan-Wenatchee over the years. Kerry reviewed the background and policy guidance, current conditions, risk assessment, and landscape and stand scale treatment framework. The work is with several agencies; a group formed from regulatory, state, and LSR representatives. Standards and Guidelines were set up to maintain LSRs and to reduce the risk to LSRs from severe impacts resulting from largescale disturbances.

### Q&A Facilitated Discussion

#### Discussion/Questions

Q = Question, A = Answer, C = Comment

- **Q:** Is FWS going to identify very specific areas where Barred Owl reduction will take place? If so, what happens to requirements in the areas where Barred Owl movement is not going to occur – is that going to remain constrained as critical habitats of NSO? What happens to management restrictions to the rest of landscapes within the range of NSO in moist forests?
- **A:** Barred Owl Management Strategy (BOM) is available and is in the federal register. USFWS is not proposing to remove every Barred Owl in the NSO areas, though with the California Spotted Owl, there aren't as many Barred Owls yet so may attempt to remove each one. We have outlined a few areas. It is a voluntary strategy and we have not mapped out every location where Barred Owl removal should occur. The BOM doesn't change critical habitat.
- **Q:** Thinking about conversations about reintroduction of fire and listed species, there have been several instances when limited operating periods intersects, engages, or influences the possibility of cultural burning where owls are involved. Is that a possibility or a no-go think about modification of what that means.
- **A:** If there are no individuals that could be shown through surveys, there is no need for limited operating periods. Some forests have taken a conservative approach and have not done surveys and instead just have applied some limited operating periods which have made things simpler but potentially prevent beneficial work. It comes down to that cost-benefit and is case-by-case. It would be surprising if limited operating periods are included in the NWFP across the board instead of case-by-case.
- **Q:** Are service agencies considering the support behind Tribal sovereignty and self-governance?
- **A:** The Tribal perspective is something service agencies think about. Generally, services agencies view prescribed fire as beneficial, but it also has adverse effects.  
**C:** Service agencies have a tribal commitment to Indigenous people; we have a commitment to implementation and to make sure treaty rights are secured. In 2011, the Treaty Rights at Risk document was released that identified treaty rights that were not being met and treaties signed

by the U.S. government. NOAA and other agencies are under obligation to provide an abundant harvest to Tribal nations. Habitat results in productivity, productivity leads to increased viability, which then leads to increased harvest. Viability also forms the platform for recovery.

- **Q:** Are there examples where service agencies partnered with Tribal natural resources departments or wildlife departments to perform surveys during limited operating periods?  
**A:** Currently unaware of any examples, but don't see reason why service agencies couldn't.
- **Q:** Are there any spatial nuances for effective Barred Owl removal, NSO effective more in old growth and did that go into  
**A:** Katherine – effectiveness was collected in removal areas didn't have type to sparse out differences,
- **Q:** What is the necessity of reserves? The Washington State Department of Natural Resources model of large dense trees shows us where we can expect to retain or expand old growth in the future. There are modeling tools available. Is there any reason why the FAC could not incorporate that design – leave owl recovery in the recovery plan and accept that as law instead of including additional strategies in the plan?  
**A:** Reserves have standards and guides. There is predictability that comes with the NWFP; it is good to have the reserves if needed.  
**C:** The recovery plan is not space specific. It is a volunteer basis.
- **C:** A member expressed concern to hear the BOM Strategy is voluntary. It makes sense to focus on California; however, there should be more strategic thought about high priority areas. The LSR Assessment Case Study presentation showed that within two years, Barred Owls came back. Who will bear the cost of these programs? Will there be support from FWS?  
**A:** FWS does have map areas and have them prioritized. Some areas are left out because they are less useful. It is voluntary. FWS wants people to want to do it but there currently is no funding and the plan doesn't speak to funding.
- **Q:** Are there impacts to salamanders and murrelets from Barred Owls?  
**A:** We don't have observations that Barred Owls affect murrelets directly. Barred Owls eat a lot of different species.
- **Q:** BLM is required to do Barred Owl control as part of their management plan. Are they going out or FWS?  
**A:** There are specifications on the qualifications of the individual, but no specifications on which entity or organization will perform the Barred Owl management.
- **Q:** Would it be appropriate for the NWFP amendment to compel the Forest Service to conduct Barred Owl removals? There could already be objectives, management approaches, agreements with Tribes, but the NWFP could include an endangered species support activity or invasive species control activity. This could occupy quite a bit of the Committee's consideration.

**A:** Barred Owls are included in the recovery plans. It was suggested earlier that a wildlife biodiversity subcommittee be convened to help identify these issues.

- **Q:** Is there anything about Barred Owls the Committee should be thinking about in terms of moist versus dry forests?

**A:** No, they are present at both. Barred Owls are present at lower densities in dense forests.

- **C:** Barred Owls have sparked the interest of the Committee, which was not on the list of issues to address. The Committee might need additional conversation regarding Barred Owls.

- **Q:** FWS alluded to the challenges of weighing short term adverse impacts of individuals versus long-term benefits in a particular landscape. Is there a way to address these tradeoffs through the consultation process in the plan or does it need to be addressed at the local level?

**A:** Those tradeoffs are hard. The recovery plan has some discussion of strategic tradeoffs. In terms of writing in the plan, a case-by-case look will be needed for each area.

**C:** Limited operating periods are there to protect the vulnerable species, such as adolescents or eggs, where species cannot move or hide from Barred Owls.

- **Q:** Regarding conservation strategy, is NOAA Fisheries considering some kind of sideboards or programmatic that would facilitate working in riparian areas to reduce catastrophic fires? How is NOAA Fisheries approaching this consultation?

**A:** The Aquatic Conservation Strategy is one of the gold stars of the NWFP as it has given two years of data. NOAA is the consulting agency working with the Forest Service. It is the Forest Service action to propose an effective monitoring program.

**C:** NOAA is brought on to ensure actions taken do not have negative impacts. If there are ways to improve riparian reserves, they will be considered as long as there is science to back up efficacy and that the effectiveness is worth the risk.

