

Tongass Futures Roundtable  
**Restoration Committee Meeting**

December 5

8am - ~1pm

**Participants:** Jason Anderson (USFS), Dave Beebe (Petersburg resident), Rob Bosworth (TNC), Larry Edwards (Greenpeace), Emily Ferry (SEACC), Karen Hardigg (TWS), Scott Harris (SCS), Evan Hjerpe (TWS), Mark Kaelke (TU), Dale Rabe (ADFG), Olleke Rappe-Daniels (USFS), Scott Snelson (USFS), Bruce Wallace (UFA), Ron Wolfe (Sealaska), Norman Cohen (TFR coordinator)

## **Meeting Notes and Summary**

### Introductions and progress on work plan

- Karen clarified what she views as her role as committee chair – coordinator of groups and individuals working on restoration in SE Alaska, facilitator of ideas, with the goal of moving the group forward.
- Karen updated group on progress on work plan
  - *Definition of restoration:* working on at this meeting
  - *Meetings* – this is our 4<sup>th</sup> and they’re going well
  - *Website* – we will begin putting documents on TFR site by January
  - *Roundtable endorsement* – not clear where we are on this one
  - *Restoration guidelines/outcomes* – will be discussed at this meeting
  - *Prioritization framework for action* – 2-3 already exist and we have not yet started on developing a framework for the committee
  - *Joint TFR project* – we have not addressed this yet
  - *Economic feasibility* – haven’t gotten there yet
  - *Restoration forum* – lots of interest between SEACC, TNC, TU, TWS, and FS – let’s begin planning
    - May also include best practices for restoration
    - Business skills workshop
  - *Congressional ask* – not quite there yet (we may tag on to existing asks)

### Restoration definition

- In an attempt to clarify expectation of group members, the committee discussed a definition of restoration. After researching many examples, Karen put a draft definition in front of the group to consider:
  - *Restoration of forest ecosystems is an attempt to rejuvenate and recover natural structure, function, and process in a landscape context.*
- The group spent about 1.5 hours discussing the definition and restoration in general. Key points included:
  - There was concern about a definition placing blame on past management practices or to solely “right the wrongs of the past.”

- All agreed that the word “restoration” is gaining popularity nationally and has a branding and funding component to it we can’t ignore, even if it’s a challenging word to define and there are sensitivities about its implications
- There was a fair amount of discussion about whether restoration of landscapes is undertaken merely for human benefits, such as to increase productivity. If that’s the case, others wondered whether restoration would be any different than other activities or TFR committees.
- We agreed the definition, for now, is for the committee and it will need to be better explained for local communities
- We also discussed whether restoration only occurs on lands that are part of the timber base or not. The group generally agreed restoration can occur on lands where the “highest value” of the land is different (whether it’s timber or wilderness).
- During our discussion we came up with a draft list of what activities members consider as **“restoration” activities**:
  - Large woody debris – introduction into streams
  - Management of riparian zones to grow large woody debris for various ecological functions
  - Thinning for wildlife habitat as opposed to pre-commercial thinning
  - Road storage/sediment abatement
  - Riparian thinning
  - Fish passage through culverts
  - Culvert removal
  - Bank stabilization
  - Stream channel rehab
  - Engineered log jams
- There was some discussion about whether the definition is for academic purposes or to clarify what we mean in SE Alaska.
- During a break, Jason Anderson worked up a draft definition, which most people seemed to feel pretty good about. A small group edited it in the afternoon and sent it out for committee comments:
  - *Restoration of forest ecosystems in Southeast Alaska is a deliberate and collaborative effort to recover and rejuvenate structures, functions, and processes on a landscape of passive and actively managed lands, which collectively provide for ecosystem services and a sustainable human environment.*
- After incorporating comments from those in attendance at the meeting, the draft definition will go out to the full committee.

#### Discussion of the role of the committee

- We briefly discussed the role of the restoration committee. In previous meetings and conversations we discussed whether we were a coordinating body or an “authoritative body.”
- The group agreed that our main role is as a coordinating and communicating body, which helps facilitate conversations and ensure that groups are not reinventing the

wheel. Since we cannot be aware of every single restoration project in SE Alaska, we agreed a good filter would be **collaborative** efforts. The main roles are:

- Coordinating body
- Helping to develop watershed plans/projects
- Communication on restoration projects (potential clearing house of projects)
- Identification of resources
  - Technical expertise
  - Dollars
- We also discussed whether there were members not at the table we should either invite or keep in the loop about our actions. Names suggested included: Neil Sticker (FWS), NRCS, Erika Aamen (NOAA), DNR, Bill Lucy (Yakutat Salmon Board), Watershed Councils, Municipalities, Tribal representation (keep it as a broad mailing list)

#### Draft guidelines/principles/outcomes

- One of the items in our work plan is to develop possible guiding principles for restoration in SE Alaska. We've tossed this around a bit and have not agreed whether it's a good idea.
- During the meeting it became clear that some groups, such as the USFS, would welcome such principles and others were less enthusiastic. One main concern is that we would be setting up an "affirmative negative," in that if a restoration project does not meet the principles then it's not a good project. No one wanted to set up that dynamic.
- Olleke also pointed out that the Montana group developed their principles largely out of a sense of distrust of the FS, whereas we're trying to work from a more positive approach.
- We agreed if we do develop these principles, it would be best to set them up as a toolkit or way to help facilitate projects, or perhaps a lessons learned approach. We also agreed this is a fine line, but a small group agreed to work on developing a list that takes a "softer" approach and uses phrases such as "consider" or "evaluate." The small group includes: **Jason, Mark, Rob, Scott H., & Karen**

#### Updates, funding & other notes

- Both TNC and SCS gave updates on their recent work for the committee. Rob handed out draft copies of their restoration prioritization framework and asked for committee feedback.
- Scott Harris shared a map that SCS has made highlighting many of the restoration projects going on in SE Alaska. He also shared a report the SCS Ground-truthing crew prepared on the Starrigavan project.
- Rob shared information on the \$4.5 million Congressional restoration funding request TNC has supported. He agreed to share it with the committee and asked that the committee consider taking it on as a project we support. We will discuss it further at the next meeting.
- Finally, we discussed possible existing projects the committee could support/endorse. Projects floated included:

- Winter Harbor? Contract is out.
  - Operations in beach fringe
  - No stream component, upland only
- Fubar 3 (part of Harris River)
- Starrigavan
- Natzuhini (Sealaska, near Hydaburg)
- This discussion led us to inviting presentations on some of the projects for our **next committee meeting, which will be in late January, possibly in Ketchikan.**
- These presentations will serve as a way for committee members to educate themselves on restoration in SE Alaska, as well as provide an opportunity for us to possibly share one with the Roundtable at the February meeting, probably just for educational purposes, too.