

## **DRAFT Minutes**

### **Interagency Research Needs: FRPA Effectiveness Monitoring Working Group Monday, November 1, 2021 from 10am-noon.**

Present: Hans Rinke (DOF), Todd (Nik) Nichols (ADFG), Joel Nudelman (DOF), Chris Tcimpidis (NRCS), Mark Minnillo (ADFG), Tim Dabney (DOF), Alison Arians (DOF) (notes), Jason Gubatayao (Sealaska Timber, will go to Corp.), Jeremy Douse (DOF), Katherine Prussian (USFS), Bill Kane (ADFG), Debbie Maas (ADFG), Kate Kanouse (ADFG), Jon Wendel (DEC); Greg Albrecht (ADFG), Andy Stephens (USFWS); Trent Liebich (USFWS); Bill Morris (BOF member); Christy Cincotta (USFWS); Kyle Graham (USFWS).

#### **10:00 Introductions, Review Agenda**

All

#### **10:05 Funding Opportunities for 2022**

Challenge Cost-Share Grants

Joel Nudelman, DOF

CCS Grants are agreements that DOF has with USFS that we've used for young growth inventory and road maintenance. They are supposed to go toward mutually beneficial activities. Never used for forest practices research, but it might work. Generally any projects would need a 20% match. S/PF is the group that manages these grants. If anyone had ideas and were looking for funding, or projects ready to go, and has lost a funding source, could probably run that through Alison and Michael Shephard at USFS and see if that would fit the requirement for funding.

Sustainable Salmon Funding

Debbie Maas, ADFG

See handout. Open calls for proposals once a year, likely to open in April, close in June. Contingent on getting additional funding. Usually hear in about January whether Congress has appropriated funds. We don't know what will happen yet, but things are looking favorable. What we can fund hasn't changed. Types of projects eligible: Habitat is mostly what you'll be interested in. 5 objectives that were eligible last year—probably similar next year.

- Cataloging Anadromous waters
- Habitat conservation (easements, protecting salmon habitat)
- Habitat restoration
- Monitoring and assessment projects, must be related to subsistence stocks
- Habitat resiliency

Have been getting \$4 million, hope for that next spring. Project would be eligible for 3 field seasons.

Qs:

Greg Albrecht: One project underway, cataloging timber areas both new and old, harvested and unharvested. Kake, Hoonah, and Westport. 2 years left on that.

Wrapping up last 3-year grant on POW next summer. Will be in Yakutat to catalog some lands available for logging. Will put in for another grant next year if available.

ACWA Grants

Jon Wendel, DEC

Collaboration between ADFG, DOF and DEC. Below are the categories that ACWA applications can fall into.

Action Category	Eligible Statewide	Priority Waters*
Restoration and implementation of BMPs	Yes	Lake Lucile; Wasilla Creek; Chester Creek; Kenai River; Anchor River; Jordan Creek; Playground Creek
Watershed planning	Yes	Wasilla Creek; Eyak Lake
Public outreach and education	Yes	Goldstream Creek; Crooked Creek; Lake Lucile; Ninilchik; Noyes Slough
Monitoring for nonpoint source pollution and/or BMP effectiveness	No	Salcha River; Little Susitna River; Kenai River; Cottonwood Creek
Marine BEACH pathogen monitoring	No	Kenai; Ketchikan; Hoonah
Special projects	Yes	Anchorage waterbodies; Statewide boating

\*Proposals for projects on specific eligible priority waters in this table will receive additional points in the review process

Just closed—12 grant applications and 3 for BEACH.

Other sources? All  
 EVOS possible sources. Kyle Graham.

**10:15 Compliance Monitoring**  
 FRPA BMP Monitoring

Joel Nudelman, DOF

Compliance and statistics reported last January. 2021 results will come out in mid-January. Have been working on inspections and compliance on DOF lands as well as private land and other public lands, and other non-federal lands where timber harvest is occurring. We try to visit all timber harvests during all phases of their life cycle. Funding sources have changed. We used to get federal and ACWA funding. Currently, since 2015, it has all been from timber sale receipts to accomplish these activities. All our resource foresters have a good understanding of timber harvest BMPs. Our staffing is lower, but we still try and do the best we can to cover as much ground as we can. Ending September 30 we've done 54 inspections on state land and 12 on other lands. Each inspection is followed up with a report and BMP report. ADFG comes on many of these inspections. Due to budget cuts DEC hasn't been able to be quite as active. But they still review all the notifications before activity on the ground. Other DOF activity is some trainings every year. This year we did Yakutat timber operations. We try to do this for our own agencies as well as other state agencies and operators.