**C:** One of the underutilized aspects of the NWFP is the adaptive management watersheds that were intended to be areas of experimentation.

- **Q:** Why have Tribes not been a part of the process since this very beginning?

**A:** FWS did not want to map an area recommending Barred Owl management without Tribal input. There has been the longest running and most successful Barred Owl management with Tribes in California. Tribal lands are not excluded; however, they are not mapped without specific approval.

**C:** It seems like collaboration should have taken place early onset. This is the first of hearing about the EIS.

**C:** There is a list of Tribes in NSO range and outreach was done.

**C:** We are starting to get more tribal engagement. The outreach is starting to make its way through. FWS has heard from Yakima Tribe.

**C:** The graphs from the presentation are for the past 20 years. This feels last-minute.

- **C:** One FAC member expressed hesitancy to include a decision on Barred Owls when the FAC is already struggling with subcommittees.

**C:** The framework of the EIS is coming out Friday for a 60-day public comment period. During that time, there are two public meetings (December 4 and 14, 2023). If the FAC has questions after reading the strategy, FWS is available to provide additional technical assistance, Q&A, and can discuss why FWS landed on the strategy.

- **C:** The DFO extended gratitude to the Services and acknowledged the difficult questions. The DFO clarified that the Committee is not being asked what to do about Barred Owls but that the Committee can decide what to recommend. The BOM is a draft strategy, not a pre-determined course of action.

**C:** One of the co-chairs acknowledged the DFO's comment and thanked the Services. The co-chair's sense is that having the Services present is very helpful, and the FAC would like the Services to participate in some of subcommittees, whether Barred Owl control or Recovery Plan implementation, since the FAC can't provide recommendations that are contrary to what the Services view as statute of limitations. The Services are not the ultimate decision-makers, neither is the FAC – it is the Forest Service.

- **Q:** Has there been conversation about 7(a)(1)1 review for this amendment, which looks at providing conservation measures independent of a larger action?  
**A:** There have not been any conversations regarding 7(a)(1) review, but it is still early in the process.
- **Q:** Could the FAC have a calendar of important dates and public engagement comment periods that includes events such as the Forest Service conducting a consultation forum or when service agencies are conducting events that allows the FAC to be present in those spaces?
- **C:** The Forest Service should actively engage in the BOM program. This should have been a topic the Committee needs to address.
- **Q:** What are the ripple effects of the work of this committee and NWFP to neighboring landowners?  
**A:** All actions affect surrounding landowners. This is about shared large landscape management; it doesn't matter what jurisdictional boundary is. This is good follow-up for subcommittees to discuss; how to look at an all-lands approach.  
**C:** One ripple effect would be between Forest Service and BLM lands and how to approach the differences in management.  
**C:** There are opportunities for partnership, for example between the Forest Service and private timberlands.
- **Q:** Regarding Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP), if federal lands change based on FAC recommendations, are there new expectations on the private landowners under HCPs?  
**A:** It would be helpful to send examples.

### **FAC Agreements/Recommendations**

- Forest Service and planning team to provide the FAC with a calendar of important dates and engagement.

### **Plan for Wednesday and Closeout**

*Kathleen Rutherford Riggs, Facilitator*

*Liz Berger, Designated Federal Official*

Kathleen reviewed what subcommittee reports outs should cover:

- Where the subcommittees have landed.
- What subcommittees are still grappling with.
- Where subcommittees see a crosswalk with other subcommittees.

The group will also go over the “now what” and how to narrow the focus of work.

The DFO reminded the group to keep letting Forest Service and planning team know what the FAC needs to focus on getting to recommendations so the team can be as responsive as possible. The DFO acknowledged the need for clarity, focus, and that things may be missing. The hope is to provide clarity over the course of the meeting. Liz extended her gratitude for the Committee’s time and efforts.

## **Welcome and Land Recognition**

*Kathleen Rutherford Riggs, Facilitator*

*Liz Berger, Designated Federal Official*

The facilitator opened the meeting by calling the room to attention. The DFO read the Land Acknowledgment, created with the Forest Service Regional Tribal Coordinator. The facilitator reviewed the agenda and ground rules with the FAC.

## **Reflections**

*Kathleen Rutherford Riggs, Facilitator*

The facilitator invited the FAC to share any reflections and observations they may have. One FAC member spoke of their frustrations that the NWFP seemed to create obstacles for restoration work in the Okanogan-Wenatchee region and recognized it is up to the FAC to clear the way for some of the obstacles. Another FAC member shared how difficult it is to create a plan that encompasses such a large landscape with so many different forest types. A member reminded the group of how Tribes are powerful allies and to think of how the group can incorporate Tribal knowledge and communities. One of the co-chairs reflected on the public comments, particularly of the father and son, and would like to keep in mind as the FAC thinks of recommendations that while the recommendations may be well intended and informed, they have a real-world impact. One member acknowledged the dissonance of discussing wildlife and forests while sitting in a room in an urban setting. There are legacies of those decisions made over the last 30 years and we are still living with those consequences. This is our opportunity to make a change for good trajectory.

## **Subcommittee Report Outs**

*Kathleen Rutherford Riggs, Facilitator*

The facilitator asked each subcommittee to report on:

- Where the subcommittees have landed.
- What subcommittees are still grappling with.
- Where subcommittees see a crosswalk with other subcommittees.

## **Fire Resilience**

The Fire Resilience subcommittee co-chairs briefly read the problem statement, reviewed the issues, and commended the subcommittee for their work in cross-walking issues with other subcommittee issues. The subcommittee is grappling with how some issues are outside the purview of the plan, yet they are important. The subcommittee discussed what the plan can and cannot do to reduce uncharacteristic wildfires while highlighting differences between moist and dry forests.

One of the subcommittee co-chairs mentioned the group brainstormed a number of issues but has not gotten into transforming into recommendations. Another challenge is incorporating Indigenous Traditional and Ecological Knowledge (ITEK) without it being a “check-the-box” process.

