



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources
Peter Goldmark - Commissioner of Public Lands

Forest Health Technical Advisory Committee

June 11, 2012

Central Washington University

Ellensburg, WA

10:05 am Aaron Everett called the meeting to order.

Introductions

Committee members present: Aaron Everett, Reese Lolley, Greg Morris, Bill Gaines, Robert Gara, Connie Mehmel, Dave Peterson, Scott Ketchum, and Doug Daoust.

Others present: Karen Ripley (DNR), Chuck Hersey (DNR), and Mark Hicks (WA Dept. of Ecology).

Welcome, housekeeping, meeting notes

Aaron provided an overview of the agenda for the day. Committee members reviewed notes from May TAC meeting. Notes will be posted on DNR website. Committee members have until the end of the week to let Aaron know if they have any edits to the meeting notes.

Klickitat WRIA Determination of Forest Health Hazard Warning

Committee reviewed considerations for the Klickitat WRIA to determine if a forest health hazard warning is warranted for mountain pine beetle in lodgepole pine, pine bark beetles in ponderosa pine and western spruce budworm in Douglas-fir and true firs. Committee began by reviewing the individual disease and insect components from the National Insect and Disease Risk Map (NIDRM) in the Klickitat WRIA. Much of the projected risk is from mountain pine beetle in ponderosa pine and to a lesser extent western pine beetle. Committee reviewed suitable host area for pine bark beetles and recent mortality map for the area.

Most lodgepole pine mortality occurred from 2006 to 2009 and there have been decreasing amounts of mortality from 2010 to 2011. The vast majority of Yakama lands not in reserve are actively managed or planned for management. DNR owns significant acreage in the northern third of the Klickitat WRIA. Outbreak status in MPB lodgepole pine is decreasing and it is mainly an issue for the Yakama Nation and some DNR land in the north. Doug believes the criteria for a warning in MPB in lodgepole pine has not been met.

Klickitat MPB lodgepole pine TAC determination: *No warning warranted.*

Ponderosa Pine: The ponderosa pine biophysical setting has an over-representation of late development closed succession class and the ponderosa pine-Douglas-fir biophysical setting also has an over representation of late development closed succession class. There is a lack of Community Wildfire Protection Plans in the area so it is hard to determine the amount of interface between ponderosa pine forest types and CWPP as a proxy for fire risk. NIDRM predicts a significant amount of mortality in ponderosa pine, however, actual mortality has not been severe. There are spotted owl habitat issues in the wetter forest types, as well as listed steelhead and salmon. Efficacy potential is high, there are two mills on the Yakama Reservation and several private mills to the south, however, DNR faces challenges marketing wood products on the northern end of the landscape. Ponderosa pine mortality is a multi-landowner issue.

Bob Gara asked how long do the pronouncements of the TAC last? Aaron said he does not have a definite answer to that question; the TAC has an ongoing monitoring role that still needs to be defined.

Greg Morris said that there has been significant work already accomplished on the Yakama Reservation in ponderosa pine and much is planned. Greg has also seen industrial landowners implementing significant treatments in ponderosa pine stands and to a lesser extent on small private lands.

Reese highlighted that we need to consider the host conditions, even though current outbreak status may not warrant a warning. If host conditions would support an outbreak it is just a matter of time until the next drought happens that fuels an outbreak.

Reese said we need to clearly be able to state why the Klickitat ranked number one in the coarse scale analysis if a warning does not turn out to be warranted. Aaron said that the TAC conducted a coarse scale analysis to select out the high-priority landscapes and the process of the fine scale analysis is to sort out these issues. The Klickitat has a significant amount of predicted NIDRM damage, a lot of significant damage occurred from 2006 to 2009 and most of the landscape is not reserve so efficacy is high and these factors are what contributed to the Klickitat ranking so high in the coarse scale analysis.

Greg said the small private landowners are a mix of people: some that are open to active management and some that have little active management interest.

The Tapash Collaborative boundary ends at the southern boundary of the Yakama Reservation, so some of the area is within a CFLR landscape and some is not.

Klickitat pine bark beetles-ponderosa pine TAC determination: No warning warranted. *Recommended area of concern.*

Committee members vote on Klickitat pine bark beetles-ponderosa pine determination:

Aaron: Area of Concern

Scott: Undecided

Reese: Area of concern

Greg: Area of concern

Bill Gaines: Area of Concern

Bob Gara: Area of concern

Connie Mehmel: Area of concern

Doug Daoust: Area of concern

Dave Peterson: Area of concern

TAC recommended an area of concern for ponderosa pine bark beetles from the Klickitat WRIA boundary to the west and north and all suitable host area east of the Klickitat WRIA boundary in the Lower Yakima WRIA and Rock Glade WRIA.

