

## UNCOMPAHGRE PLATEAU WORKING GROUP

UP Spring Creek/Dry Creek IDT Meeting  
2/12/03

Attendees: John Moore, Craig Grother, Jim Garner, Daniela Howell, Amanda Clements, Ron Turley, Rick Sherman, Mac Fellin, Dan Huisjen, Bob Welch, Chuck Finch  
Notes by Jim Garner

### Progress Update

- Amanda presented the latest mosaic objective map that incorporates the WUI designations that Dan Huisjen has worked up.
- She also displayed the latest seral stage map that has now incorporated the forest CVU data, the BLM woodland inventory data and the treatment projects initiated since 1993 (date of TM data). Some classes were hard to categorize and ended up being split between seral stages.
- Amanda presented her analysis of the current seral stages versus our desired mosaic objectives. The map shows where we have problems, i.e. too much early stage, or too much old stage and vice-versa. There is a handout with maps that detail the problem areas and what we are lacking. Due to time constraints, this analysis was only completed for the public lands.

### Discussion Of Process and Project Identification Issues

- The group agreed that existing/planned/funded projects should move forward. We do however, need to include the probable effect of these projects on the existing mosaics.
- When evaluating or planning projects, we need to be explicit as to whether the proposed project would result in a “seral change” or a “condition improvement”. This is an important consideration, as a “condition improvement” would essentially be neutral in regards to affecting the overall mosaic.
- The group agreed that we should ID which projects will help address imbalances on the landscape rather than strictly letting the funding drive project selection. This effort will be long term and other funding sources will likely be available in the future.
- The ultimate “driver” of an individual project (deer, WUI, etc.) is immaterial as long as the result will fit in with the mosaic objective for that particular area. In other words, it would be acceptable to place a

“deer habitat” project in a “WUI” polygon, as long as the effect was either neutral or beneficial to meeting the stated mosaic objective for that area.

- The group felt that the process should roughly follow these steps:
  1. Start with mosaic analysis to identify geographic areas of opportunity.
  2. Hold a generic group discussion of potential avenues to address the needs of an area. Decide at a broad level how to meet objectives.
  3. Lead person (discussed below) generates project design per mosaic drivers and broad level needs identified by the group. Does so in conjunction with underlying interests (WAPA/TriState, DOW, etc).
  4. Come together as a group for prioritization and sequencing.
  5. Field trip to review proposed action.

- A major roadblock was identified by the group regarding the time necessary for planning and implementing these projects. Nothing is coming off the table and field season is coming soon.

### Discussion of WUI Polygons

- Dan led a discussion of the individual WUI polygons that were developed. At a relatively gross scale, these areas were identified and digitized on-screen during the discussions using Arcview. Dan ran the comparisons between existing seral stages and the desired mosaics to derive a number, which indicated within each polygon, the number of acres that required treatment. The polygons were attributed with this information in the GIS, and will help guide project planning.

### Discussion of USFS Projects

- Craig Grother led a discussion of potential projects on USFS administered lands. The boundaries of the project areas were outlined on paper, and provided to Jim Garner for digitizing prior to the meeting. The map was accompanied by a handout from Craig that included a detailed description of each project.
- The areas presented focused on the mountain shrub/ponderosa pine habitats because of lynx considerations. Craig reiterated to the group that no further projects are planned in the forested areas of these watersheds due to lynx issues.

- Some of the “units” (project areas) identified by the USFS overlapped with WUI polygons identified by Dan. As WUI is a higher consideration, the prescribed mosaics for this type will take precedence.
- The proposed USFS treatments were designed almost exclusively to reduce understory in mixed oak/ponderosa pine types. There was discussion of whether some treatments (say burn versus roller chop) would actually induce a seral change, or a condition change. In the end it was agreed that regardless of method, reduction in the amount of the oak understory would be fairly short-lived. As such, the effect would be classed more as a “conditional” rather than seral change.
- Concerns were expressed by several members of the group in regards to the removal of older age class oakbrush. It was agreed that an effort should be made to direct treatments towards mid and early seral classes.

#### Identification of “Project Leads”

- In order to provide optimum coordination, lead people were identified for each polygon type and/or agency. These people are to act as a point of contact and will be coordinating projects with other “leads”. It should be noted that these people will need considerable assistance from others both in and outside their respective agencies. If anyone has a potential project they would like to submit for consideration, please contact the appropriate lead as detailed below.

1. WUI/Power – Cunio/Blake
2. Sage Grouse – Bob Welch
3. Lynx Polygon – Craig Grother
4. Veg Units (BLM) – Bob Welch/Amanda Clements
5. Veg Units (USFS) – Craig Grother/John Moore
6. Garner will coordinate with all on DOW/Deer projects.

- Leads need to consider :

1. Blurring boundaries
2. Accommodating underlying mosaic issues
3. Design within MIS species recommendations (contact Jim Garner regarding additional information).

- Leads need to Produce:

- Mapped unit boundary for their “polygon” (i.e. WUI, GSG, Natural Mosaic).
- A proposed “Action Statement” for their polygon.
- Acres of Change Needed to Meet Mosaic Objectives
- Type of Seral Change (More Late? More Early?, Etc.) OR Type of Condition Change. (Track by 5th Code Watershed).
- Likely Methods (fire, rollerchop, thinning, etc.)
- General Description of Patch Size/Distribution/Matrix

- Design Modifications to accommodate/promote underlying concerns & address potential MIS/obligate species concerns.
- Specific Methods (HydroAx, Rx Burn, etc.)
- Tight objectives including percent change the project is expected to produce.
- Enough well defined projects for a 3 year time frame.

The group agreed to reconvene on March 12th, 9AM at the BLM north conference room. It is hoped that the “project leads” will have the bulk of the above completed at that time.