### Discussion/Questions

Q = Question, A = Answer, C = Comment

- **C:** An FAC member recognized the longest section in the subcommittee report out is regarding cultural fire, which is a step in the right direction.  
**C:** A member cited concepts in the Tribal Relations Forest Service Manual, which notes on Tribal relations within policy, and provides a point of reference for utilizing language that already exists within the Forest Service.  
**C:** Ecological biodiversity is a product of Indigenous science. It is an opportunity and necessity to collaborate with Tribes on desired conditions. There is an opportunity to be more explicit.
- **Q:** What is cultural burning versus prescribed fire?  
**A:** Prescribed fire is a western, white-dominant practice derived from cultural burning. It is utilized as a tool for fuel reduction/fire suppression. Cultural fire is an element of those, it is the next step of ecological biodiversity to enhance and maintain certain species that are there. Cultural fire is a connection of spirit and responsibility to take care of the landscape; there’s a priority within the different landscape. It’s complex and not clearcut defined, which is intentional.  
**C:** There are differences between communities for use of fire. For example, the Klamath Tribes who had historically practiced burns was opposed to using prescribed fire within their historic lands over concern for deer and elk. There is diversity within the Indigenous community. Ultimately, it does not seem difficult to incorporate cultural burning within a larger program of prescribed fire.
- **C:** A commenter highlighted additional distinctions/nuances:
  - Plantations and how fire interacts and engages with plantations.
  - Post-fire management.
- **C:** Why should the FAC not address issues of managing natural ignitions or resource benefits? A primary concern is that several of the individual land resource management plans are in support of full suppression. The speaker noted low confidence in making changes to individual plans in a timely manner – how can the FAC use the NWFP amendment to move these along faster?  
**C:** The conversation for the FAC to not specifically address these issues resulted from a consultation with colleagues who work in risk management, fire, and fuels who felt like it could derail an entire process. Instead, language should emphasize the use of fire where beneficial. The idea is to use broader statements to encapsulate these ideas. This is a discussion the FAC should have, of where and how to use specific language in recommendations on controversial topics versus broader statements.

- **C:** Fire is controversial. There should be an educational component for the public to better understand what fires are today.

**C:** Education was discussed and so was public perception. One of the issues we grappled with was in terms of what can the plan do versus not. Forest Service could encourage to do outreach but is that something the plan can address?

**Q:** Why not?

**C:** That’s the question the subcommittee grappled with. It will be helpful to think of what the plan can do to help educate the public.
- **C:** Much education and outreach are based on the Smokey the Bear model. It will be beneficial to reach out to fire managers. That is something to potentially do in the implementation process: reach out to those on the frontlines.

**C:** Fire managers could also be in subcommittees or as panels in future FAC meetings.
- **C:** A FAC member reminded the group of the importance to consider the distinction between moist and dry forest in fire discussions. More fire in dry forest and less fire in existing mature forest and moist forests is desired. There is concern over whether there is something the Forest Service can do now before the new fire season begins changing. Every year we continue to delay in this is more forest is burning; there is a real urgency. When discussing with the Klamath Tribe about prescribed burning/cultural fire, the suggestion was for a 20-year timeline and the Tribe decided to do it in 10 because the cost of every year of delay is more forest burning.
- **Q:** This deserves more time on the agenda. Can future meetings dedicate more space and time to go over these important conversations and potential disagreements?

**A:** For the other subcommittees, the group needs to try a tighter timeframe and can adjust accordingly. It would be beneficial for the group to walk in on Thursday with a shared understanding of what this means and what is needed to move forward for the next conversations.

### Old Growth

The Old Growth subcommittee co-chairs shared that the subcommittee has been doing learning and understanding of the issues. One of the things the group struggled with was the problem statement. There is more work to be done. A distinction between wet and dry outcomes needs to be adjusted. The wildlife issues are not properly addressed in the current structure; a co-chair suggested the Committee consider a new subcommittee. The lack of attention to wildlife is apparent in the NOI.

The Old Growth subcommittee co-chairs shared two key issues regarding Old Growth:

1. Is LSR designation the correct approach for dry forests? It can be renamed, and the concept be kept, or move away from traditional reserves. What does the FAC recommend to the Forest Service regarding mature and old growth trees? Do we want to retain classification of LSR when Forest Service says a defined area is necessary?
2. The disposition of remaining mature and old forest in the moist forest, particularly naturally developed mature and old growth forest. Does the FAC want to protect all of it? If “yes,” is some



kind of designation needed? What does the FAC want to do about compensating the commercial land base for that preservation?

### Discussion/Questions

Q = Question, A = Answer, C = Comment

- **Q:** Has there been discussion about how much habitat is enough? What is the spectrum of the landscape that is beneficial to species?  
**A:** The Old Growth subcommittee discussed this at length and the general agreement is that old growth ecosystems are so rare and valuable for many reasons that they need to be conserved wherever they occur. The subcommittee also recognized the number of current old growth ecosystems is a small remnant of how many there used to be. The FAC needs to consider connectivity – are the reserves big enough to meet the needs of the species to conserve? Protect what we have and develop more; however, consensus is needed from others.  
**C:** Agreed. It is very important to work with the landscapes that have been altered so they can be structurally beneficial to the species that live there.
- **Q:** Is the subcommittee suggesting or considering proposing new land use applications in lands outside of LSRs and another for plantations that need to be treated and burned?  
**A:** One consideration is transitioning plantations into managing forests that are structurally diverse. The Forest Service does not need any kind of classification for that action. The Forest Service can alter LSR or alter the requirements about limitations on management of some of those plantations within the LSR without taking them out of LSR status, but it is not necessary to have a special designation to move plantations to functional manageable forest systems.  
**C:** Regarding plantations in the forest, there is a case study of a smaller forest (~600,000 acres) of which over 90% of the forest are reserves. The study focused on management on plantations within and across the landscape. The treatments varied depending on land use allocation and it was successful.
- **C:** The issue of mature and old conservation are the questions of “what is mature, what is old? Is dry versus moist important? What about LSRs?” It requires vision and clear guidance on direction.
- **C:** Flagging for goals: the group requested highlighting the conversation about dry forests, whether there is a hardwood component and whether there is a need to think differently between California and Oregon versus the eastern Cascades hardwood that are conifer-dominated.

