

DRAFT
Framework Committee Minutes
May 28, 2008
Juneau, AK Forest Service Office

Members attending all or portions of the meeting: **Bold = primary TFR member**

In person: Charlie S., Clarence C., Cynthia S., Dale R., Mark R., Norman C., Jason A., Pete H., Keith R., Kent N., **Forrest C.**, Mark K., Dave A., Rob R., Bill H., John C., Shelly W., Rob B., Chris S., **Chris M.** (chair)

Via teleconference: **John S., George W., Owen G., Karen H.,** Even H., **Niel L., Elaine P.** Pete H.

Meeting convened at 8:00am with a round of introductions and some opening comments on what we hoped to accomplish along with some logistics and schedule items for the day. Goal was to review each of the USFS Five Year Timber Sale Plan sales identified as “red flags” at our last committee meeting in Hoonah. The Forest Service had numerous staff present and district rangers or their representative from three districts.

Following are some key opening points and thoughts from discussions during the day:

- Try to explore specific concerns for each sale by the various interests. Listen to concerns and try to identify key points and possible ways to address.
- The committee realizes that we are in a transition period between the old forest plan and the new one and that sale offerings in FY08 and FY09 are far enough in the timber pipeline that there are side boards on what can be changed. Once we move into FY10 there is more flexibility and FY11 and FY12 have even more potential for significant changes both in content and process.
- Goal is to move toward a collaborative timber sale planning methodology that identifies and deals with issues early in the process and is overall a more holistic approach that works elements of restoration, young growth management, access and timber economics and conservation principals into each sale. This type of work is beginning and being incorporated into the current planning process when ever feasible.
- Mid to long-term we need to merge the work being done by various TFR committees that are addressing elements of this process into the working relationship being developed between the State and Forest Service and incorporate the conservation forester into the process.

Following are my notes by sale and fiscal year; these may not have caught all the points raised, so please feel free to make edits and additions:

Summary of Remaining FY08 Sales (Gate 5)

Baht: 16.8 MMBF, pre-reading needed to appraise positive. Bids have been received for this work, but not awarded. Bid for timber sale would be June/July. Volume would not be available for harvest in FY08.

Traitors: 15.4 MMBF, main issue with this sale from an economic perspective is the need to use three different LTF's. This situation drives the costs too high for such a small amount of volume, not likely to sell if offered.

Backline: 3.8 MMBF, all helicopter harvest, currently being advertized and closes June 3. This should be a sale that will sell.

Sealevel (Orion re-offer): 5.6 MMBF, this was a settlement agreement sale, I'm not sure of the status, but I think it has been dropped? Sale was already offered however, bid offer on the separate roads contract came in very high so the sale ad was withdrawn. Plan to go out with road package again within the next month or so.

Todahl Backline: 3.5 MMBF, possible offer. Also some discussion of offering with Scott Peak/Bocephus as Timber Subject to Agreement (TSA), but Scott Peak is still under litigation. This sale would also need a re-appraisal before it could be offered. Sale is helicopter logging of small groups

Goose Creek: Small sales will continue to be offered. All previous sales offered received bids and were sold.

Summary of FY09 sales–

Scratchings ROD II - some units within roadless deferred from first ROD because of the settlement agreement with NRDC et al. (2 RODs from one EIS). **Soda Nick** – small sales - located south of Craig

Iyouktug - Includes selective harvest off the road and helicopter units. Will be offered in multiple sales

Central Gravina - NE of State land on Gravina island. Part of the VCU is no longer in the timber base – only north part is. Still controversial even though worked with local folks.

Overlook

Scott Peak/Bocephus - see above.

Kuiu - redflag ROD just signed. North part is roadless. Kake residents against.

Logjam - redflag Two sales split east/west plus some small sales.