USFS BMP Monitoring

KK Prussian

KK: Draft so far, see PPT. KK will send me the final when it's ready.  
 Invasives—Hawkweed was sprayed. Looks like it was successful—possible increase of dose needed.  
 Minerals—Hecla Greens Creek Mine.  
 Recreation—Sawmill Creek Campground in Sitka. Water quality improvement.  
 Roads—False Island AOP replacement—Sitka. Better documentation of BMPs needed.  
 Roads—Thorne Bay Road 3012. Better documentation and tracking needed. Site-specific BMP needed.  
 Updates to catalog

Vegetation—Snakey Lakes Thorne Bay. No corrective actions needed for implementation or effectiveness.

Q:

Greg Albrecht: False Island culverts—were there 3 or 4?

KK: Looked at other pipes, but the culvert that was randomly assigned was just the one site.

G: Interested in how the other pipes were functioning.

KK: Marty Becker and Dean Anderson were on that trip.

KK will have the full report in 2 weeks. Wait to send minutes until she's shared that.

## 10:25 FRPA Effectiveness Monitoring Updates

### ADFG Projects

Greg Albrecht

Windthrow data from USFS, wrapping that up, looking to see if there was an easy correlation between wind direction and fetch and windthrow that could help with DPO reviews and timber sales process, working with applicant to identify sensitive areas of windthrow. No smoking gun on that. Good analysis but in the end it didn't yield fruit. We have had success asking landowners for bigger buffers voluntarily in windy areas.

Have also been looking at potential regulatory updates to propose to the Board of Forestry: Map requirements for DPOs, and also new provisions for young growth buffers for applicant. Variable and windproof buffers voluntarily.

### DOF Projects

Joel Nudelman

Road condition surveys have been the most common—that work has been cyclical due to staffing and funding. We've had periods of dedicated funding through Sustainable Salmon funding, but not recently. About the last 10 years, it's been a little hit and miss—generally when we have projects or something has been brought to our attention. This year, with Sealaska timber company winding down, we wanted to look at the legacy road system. Our plan for the summer and fall was to visit as much of those as possible. Completed all of POW, but haven't been able to get to other islands. Most of the spur systems were closed out. Only the mainline leading to the sortyards remained open. Under FRPA, we use the terms active, inactive, and closed as road classifications. For these surveys, we were concentrating on the "inactive" roads. No longer used for log hauling, but still have structures in place. While we were on these surveys, we stopped at all fish crossings with bridges or culverts, and evaluated them all. All the bridges were in good shape, and not many culverts had problems. Most were in good shape. Did identify 11 fish culverts that need attention, all on POW operations. Each structure had priority 1, 2 or 3. Only one culvert had a priority 1. 1: affecting fish habitat now. 2: could affect fish passage if neglected. 3: extended neglect may affect water quality, but not fish passage. Joel has reports on each of these 11 structures.

Will look to other areas—Kake, Hoonah, etc. in the future. We can work with ADFG on some of these. Good to have ADFG's cooperation.

### USFS Projects

KK Prussian

Draft report of 2021 projects implemented relative to soil and water/fisheries.

- Hoonah Ranger District. Spasski Stream Restoration
- Margaret Creek Stream Restoration. Will continue into 2022.

- Michael Creek Culvert Removal. Used hand methods to remove a culvert. Partnership project with SAWG—local youth.
- Italo and Situk River marine debris cleanup.
- Tawah Vegetation project (Yakutat)—Ophir and Tawah Creeks.
- Ophir Creek Restoration training—hand tool methods. Student Conservation Association—putting wood back in the creek.
- Nahania Creek Stream restoration (POW)
- Handtool stream restoration workshop (POW)
- Nakwasina Watershed improvements (Sitka), partnership with SOA.
- Cinder Cone Trail improvements—water connectivity, not fish passage.
- Appleton Creek Stream Restoration
- Redoubt Lake Enhancement project—using fertilizer to improve subsistence.
- BitSu Creek Restoration (Wrangell)
- Kake Keex Kwan Community Forest—looking at existing conditions and project planning.
- Aquatic organism passage

#### 2022 season:

- Partnerships
- Margaret Creek stream passage
- Omer Creek in Petersburg
- Eastover Creek—hand method
- Shegeen Creek
- Kos Island
- Additional Cube Cove work projects.
- Lots of road work, connectivity and stream passage.
- Strategy for Sustainable forest management. Some good news—working toward a more balanced forest management.
- Restoration and resilience.
- Monitoring research: working on all-habitat data project. In 1997, habitat objective paper—a lot more habitat data that has been collected. Post-doc in Corvallis is re-analyzing the data. Will look at whether there are climate drivers with any changes, we'll be able to see that. Reassessment of old and new data. MIS project has a report coming out—in final stages of analysis. Will share that when it comes out. REM is in final analysis. Probably 6 months out.
- Young growth management—how we can work with foresters and silviculture folks to meet our best management in riparian areas.
- Canopy cover—can we glean information from that on forest structure and water yield. Results from that will not be immediate.
- Validation of LIDAR streams and channel classifications.