### **FAC Agreements/Recommendations**

- FAC to discuss the need for an additional wildlife biodiversity subcommittee.

### Communities

The Communities subcommittee co-chairs read the problem statement and walked through the issues. The subcommittee reviewed the goals of the original plan which helped drive the highlighted topics. The Communities subcommittee is grappling with narrowing topics while also covering broad issues; they are unsure how to address problems regarding infrastructure, capacity, and larger issues areas that have narrow plan nexus but are important to rural and forest communities. The group did not talk about implementation versus recommendation.

### Discussion/Questions

Q = Question, A = Answer, C = Comment

- **C:** The recreation economy does not take the place of the natural resource economy.
- **Q:** Were smoke-impacted communities considered in discussion? These communities are not mentioned in the Fire or Climate subcommittees.  
**A:** The group did not talk about smoke-impacted communities. The public health component was not discussed in-depth. The Fire and Communities subcommittees should connect if smoke-impacted communities is more about fire resilience.  
**C:** The FAC could consider further engagement with agencies such as the DEQ and EPA.
- **C:** Monitoring was identified as a workforce nexus issue, which is often underfunded and an afterthought. It could potentially be a significant source of revenue.  
**C:** There is a need for processing facilities and workforces available. Those communities are the ones that provide the workforce needed to be able to manage the forests. The processing facilities allow for the utilization of what is removed from the forest and to subsidize the ability to do these activities. It is fundamental to be able to do stewardship – who better to be involved than the ones who live in the vicinity of these forest systems.  
**C:** From an economic perspective, the discussion around workforce focused on predictability. While it is the rural populations and communities linked to the forest who do the monitoring, most don't live in the communities anymore.  
**C:** One of the challenges is to make these communities attractive to younger generations so they stay in those communities.  
**C:** Agree. The FAC can help link this to the scope of the plan.  
**C:** NWFP decisions affect the local people and communities. There are real life implications to these policies with different cultures and economies.  
**C:** Thinking of one of the public commentors from Day 1, the Glacier Peak Institute is involved in workforce training and stewardship.
- **Q:** How is the FAC defining “communities?” As communities of place or a broader definition? The NOI speaks specifically of forest communities and communities of place.  
**A:** This is not fully addressed and is flagged in the document for additional discussion.
- **Q:** What are the conversations within the subcommittee regarding Black, Indigenous, people of color and environmental justice communities?  
**A:** This has not been a major topic of discussion.

**C:** It is implied – such as in the workforce and non-timber workforce. Many of these are underserved communities. This topic is important, but there wasn't a clear nexus to the NWFP. This needs to be more explicitly addressed.

- **C:** Outreach was done for a specific project and there was a three-part informational series on Latinx radio. There may be an opportunity for outreach related to the NWFP process for another interview on Spanish radio.
- **Q:** Is there an inter-generational component? Younger generations are one of the main catalysts to carry forward the work. This is an Indigenous knowledge and practice. There is a large untapped group of people to connect with and help solve issues across generations.
- **Q:** Do communities prefer engaging in restoration and stewardship activities rather than recreational economy?  
**C:** This is a difficult topic and is not solely for the Forest Service to address. How much of that responsibility belongs to the Forest Service, and what influence does the FAC have? It is important to think about scale and how much can be provided by forest products for these communities to thrive. The FAC needs to think about how much is enough, what is the scale, and what is the Forest Service's capacity.  
**C:** This will never feel adequate or sufficient. It's important to consider where people or communities relate to each subcommittee.  
**C:** It is imperative to not make promises the Forest Service cannot follow through or keep.

### Tribal Inclusion

The Tribal Inclusion co-chairs read through the problem statement and emphasized a few of the top concerns identified within the original NWFP: 1) Lack of Tribal consultation and engagement is the biggest missed opportunity. The Committee is aware of this issue and is working to continue to bring light to current and future work. 2) Suppression and removal of Indigenous practitioners and management, along with current structural barriers and mechanics are preventing Tribal Governments and communities from sustainable stewardship. The co-chair ended the report stating there are many references to “meaningful” and encouraged the FAC to define what “meaningful” inclusion looks like moving forward.

Another challenge that was emphasized is understanding where to start as Tribal inclusion is an important issue. The co-chair noted appreciation for the Communities subcommittee for including Tribal communities within their identified issues and recommendations.

### Discussion/Questions

Q = Question, A = Answer, C = Comment

- **C:** It would be helpful for the Committee to hear from someone above the FAC to understand why there isn't more urgent action.  
**A:** Currently, there are no ramifications for lack of Tribal consultation, which creates an environment without trust.

- Q:** The Forest Service has a Tribal consultation process that is separate from the FAC. How does the Committee ensure current and future work identified by Tribes is included in the NWFP recommendations?

**A:** When consultation results in disagreement between the Forest Service and Tribes, there is no recourse and often leads to lawsuits.

**A:** Tribes are place-based societies, and rights are based on places, meaning they cannot move or relocate when their lands are restricted. In the long term, there is an obligation to understand perpetual rights and include them in future plans and amendments.
- C:** The only place Tribes are acknowledged in the current plan is at the end of the monitoring section. There are currently many issues identified and the Tribal Inclusion problem statement could go directly into the NWFP, including standards and accountabilities. This is an opportunity to make major component changes and amendments.
- C:** The Good Neighbor Authority can be a valuable resource. Tribes are included within this program that allows the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to develop an agreement with states and Tribes, which includes funding to add staff. This could provide an opportunity to build capacity within the Tribes to create jobs and provide restoration work, all while keeping the revenue with the Tribes. This will also build better relationships through collaboration with Tribal members and the Forest Service. If the Forest Service is providing funds to pay for Tribal staff to conduct the NEPA planning, this will be motivation to engage with the Tribes to do work on this project.
- C:** A member thanked the subcommittee co-chairs for using strong language to set the tone and convey the gravity of these issues, as education is a critical component to making change. Along with monitoring and habitat management expansion, Tribes should have a say in how to manage multiple species, rather than just focusing primarily on one.
- Q:** Will there be a conversation around non-timber forest products?