Goose Creek – small sales

Baht ROD II - same situation as Scratchings ROD II

Navy - add to redflag list

Logjam EIS FY09

- First sale that has had the benefit of participation of the State since the development of the partnership with the FS. This is a transition sale and the new approach has been applied where possible, but side boards were in place due to the NEPA process and timeline.
- More selection harvest units as opposed to clear cut units in original plan. Most of the selection units in the Sweetwater watershed.
- Fewer roads went from 29 miles of new road to 19 miles, a significant reduction. Some road specifications were changed from system roads to temporary roads but are still analyzing. There are concerns that temporary roads still are used for hunting and trapping and still effect hydrology and wildlife. Forest Plan Amendment addresses this from looking at total road density rather than open road density. Existing road management will be determined by the ATM to be signed this fall. Also a concern that the public does want to use these roads and this use may increase since biomass is an upcoming issue.
- Will close xx miles of road (close 50%)
- No pre-roading needed, sale pays for itself. Goal for all new sales is to not use pre-roading dollars.
- Sale is near Honker Divide. Area immediately adjacent to Honker Divide is in Phase 2 not Phase 1 of the Forest Plan Implementation Strategy but still may be a connectivity issue with adjacent sale areas (Staney, Neck Lake, Rio Beaver).
- Alternative that doesn't select units that maintain connectivity north/south and east/west for wildlife has been dropped. (Changes in the new FP also address this issue in a proactive manner)
- Located on POW island and could provide approximately three years worth of timber for Viking Lumber
- Participants stressed that we need to move toward an Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP) approach to sale planning and need to develop a timeline to move from old methods to new methods of sale preparation. There are multiple efforts heading in this direction, various TFR committees, State/USFS partnership as examples. Can be flexible with Logjam (in order to make timber available but don't want to continue this way project after project.)

There was a discussion about having a sustainable supply of cedar on a Tongass-wide basis. The Tongass is not targeting cedar but based on cut-sold reports, appears that the percentage of cedar being harvested is more than the % in the suitable timber base. Need to look at the cedar on suitable lands and that within non-development LUDs. Areas with cedar decline are being considered for harvest units. From the post-harvest surveys, appears to be no problems with regeneration. Not a lot known about cedar distribution and what has been harvested.

Central Gravina EIS FY09

- Gravina ROD withdrawn in 2004. New information has caused this project to be reworked. Primarily this includes the location of the road on State land and the reallocation of LUDs with the 2008 Forest Plan Amendment. This eliminated some concerns about scenery and units in Bostwick Inlet (which is now Semi-remote Recreation).

- See handouts (4) from Rob on this sale
- Roads are planned to be “stored” after sale completion. Might need to look at this more closely due to proximity to Ketchikan and opportunities for hunting and firewood. Not known at this time if pre-roading will be needed.
- 16 miles of road, 100% roadless, questions about number of stream crossings
- Numerous changes made to this proposal when compared to the previous proposed project for this area including consultation with various interest groups
- There was a collaborative effort in this area in the 90’s with many of the same interest groups. More recent discussions have had the same interests, but different people representing the interests as compared to the 90’s process.
- SEACC special area (Gravina Island)
- Audubon/TNC conservation priority watershed, bear, deer, salmon, however the core areas are not in the area being proposed for the sale.
- Need to post the maps with alternatives
- Deer issues with predation factor
- Potential issue with Standards and Guidelines, look at the whole island to address deer habitat, marten under the plan. Hard to just focus on the sale area need a larger geographic look to put this topic in context.

Klam FY10 and Saddle Lakes FY12 – both through Gate 1. Next 2 projects on KMRD that the collaborative group would work on.

Kuiu EIS FY09

- Kuiu FEIS was released in July 2007. ROD is signed and should be in the mail.
- New roads 6.5 miles and reopen 6 miles of old roads
- Sale is 75% Hemlock, less than 10% Cedar with overall volume approximately 31.4 MMBF
- 1% of the North Kuiu inventoried roadless area will be harvested.
- Kake village concern, at least one person in particular and possibly others
- Concern that this sale may not help any current operators. All three sawmills are potential bidders on this sale. Viking as logged other sales on Kuiu Island.
- Harvesting is all ground based, zero helicopter, no partial cuts and long haul via barge to mills
- 2 LTFs were analyzed to keep options open but the recent volume has gone out of Rowan Bay
- Marten, endemic and introduced present
- Plan to cruise the units this summer
- May move forward with another sale on Kuiu Island to make a more viable sale

Navy – FY09

- Need to add as a redflag. Only some of the alternatives trigger this project as a redflag.