#### USFWS Projects

Kyle Graham

Ongoing project and fundraising in Port Graham area. USFWS and Port Graham, along with village of Port Graham, looking at fish passage project on a road that went from PG to Seldovia. Looking at RCS that Joel put together in 2014 or 2015. Submitted project to EVOS council. Quite a push this spring, and a lot of money available. Working on Native lands or Corporations. Proposed to address about 23

culverts and bridges, all the way out to Windy Bay to Rocky Lake. They had an objection to using culverts. \$8 million was for updating the stream crossings to meet current fish passage standards. We are now revising the project for updating the road and need to fundraise on additional stream crossing sites. About 4 sites that have already been funded with federal highway tribal transportation money, and trying to get access to those sites. If we are able to get funding for this project, could significantly address some of the concerns that have been long-standing access needs and road improvements and stream crossing needs.

Qs

Joel: I appreciate the work USFWS are doing to pursue this area. Interesting thing about the PG area—for all the RCS we've done, it's usually pretty rare to have bridge problems, but here in PG there were some big problems with bridges and culverts. Definitely some poorly-rated culverts. Hopefully those will get some attention in the future. Good to see the bridges getting fixed. Used to be able to drive from Seldovia to Port Graham.

Chris Tcimpidis: Just Port Graham?

Joel: RCS was Seldovia and Port Graham. Did all the forest roads that were notified for FRPA.

Chris Tcimpidis: Has a forest management plan for Port Graham. I think there was some discussion of some fish passage issues. Encouraged our planner to fund fixing or removal of these culverts. Please send information my way.

Joel: Will send report on DOF effectiveness monitoring.

Kyle: Benefits of working on this project— Port Graham has very little ability to work on this on its own. Now a host of partners to work on this. Collaboration is helpful.

Trent: Eyak Lake and EVOS project: EVOS will upgrade the weir. Combination of partners. ADFG, USFWS. \$5.7 million.

### **11:15 Research Priorities**

DOF

Tim Dabney, Jeremy Douse, DOF

Helge will be asking BOF to focus on research priorities at 11/10 meeting.

Jeremy:

- Northern Region: reforestation—also a part of FRPA. Miho Welton is working on scarification techniques. Funded through McIntire Stennis Grants.
- Looking through Anadromous Waters Catalog—detailed and good. Any updates are useful to us, to avoid issues.
- Water quality monitoring in specific watersheds in state forests. Annual variability of non point-source pollution. Effectiveness Monitoring.

Tim: DOF has a very active hazardous fuels reduction program. Until recently, that was funded entirely by USFS grants. In the last 2 years, we have been funded by the state. We are ramping up our efforts and just recently, at our interagency fall fire review, the science consortium presented some research associated with hazardous fuels reduction projects. What would be the impacts of fuels reduction where there is permafrost, and possibility of thermokarsting. Brand-new, but would be interested in working with other agencies to take a look at hazardous fuels techniques we could be looking at, and how that affects thermokarsting. Roller-chopping, shear-blading, masticating, etc. Some research already, and we need to do more. Need to be thinking about the impacts.

USFS

Katherine Prussian, USFS

Mentioned those earlier. If anything else, we'll be adding projects. Guessing that we'll be increasing Road Conditions survey. We have gaps, and a lot of this information is getting old. Maybe an opportunity to work with local folks—water connectivity and fish passage. Assessment monitoring and research.

ADFG

Greg Albrecht, ADFG

Continue to be looking into buffer issues that mentioned earlier under reg changes. Another avenue of that, discussed before, industry members—might want to research looking at changes in regulation that would increase the buffer size on big floodplain streams, while perhaps decreasing buffers on very small streams. Would like to do a literature review, looking at what the net trade-offs would be, equitable to present to the Board in the future.

USFWS

Chris Tcimpidis NRCS Research needs:

Year Added to List	Topic	Presented by	Date
2021	Areawide strategies on treatment of spruce bark beetle killed trees and the growing fire threat they pose.	S. Crockett	8/17/2021
2021	Ecological/wildlife issues limiting tree species richness on naturally regenerated clearcuts in the Copper River Basin.	C. Tcimpidis	8/17/2021
2021	Assesment of habitat/ecology shifts after PCT in sitka spruce stands, in stands older than 20 years.	C. Tcimpidis	8/17/2021
2021	Effects of appropriate forest thinning on sap production in birch stands	C. Tcimpidis	8/17/2021
2021	Dynamics between second growth management and wildlife, relating to caloric needs created by the additional vertical structure of forest debris in SE Alaska.	S. Savell	8/17/2021

**Comments & Suggestions**

Canopy structure relative to leaf area index—related to peak and low flows. Anyone have any other projects and work that's been done on this?

December good for meeting next year.

Include link to EFF mon projects on DOF website. Share reports and other info with people.