**A:** Non-timber products have not been defined. This is an important issue regarding who gets priority and access and why (such as access to huckleberries). There is additional concern around land boundaries between Forest Service lands and Tribal lands, which can have harmful consequences if they are not addressed.
- Q:** In addition to the Good Neighbor Authority, each Tribal entity has different points of view and priorities. Is there a memorandum to identify these differences across Tribes?

**A:** Some exist but need constant updating, which takes away from other resources. Parallel work is ongoing called BRIDGES, which looks at legal authorities centering Tribal voices. BRIDGES 2 provides the same work for Alaskan Tribes, and BRIDGES 3 will be a Native-led, online repository to share issues and other knowledge. This public repository is sponsored by the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) and will go live soon.
- Q:** The BA and BO talks yesterday did not mention partnership with Tribes. Has there been any discussion around roles for Tribes within the consultation services?

**A:** Tribal knowledge is viewed as a guide and can help reform data collection. The FAC co-chair will connect The Tribal Inclusion subcommittee co-chairs with the BRIDGES leads to expand on this idea.

## Climate

The Climate co-chairs summarized the process of the Climate subcommittee to identify and create the problem statement, which was then read to the group. What the subcommittee identified key issues including impacts to Indigenous and front-line communities, native species, need for resilient habitats, and the difference between dry and wet forests and their potential recommendations. The key to tackling climate adaptation is building flexibility to account for climate change over time. The subcommittee co-chair asked the Committee to consider the need for a separate climate section/addendum as this is an important issue that was much different when the NWFP was first written. Addressing climate change will need to be an inter-jurisdictional and cross boundary approach and assessment, as these issues are not isolated impacts, rather compounding issues.

The subcommittee co-chair informed the Committee that the Climate subcommittee has not yet landed on resolutions, and further research is needed to understand what plans are currently out there. It was agreed that further discussions are needed to align on the approach to address climate resilience within the NWFP. Different approaches include keeping the Climate subcommittee a standalone subcommittee, creating a Climate addendum, or dissolving the Climate subcommittee and have climate issues identified within the other subcommittees.

## Discussion/Questions

Q = Question, A = Answer, C = Comment

- **Q:** What extent of climate issues are covered? For example, rain on snow, flash events, impact on snow, rain on road systems, and big snow events.  
**A:** These are covered within the recreation row, and roads and flooding are addressed in the problem statement.
- **C:** Climate could be incorporated into other subcommittees. The restoration activities on the east side and the restoration of plantations would be a good first step in addressing climate change. This will allow systems to be more adapted to deal with climate change and can be incorporated into other actions subcommittees are thinking about taking.
- **C:** How does climate change impact abnormal snow events or east wind events? There is a need to better understand these issues. The group should choose management activities that reduce risk and increase future options for addressing climate change.
- **C:** Climate should be standalone and include an addendum as climate change adaptation crosses every subcommittee. Dissolving the group would create duplicate work. Additionally, the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) is successful as a standalone addendum and can be used as a guide for an addendum to the NWFP.  
**C:** While the ACS does work well, there are pros and cons to each. Having something plugged

into the plan may be hard to change and adapt in the future. Is there a way to include current issues in the amendment that are specific enough, but not too specific, along with having accountability to that flexibility. Dissolving the subcommittee into the other subcommittees would avoid siloing.

- **Q:** Should the group think about framing and implementation of adaptive management areas and concepts?  
**A:** Adaptive management is a good concept but difficult to frame. It may not be practical to deploy on the ground.

### Final Reflections

The DFO sees that the foundation for recommendations is set, which is progress for a committee that hasn't been around for long. They recognized this was hard work for everyone involved.

Next, the DFO ensured that the subcommittees have what they need to focus on next. If anyone needs additional support, please reach out.

As the Committee moves to recommendations, the DFO suggested not spending too much time trying to identify where recommendations land, the Forest Service can make that call. Getting the recommendations finalized is the top priority.

Lastly, Forest Service policies can be updated, waved, addressed, or changed. There is now a policy team that addresses these issues. If there is a policy that is no longer working, or will not work in the future, bring it to the Forest Service so these can be addressed.

### **Narrowing the Focus**

*Kathleen Rutherford Riggs, Facilitator*

*Annie Goode, Director, Pacific Planning Service Group, U.S. Forest Service*

The facilitator asked the Committee if they saw any common ideas or themes floating to the top of the suite of recommendations. One initially identified is Tribal engagement being a crosscutting issue.

### Discussion/Questions

Q = Question, A = Answer, C = Comment

- **Q:** Does it make sense to provide interim recommendations that the Forest Service should consider? This could provide interim consensus recommendations, rather than specific plan components.
- **C:** A member highlighted four potential recommendations:
  - Treatments in seasonally dry, fire prone forests with the goals of:
    - Conserving old trees.

- Facilitating conservation of Northern Spotted Owls and other old forest associated species.
    - Managing fire risk to communities and other valued resources.
  - Accelerating treatment of managed stands with the goals of:
    - Managing fire risk.
    - Facilitating development of future old forest structure.
    - More generally, adapting managed stands to future climate and disturbance regimes.
  - Creation of Tribal co-management mechanisms that can be built out and strengthened over time.
  - Disposition of moist mature and old forest outside of reserves.
- **C:** The current NWFP is not meeting the Endangered Species Act, which is imperative to include as it is directly related to wildlife issues. Not addressing these issues can have a great impact on the food chain. The plan should be more explicit on the treatment of wildlife and addressing the species themselves, not just the habitat they live in.  
**C:** Others disagree and can see wildlife throughout the subcommittee issues and recommendations. It may be beneficial for subcommittee members to go back to their issues and think more about wildlife.
- **Q:** Where does the Committee feel comfortable going with the Climate subcommittee?  
**A:** It is agreed that Climate should remain its own subcommittee.
- **Q:** Does the group feel ready to move to writing suggestions for these issues?  
**A:** Some believe that it is time to start writing recommendations, some feel strongly that there is more work to be done within the subcommittees.
- **C:** It would be helpful to the Committee to have a tool, like a crosswalk table, which provides insight on the issues identified by the subcommittees and nexus on the plan.