North Thorne/Rio Beaver Gate 1- FY09

- Not a redflag but may be brought forward as an IRMP. Have an unpublished DEIS for the North Thorne portion that includes restoration projects. Not much volume in this portion but did not look at all the helicopter logging opportunities.
- Approximately 60.0MMBF in project area
- South of Honker Divide
- High percentage of past harvest in North Thorne, so opportunities for restoration work
- Some young growth in 40 year age class, lots in 20-30 year age class needing thinning. May be a good area to test if young-growth management can improve habitat.
- Lower value for protection, but core areas for restoration activities
- Mental Health Trust Kassan Project 30 MMBF?
- Good timeline and candidate for a Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP) project
- About ½ the project is done in regard to analysis work for North Thorne

At this point there was some discussion about IRMP and developing two proposed actions that would take a larger look from a geographic perspective utilizing this process. There is a need to identify some candidate locations to work on this concept and some discussion about bringing two projects forward to the full TFR for critique at the September meeting. There was also discussion on how the Futures group would interact with the IDT.

Staney EIS FY10

- High potential for IRMP and State/FS will work with conservation interests to develop a unit pool at the Gate I level and come up with a proposed action for the committee to review at our next face-to-face meeting in July. (If I remember correctly this was Clarence, Dave and Keith that were going to work on this?)
- They thought that they would need about 30-45 days to develop a proposed action and would incorporate helicopter selective harvest and restoration components into the proposed action.
- First project to include the USFS/State team to do a Gate 1.
- Suggestion to treat Logjam intensively and Staney integrated to compare the results since project areas are similar.
- Target ROD date is 2011 and offer the same year which is very optimistic.
- Concerns – restoration, ecological integrity of remaining timber, lost of karst which is already mapped.

There was a discussion about value-cutting and highgrading and whether they were the same. If the stand can continue to function as old-growth, need to maintain structure and age classes. Uneven-aged silviculture prescriptions can be very labor intensive to layout, cruise and administer. Need to develop a prescription that works for everyone including the operator. This may be something this committee could work on.

Central Kupreanof FY10

- Approximately 20 MMBF with Gate II draft EIS due this summer
- Will include the ATM for all roads with that connect to the community of Kake.
- Includes some small stewardship projects – stream restoration work, PCT, road maintenance
- 70 mmbf, New roads about 25 miles, 9.0 miles reconstruction and 6.0 miles temporary out of new total.
- Helicopter units about 14%
- Potential bidders, Viking Lumber and possibly two other mills.
- Concern about effects to Castle River. Lower Castle River (VCU 4350) is not included in the project area. VCU 4360 is included and has 5 of the 6 concerns re: roadless.

There are also a number of maps that will be posted to the website including a map that shows the location of each of the sales in the current five year plan by VCU.

I'm sure I missed some things, so please look for (?) and other places that you can help fill in any important details that I missed. One other discussion I tried to capture was a summary of the agreement which we had right before lunch. – Cynthia

Summary of cost-share agreement

The current plan is to work towards a more integrated process in three steps.

1. State and FS team together – Gate 1 level - pre-NEPA analysis
 - a. Economics – DNR (Clarence)
 - b. Habitat bio - ADFG
 - c. Silviculturist – USFS
 - d. GIS - USFS
 - e. NEAT-R - USFS

The focus is on developing economic timber sales and avoiding pre-roading and other issues. This team provides the Gate 1 analysis in a project plan that they had off to the 3 USFS IDTs. Technical checkpoints will be used to make sure they stay on the process and purpose. (The FS is currently using checkpoints internally.) They are not involved in the decision. After the decision, they will be involved with helping to move the paper plan to the field.

2. Integrate other group viewpoints and DOT/DEC
 - a. Committees - restoration

Consider the needs of the communities as well as resource needs.

3. Monitoring
 - a. wolves
 - b. deer
 - c. goshawks
 - d. endemic mammals
 - e. roads and access management