



Snag Conservation Work Group CRM

NOTES – Work Session 1

NRD Meeting Room, Naches, WA

Wednesday, January 31, 2018 – 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm

Session Objective:

To bring SCWG, Naches Ranger District staff, local woodcutters and other stakeholders into a discussion of conservation-minded firewood cutting/collection, with a goal of creating a process for firewood harvest while protecting snags.

Notes from Opening Comments, Introductions, Session Objective & Agenda [5:30 to 5:50 pm]

- Opening comments (Jeff, Kelly); Welcoming all and a brief introduction to the reason for the meeting
- Self-introductions began with the Naches Ranger District's Kelly Lawrence introducing members of the Snag Conservation Work Group who were in attendance – Herself, Jeff Kozma with the Yakama Nation, Scott Downes of DFW, Karen Zook, Audubon, and Dave Lucas, Naches Ranger District;
Self-introductions provided a brief advance glimpse into the issues woodcutters face in the District and the reasons they were attending the workshop
- Jim reviewed the workshop/session objective and agenda, and request that all participants please add names/contact information to the signup sheet
- Jim discussed the Coordinated Resource Management Process as it fit with the workshop objective and agenda, the handed out and reviewed suggested Engagement Agreements, and committed to follow them

Notes from Overview of the Issues and Forests Involved [5:50 to 6:33 pm]

- Naches Ranger District's Dave Lucas reviewed the geographic area of the Naches Ranger District and woodcutting areas; He created a handout (included with these notes) to facilitate a discussion of what is – or might be – possible for woodcutting, and where it might take place in addition to current cutting areas
After discussion of the acreages and woodcutter harvest (based on permits sold/bought) shown on the handout, it was noted that only 2.9% of the District is utilized for woodcutting, with acknowledgement that the woodcutter community's actual footprint in the forest is very small Dave discussed his efforts, and those of others, to both preserve ground with standing snags and develop new woodcutting areas
Group discussion involved the amount of ground actually open; snags left by recent fires; interactions of woodpeckers and/or other threatened/endangered or "of concern" species using snags; the danger – and inaccessibility – of snags along highways/roads and a brief discussion of the role of WADOT and other agencies

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- Jeff and Kelly addressed “Who/What is SCWG?”
Jeff’s PowerPoint presentation illustrated many of the concerns habitat folks have about the loss of snags for cavity-nesting birds and mammals, and research supporting those concerns; Lively participant discussion revolved around woodcutters’ experiences on the ground and questions concerning research validity and its assumptions
Kelly followed up with a bit of history and her role in finding people solutions to the concerns about the cutting of snags
- Before breaking into small table discussions, Jim and others reminded all about the importance of woodcutter input/participation for a successful outcome and workable solutions to the concerns discussed

Notes from Participants’ Desired Outcomes Table Discussion [6:43 to 7:31 pm]

- Four tables, each with four to seven participants, discussed the question. “What will workable solutions to woodcutters, Snag Work Group, and Agency folks’ concerns look like over the next decade?”
- *Collective solutions/suggestions from the four discussion tables include the following:*
 - Have more meetings like this one – with better outreach to let people know; Post notes and notices on web page
 - Public input to woodcutting areas is, and will be, critical to success for all stakeholders
 - Improve and more widely distribute an educational pamphlet to go with permits when handed out, and other materials – these should be distributed before snag restrictions are issued
 - Open up new/more areas for woodcutting – to maintain and/or increase availability – increase wood cutting away from picked-over areas
 - Provide advance info on potential opening sale areas
 - Go through open woodcutting areas and mark trees to be left
 - Design/open temporary roads within areas for new access – they would not need long study before opening
 - Allow more roadside removal working with WADOT – especially 410, 12, and Bumping Road – this would create fuel breaks for fire, and could be a great benefit to limiting wildfires, AND it will deal with dangerous trees and snags
 - Allow removal of green wood (even if it needs a rule change) – especially along roads where wind felling has occurred
 - Slash piles are of little use – not really an alternative
 - Use girdling to create snags and habitat, then mark those trees
 - Find a way to include state land in woodcutting areas
 - Cut closer to population areas – a lot of good wood is found there – a lot in cabin areas; Open up small scale wood sales following LCWD and Fire Wise guidelines
 - Rotate cutting areas over time – sort of a roving window of cutting areas
 - Greatly increase public education efforts, especially re: spotting cavities, identifying tree species and information such as how cavity nesters use ponderosa (which is not good firewood choice); Also habitat maps which address the quality of various wood species for firewood or cavities, or whatever is important while overlaying cutting areas and tree types
 - New areas must be developed, since they are needed and down wood IS available
 - Roadside cutting must be facilitated/allowed/supported

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- Timing of cutting could be of great value – find a way to support and develop that
 - Clearly identify areas where it is okay for cutting of snags
 - Find ways to create greater transparency about conserved/protected areas
 - Develop ways to help people think in terms of using wood cutting –and woodcutters – as important TOOLS for the forest
 - Very important to get better communication about the actual role and impact of woodcutters back to the working group
- *Discussion of groups' views – of some of the thoughts/ideas above*
 - Importance of communication back to the work group is critical – especially about actual woodcutters' impact (including discussion of exclusion areas and so on..}
 - Education of tree types and their values (following up on Dave's idea about the Fremont Forest approach) would be of great value to all stakeholders
 - Consider the use of videos – YouTube, etc. – maybe using high school kids to develop messages and media?
 - Environmental Impact work/analysis needs to be pushed – get to it early on since it takes time
 - Coordination with WADOT needs to be followed up soon and improved – availability of piles, or actually doing the cutting of standing dead roadside trees or...
 - More comprehensive discussion about the roles of woodcutters as TOOLS benefiting the forest
 - Cutting of green wood for thinning AND firewood needs to be pushed

Notes from “What We Want to Do” discussion [7:31 to 8:08 pm]

- Discussion of what must happen to realize solutions/visions identified by the group as a whole:
Staff and SCWG folks have plenty of positive and workable ideas/solutions on which to move forward
- How communication will take place:
These notes distributed by email, hard copy and (tbd) posted on Audubon's web page; If posted, participant's contact information will not be included, although names may be
- When and/or where to meet Again?
Next meeting – if needed – will be determined down the road; SCWG and staff folks have agreed to follow up on a number of the “table” suggestions and communicate thoughts, actions and work with participants through personal conversation, online and email communication.