### **FAC Agreements/Recommendations**

- Forest Service to provide a tool to aid the Committee in connecting issues identified by each subcommittee with the potential nexus with the NWFP.

### **Northwest Forest Plan Amendment Process**

*Annie Goode, Director, Pacific Planning Service Group, U.S. Forest Service*

The Director presented the NWFP Plan Amendment Process (20231115\_Schedule & Next Steps.pptx). The presentation included steps completed to date:

- Charter: Identify concerns in 90 days.
- Four meetings to date:
  - Problem statements identified.

- Issue summaries created.

Next steps include the following:

- Publication of NOI (target date December 7, 2023) with a 45-day comment period.
- Subcommittees, with facilitation and staff teams, consider priorities across five “needs for change” and explore how to operationalize ideas.
- Turn issue statements into specific proposed recommendations for consideration at the January meeting.

The Committee reviewed two potential timeframes. Timeframe #1 required finalized recommendations by the January 2024, FAC meeting. Timeframe #2 required finalized recommendations by the April 2024, FAC meeting.

### Discussion/Questions

Q = Question, A = Answer, C = Comment

- **Q:** Where does the rechartering process fall into these timelines?  
**A:** This process will kick off in January 2024, and will take some time. The goal is to recharter before the current charter expires in December 2024.
- **Q:** How does this align with the dates presented by the services yesterday?  
**A:** The Forest Service is working to finalize consultation contracts; however, it is challenging as recommendations have not yet been identified or shared. Having that clarity will help define the process.
- **Q:** Once there are proposed actions and alternatives, will the service consultations then review and analyze them?  
**A:** It will be important to have the services involved early to understand where the group wants to go. This will be valuable to the entire process. They can also participate in different subcommittees conversations as needed.
- **Q:** How plausible will it be that something within the process may go to litigation? How does the Committee account for opposing legal action with the timeframes?  
**A:** The Forest Service works closely with their legal counsel to ensure mistakes are not made. Additionally, the NOI cannot be shared until it is approved by the general counsel. Allowing the public to comment helps the Forest Service and team identify any potential issues that may arise, and edits can be made to help mitigate these concerns.
- **Q:** What is the general public and Tribal engagement strategy?  
**A:** There is a robust communications plan and an engagement team working through these steps. The strategy has been well thought out, and plans are in place and in final review. There is a broader approach to Tribal engagement that is currently in the process of being built out. There is also the intention to continue the public engagement process into the spring. There are no specific locations yet, but the FAC can provide recommendations if they wish.



- **Q:** Is the Forest Service looking for Committee advice regarding choosing between the two potential timelines? What is the Forest Service expecting of the Committee right now?

**A:** The important milestone is the January meeting. Does the Committee feel the Forest Service has provided enough information about the nexus to the plan or is additional time needed? The difference between the two schedules is where it starts.
- **C:** It seems there is a consensus within the subcommittees that there is work that still needs to be done and additional time may be beneficial.
- **Q:** Confirming if there will be service consultations soon will help the Committee understand if the January timeline can be met.

**A:** The consultation agreement will be finalized quickly and will not influence the timeline. The more the ideas are refined, the faster the consultation can happen.
- **C:** The DFO shared that a response was received from the Secretary and Chief regarding the timeline flexibility and risks. The secretary confirmed there can be flexibility around the timelines to account for unforeseen circumstances and timeline risks, however a sense of urgency remains. Tribal consultation is a separate process and will not be limited to the timeframes. This letter was shared with the Committee members via email after the 'meeting.
- **Q:** Has the Forest Service received requests from cooperating agencies or has engagement started?

**A:** No requests have been received. The NOI initiates cooperative engagement and requests.
- **C:** There are either one (1) or two (2) more FAC meetings before recommendations are finalized. This means there needs to be a structured approach to close the loop to get to the narrative framework.
- **Q:** What does the timelines look like if there is a potential government shutdown?

**A:** Approaches will be addressed as unforeseen circumstances arise.
- **C:** What the Committee is hearing is that recommendations should be finalized by the January 2024 meeting.
- **Q:** Is the election timeline going to be a factor? Should the Committee fast track recommendations pertaining to amendments and a parallel track for implementation? This may mean Tribal Inclusion recommendations should be removed for now as they will need more time.
- **C:** Based on where the Committee is today with recommendations, it seems like a tall order to have recommendations finalized by February. Is there a way to bridge that concern? Is there a way to have virtual meetings with the whole group? In order to get to refined recommendations, we'll need more conversations.

- **C:** This issue was raised at the last Committee meeting. It feels unfair to ask the Committee to finalize these recommendations over the holidays.
- **C:** The Committee has done great work so far, but decisions have not yet been made. Drafting plan components is difficult and many have not done this before. How the committee words the amendment matters, and the Committee needs to identify high priority issues that the Forest Service needs to address. There is also a possibility recommendations may be thrown out under a new political administration.
- **C:** Some indicated timeline #1 is doable. The Forest Service staff will be helpful and supportive within the subcommittee meetings. The Committee can likely stay on track as long as there is no turnover in members and facilitation can keep the subcommittees focused.
- **C:** The DFO understands everyone's concerns. There were no expectations for unreasonable requests such as working over the holidays or during a government shutdown. The DFO is open to hearing what is needed from the Committee while staying focused on what is doable. They feel the group can get recommendations completed by the January meeting.
- **C:** One approach could include a small group drafting a series of recommendations for the larger group to consider. They know the sense of the group and believe only six to ten recommendations will be needed.
- **Q:** What is included in the recommendations vs. the implementation to the NWFP or other operational changes?  
**A:** This is a dual track approach. Other vehicles may be policies or practices that can be changed without an amendment.
- **Q:** What does it mean if the Committee does not meet this timeline? Will the group still be supported by the Forest Service?  
**A:** The DFO is open to discussing and adjusting the timelines. Additionally, the Forest Service values the Committee and is committed to moving forward.