Western Spruce Budworm: Defoliation activity has been limited in the area for the last few years. Western spruce budworm in the Klickitat WRIA does not meet the criteria of having a current outbreak. Treatments on the Yakama Nation can serve as a case study for active management to reduce budworm risk for the budworm warning area in north central Washington.

Klickitat western spruce budworm TAC determination: *No warning warranted.*

Committee will develop landscape goals for the ponderosa pine area of concern for the Klickitat and suitable host area in the western Lower Yakima and western Rock Glade WRIAs.

Overview of Draft TAC Recommendations and Report for Warning Areas

Committee Report

A final draft will be available for committee review by Friday, June 15th on a one week turnaround time.

It was suggested that further explanation be included in the committee recommendations as to rationale for not recommending a warning. Aaron recommends keeping that discussion in the staff report.

Both the staff report and report to the Commissioner will be made available to public at the same time.

Doug asked what is the difference between a warning area and an area of concern. Based on the report they are mixed so it is hard to tell the difference. Need to clarify the difference between a warning and an area of concern. An area of concern highlights areas that do not meet the criteria for a warning but have issues that the Commissioner can use his discretion to issue a warning or not. Scott recommends adding a definition about areas of concern and forest health hazard warning areas.

What are the four criteria that determine a warning? Include a discussion of the criteria in the introduction to the commissioner report.

Reese and Bill recommend that we need to explain the context of the decision making process that excluded areas with significant forest health issues (Methow, Wentachee, etc...) due to high levels of reserve. Aaron thought that maybe it would make sense to include that in the cover letter.

Dave recommended having an executive summary.

Klickitat Area of Concern: need to account for the amount of active management on Yakama and industrial lands. Need to develop landscape targets for Klickitat area of concern.

Change Table 2 in commissioner report to include acreage of ponderosa pine in all of the area of concern. Remove "warning area" from table title replace with "area of concern." Bob recommended including a description of what Table 2 tell us about the landscape.

Area of concern lodgepole pine: Need to edit Bob Gara's MPB population dynamic -diagram (Figure 4) per Bob's suggestion. Bob said the population dynamics of MPB depends on the conditions of the host on both a stand and landscape scale. Key factor is host susceptibility. Dave said we are mainly talking about increasing the diversity of lodgepole pine age class mosaics across the landscape, the committee agreed with this recommendation.

Area of concern western spruce budworm: Per Connie's and Dave's comments landscape level goals were created based on biophysical settings.

Stand level recommendations: Provide some examples of stand level treatments that can mitigate risk. We will develop stand level recommendations for MPB lodgepole pine, bark beetles in ponderosa pine and western spruce budworm in the recommendation report. Aaron asked for good sources of case studies of effective activities to reduce budworm risk. Connie and Bob suggested talking to Paul Flanagan. Connie has a case study on Yakama budworm treatments, Connie will provide them to Aaron.

Bob will provide some feedback on integrated pest management language to include in the western spruce budworm stand level recommendation section.

Add citations from WSBW "Managing Trees and Stands Susceptible to Western Spruce Budworm" Technical Bulletin 1695.

Bill Gaines suggested adding a reference to the Agee et. al. fire and safety principles document in Extreme Wildfire Hazard section. Add CWPP as a proxy for fire hazard in wildfire section. Reference Morris Johnson's publication on fire hazard.

Committee reviewed Special Landowner/Manager Recommendations section of the draft document.

Environmental Risks and Alternatives: Bill Gaines said it should be the interaction of stand conditions, fire, insect, disease and climate change. Climate is a stressor in addition to fire, insects and pathogens. Intersection of past management trends and what is expected to occur (drier climate) due to climate change.

Staff Report:

Committee reviewed draft staff report. Staff report is intended to serve as a detailed account of the TAC process to compliment the recommendation report to the commissioner. The draft staff report will be put on the Drop Box site for further review by the committee. More citations will be added to the staff report.

Dave Peterson asked if the reports will be peer-reviewed or a friendly review to make sure we did not miss anything or made a glaring error. Scott said we want to have a friendly, critical review to check for any major issues. Potential reviewers: Scott mentioned NCASI, other suggestions included WSU extension forester Andy Perleberg, UW professor Bob Edmonds, USFS Regional Silviculturist Eric Watrud, USFS Regional ecologist Tom Demeo. We will provide the commissioner report and staff report to reviewers by Friday, June 15th.

TAC Process Timeline

-Draft report will be disseminated to committee by Friday, June 15th for final comments. Committee members will submit comments by Friday, June 22 to Aaron. Reviewers will be sent draft report on June 15th.

-Once report is final, it will be delivered to the commissioner. There will be a public meeting in the warning area and consultation with land managers/landowners/interested publics in all areas of concern. Aaron estimates that the initial announcement will be completed in the first week of July, followed by public outreach.

-A focus will be trying to identify viable, multi-landowner projects. Some level of jobs bill funding will be available for treatments.

-Main resource will be the availability of DNR staff to provide site assessments and technical assistance.