## **Welcome and Opening**

*Liz Berger, Designated Federal Official*

*Kathleen Rutherford Riggs, Facilitator*

The facilitator opened the meeting reviewing the agenda revisions and reminding the group of the ground rules.

The DFO reflected on the rich discussion and hard work the Committee has put in over the first two (2) days.

The DFO heard the group needed more time to identify and refine the subcommittee recommendations, and confirmed the new expectation of the group is to present final recommendations to the Forest Service during the April 2024, FAC meeting. They reminded the group of flexibility with the timeline, in the event risks or blockers arise. The DFO also heard the group cannot work over the holidays and does not expect anyone to do so.

The DFO followed up with previous requests confirming meeting documentation will be shared with the Committee members one (1) week prior to meetings to allow for pre-reading and preparation.

Lastly, they shared the Forest Service can provide guidance and examples to the Committee to help draft recommendations and plan components.

## **Reflections**

*Kathleen Rutherford Riggs, Facilitator*

The facilitator invited the Committee members to reflect on the discussion over the last two days, including timeline updates provided by the DFO. Reflections and comments include:

- The Committee thanked the DFO and appreciates the extended timeline; however, they still recognize the need to move quickly while maintaining a respectful understanding of all the moving parts.
- The Committee agreed Tribal engagement should be separated out to ensure there is an additional record of commitment and environmental statements. It was suggested to keep crosscutting Tribal issues included within the subcommittee recommendations, so as to not lose sight of important topics.
- Most agreed a Biodiversity subcommittee should be created, although some Committee members feel wildlife and endangered species are already included within the subcommittee issues.

- The importance of the relationship reset and shift between the Forest Service and Tribes within the Tribal Inclusion work was acknowledged and appreciated by multiple Committee members.
- A few concerns were identified, starting with the need for improved procedures, scheduling, agenda development, and email procedure protocol. Secondly, there is a need for better subcommittee planning, communication, and structure. Facilitation can better support and guide the subcommittees to distill and synthesize issues into plan components. Additionally, there is a need for “action forcing” mechanisms, some ideas could include opening the floor for motions and better utilizing Forest Service staff. Lastly, the NOI verbiage may be too ambitious and should include more realistic promises to constituents.

The facilitator closed out reflections by thanking the group for their time over the last few days and highlighted that what the group does is as important as how the group does it. Members were encouraged to pay attention to the larger goal and to move around parts as needed to accomplish this goal.

### **What’s Next – Schedule Overview**

*Annie Goode, Director, Pacific Planning Service Group, U.S. Forest Service*

The Director led the group discussion around locations for future FAC meetings. Locations to explore included Redding or Sacramento, as they are easy to fly in and out of. The Director invited the Committee members to discuss additional location options.

### Discussion/Questions

Q = Question, A = Answer, C = Comment

- **C:** Redding would be a good springtime location, as the Committee could better explore and understand the landscape and opportunities.  
**C:** Winter would be a good time to visit the wet or coastal forests.
- **C:** The Committee could meet in a location that is not a city scape. This could encourage a better mindset and provide the group with an opportunity for a half-day field trip.  
**C:** Members expressed support for meeting in a more rural location. The Committee should be intentional in their location decisions and economic impact.  
**C:** Additional suggestions included Medford, OR, Eugene, OR, Wenatchee, WA, or Yakima, WA.
- **C:** Eureka, CA, would be another location that meets the requirements the group is discussing.  
**C:** Eureka can be unreliable. The location is known for fog delays, and delayed flights are usually rescheduled for the following day.
- **C:** The Columbia Gorge should be considered. The area has an impacted community, access to Tribal sites, and dry forests. This would be a good location for the June meeting.

- **Q:** As there is group interest in field trips, is the Committee okay with adding an extra day?  
**A:** The Committee voted yes.  
**C:** A field trip will not be possible for every event, but an extra day for the Committee to work with the Forest Service would be beneficial.
- **Q:** Does the Committee want to invite Tribal partners to host one of the Committee meetings?  
**A:** The Forest Service will take this into consideration.
- The group voted Eugene, OR, for the January meeting.
  - The group voted for the Redding, CA, area for the April meeting.
  - The group voted for the Columbia Gorge, WA, for the June meeting.
- **Q:** IS the group interested in night meetings?  
**A:** This would require additional conversation.

### **Committee Business: Operating Protocols**

*Kathleen Rutherford Riggs, Facilitator*

The facilitator led the Committee through annotated comments and questions in the Operating Protocol document (20231114\_DraftOperatingProtocols.docx). Additional callouts were documented, and the final draft will be shared with the Committee when updated and finalized.

#### Discussion/Questions

Q = Question, A = Answer, C = Comment

- **Q:** Does the group need a dispute recognition?  
**A:** The facilitation team will help guide these conversations to resolution. If the group cannot come to a resolution, the facilitation team will document for the “for” and “against” which can help guide the Forest Service in their final recommendations.
- **Q:** There is confusion around what can and cannot be shared with groups outside of the Committee. Can the Forest Service create a folder in the Box containing documents that can be shared with outside parties?  
**A:** Yes, the Forest Service will create this folder within the NWFP Box.
- **Q:** What subcommittee work is public?  
**A:** Subcommittees are not decision-making bodies; therefore, they cannot make recommendations. The USDA policy is to encourage as much transparency as possible.
- **Q:** Who is most appropriate person to share the Land Acknowledgement at each meeting?  
**A:** The federal government will give the Land Acknowledgement. Each Land Acknowledgement will be for the land where the Committee is currently meeting and making decisions for.

The Committee voted in agreement for all changes discussed.

### **FAC Agreements/Recommendations**

- The facilitator and co-chair suggested that the issue of adding a new subcommittee should be addressed at the All Cochairs call the week following the FAC meeting. The facilitator stated that the co-chairs serve as a representative subset of the group.

### **Notice of Intent (NOI)**

*Annie Goode, Director, Pacific Planning Service Group, U.S. Forest Service*

The Director shared the draft NOI with the Committee, including reviewing the previous presentation from the last meeting. The NOI structure and the last round of feedback from the Committee were reviewed. The Director then opened the discussion for high-level feedback or red flags. Feedback included:

- There needs to be a callout for Indigenous fire regimes.
- Both fire resistance and resilience should be added, as these are two different approaches.

The DFO and the Director requested offline feedback for the NOI no later than Monday, 11/20, 2023. They requested high-level/red flag feedback only.

The DFO reminded the group that the NOI has a 45-day public comment period, and the Committee members can utilize this time to provide individual feedback for consideration.

### **Close-out**

*Liz Berger, Designated Federal Official*

During closing remarks, the DFO shared gratitude from Meryl Harrell, Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, recognizing the Committee's hard work and that this is a complex and challenging process. The DFO encouraged the Committee to continue to flag any needs from the Forest Service and they will provide the support needed.

The DFO thanked the facilitator for the advice and expertise provided to the Committee thus far.

The DFO ended the meeting by thanking the Forest Service team, the Co-chairs, the public, and partners for their engagement and thoughts over the last three (3) days.

**Meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am**

APPENDIX A

*Glossary/Acronyms*

<b>AMA</b>	Adaptive Management Area
<b>BLM</b>	Bureau of Land Management
<b>DFO</b>	Designated Federal Official
<b>EIS</b>	Environmental Impact Statement
<b>FAC</b>	Federal Advisory Committee
<b>LSR</b>	Late Successional Reserve
<b>NEPA</b>	National Environmental Policy Act
<b>NFMA</b>	National Forest Management Act
<b>NMFS</b>	National Marine Fisheries Service
<b>NWFP</b>	Northwest Forest Plan
<b>PPSG</b>	Pacific Planning Service Group
<b>USDA</b>	United States Department of Agriculture
<b>USFS</b>	United States Forest Service
<b>USFWS</b>	United States Fish & Wildlife Service

APPENDIX A

*Attendance*

***Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) Attendees:***

<b>FAC Member</b>	<b>Subcommittee Involvement</b>
Angela Sondenaa, PhD	Old Growth co-chair, Climate
Ann House, JD	Tribal Inclusion co-chair
Betsy Robblee	Tribal Inclusion, Climate, Communities, Old Growth, Fire Resilience
Daniel Reid Sarna-Wojcicki, PhD	Fire Resilience co-chair, Tribal Inclusion, Climate, Communities
Elaine Harvey, PhD	Tribal Inclusion, Climate, Communities, Fire Resilience
Heidi Huber-Stearns, PhD	Climate, Communities co-chair, Fire Resilience
James Johnston, PhD	Tribal Inclusion, Communities, Old Growth
<i>Jarred Patton</i>	<i>Tribal Inclusion, Communities</i>
Jerry Franklin, PhD	Old Growth co-chair, Climate, Fire Resilience
Jose Linares	Communities
Karen Hans	Fire Resilience co-chair, Old Growth
Laura Osiadacz	Communities, Fire Resilience
<i>Lindsay Warness</i>	<i>Communities, Old Growth</i>
Meg Krawchuck, PhD	Tribal Inclusion, Climate, Old Growth, Fire
Mike Anderson, JD	Tribal Inclusion, Climate, Old Growth, Fire Resilience
Nicholas Goulette	Communities co-chair, Fire Resilience

Robert "Bobby" Brunoe	Tribal Inclusion, Climate
Ryan Haugo, PhD	Climate, Old Growth, Fire
Ryan Miller	TBD
Ryan Reed	Tribal Inclusion co-chair, Climate, Fire Resilience
Susan Jane Brown, JD	Tribal Inclusion, Old Growth, Fire Resilience
Travis Joseph	Tribal Inclusion, Climate, Communities, Old Growth, Fire Resilience

Key: *Not in attendance*

**Planning Team Attendees**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Annie Goode	Director, Pacific Planning Service Group
Brendan White	U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Candice Magbag Plendl	True Wind Collaborative
Delaney Caslow	Resource Assistant PPSG
Dennis Dougherty	Recreation Specialist PPSG
Jackie Groce	Director, Resource Planning and Monitoring
Jamie Barbour	U.S. Forest Service
Jim Thrailkill	U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Katherine Fitzgerald	U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Kathleen Rutherford Riggs	KCG: Collective Action Consulting
Katie Heard	U.S. Forest Service
Kelly Hetzler	PPSG Tribal Relations
Kimm Fox-Middleton	U.S. Forest Service
Liz Berger	Designated Federal Official
Mark Brown	Northwest Forest Plan Program Manager
Michele Miranda	PPSG Public Engagement Specialist
Michelle Capp	U.S. Forest Service
Nick DiProffio	Washington Office Planning Specialist
Sarah Lange	U.S. Forest Service
Scott Peets	Aquatic Specialist PPSG
Talia Neiman	True Wind Collaborative
Tana-Isabela Anulacion	U.S. Forest Service
Thomas Timberlake	Climate Change and Science Coordinator

**Public Comment**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Craig Ditman	Citizen
Mitch Freedman	Conservation Northwest
Steve Holmer	American Bird Conservancy
Tim Ingalsbee	Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, & Ecology (FUSEE)
Don Parks	Sierra Club



Dan Rankin	Mayor, Town of Darrington
Oak Rankin	Glacier Peak Institute
Graham Taylor	National Parks Conservation Association

Co-Chair Verification

 1-17-24  
Susan Jane Brown

 1-19-24

Travis Joseph