

Greys River Forest Collaborative

May 24, 2017

Welcome and introductions

Attendees: Marti Halverson, Tim Haberberger, Dave Fogle, Gary Fralick, Brook Lee, Kent Connelly, Jerry ?, Rich Stem, Dean Burnham, Chad Hayward, Kay Lynn Nield, Derek Ibarguen, Judy Riede, Don Goetz, Byron Baker

Justin Laycock(sp?) will be the new acting district ranger

Group did a great job selecting project areas

How detailed should our recommendations be?

Purpose, need, methods, project area (no need to be overly detailed)

Public comment

None

Review interest statements and focus areas

Updated map of forest health

Lower Greys and Murphy Complex have defoliators

Could harvest dead, dying, damaged timber under categorical exclusion (limited to 250 acres)

Could do one environmental assessment for both of these areas

Lodgepole can last 8-10 years before it deteriorates

Over the last decade, bulk of timber harvest has been from personal use permits

This is not the way it should be, and is changing

A lot of damage at Grover Park being caused by personal use

Commercial timber operators are required to comply with numerous rules, activities and harvest are closely monitored by USFS

Formal appraisal process with competitive bidding (minimum bid) for commercial timber sale

How do commercial timber sales work?

1) Analysis area defined by USFS based on need

2) Go through NEPA process

3) Identify areas they want to treat; CE limited to 250 acres, EA can be larger

4) Figure out how much volume is in proposed treatment areas

5) Do appraisal based on costs, timber value changed on quarterly basis

6) Put it out for bid, generally highest bidder purchases contract

7) Harvest. Takes a whole season, up to 3 years

8) Write stipulations into contract based on specific needs: Need to clean area, maintain roads, dust abatement (before and during), restricted hauling periods, safety measures, etc. (contractors held to high standards)

9) USFS gets money to go back and reforest if needed

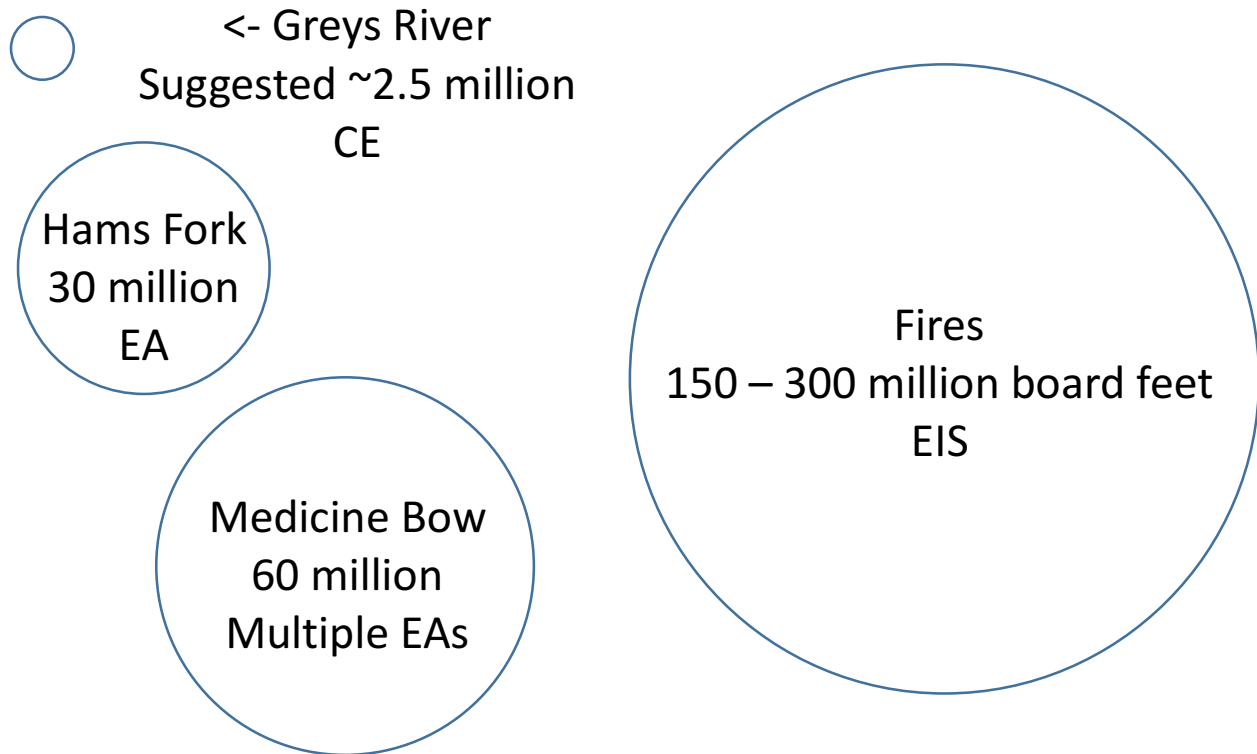
What happens if you have trees that are dead?

Dead wood worth is increasing because there's a big market for firewood (<10-12 yrs old)

Woods mills mainly in Idaho and Montana; Evanston is making money out of firewood
Tri-Basin Divide has gone out to contract, bid has been awarded, goal to start cutting in 2018
USFS works with WGFD on contracts to include wildlife stipulations, can use harvest to improve wildlife habitat

CE is typically for dead timber, but EA can address wildlife, recreation, etc. issues
How to benefit wildlife?

Rejuvenate aspen and mountain shrubs, reduce conifer encroachment
Sense of project scale:



What does the USFS do to protect or improve watershed health?

Having stands of different ages at a landscape level can help control fire

Through interdisciplinary team process as part of NEPA (multiple interests provide input on proposal)

How does the USFS address habitat fragmentation?

Wildlife biologist in IDT process engages WGFD on habitat, migration corridors, etc.

How much is bark beetle currently destroying on an annual basis?

Mountain pine beetles fluctuate.

Does timbering make bark beetle better or worse?

Doesn't make it worse. Harvesting large trees removes bark beetle habitat and can abate outbreak spread

Douglas fir beetle inhabits more localized patches

Age class and species differentiation makes for a healthy forest

At what point does USFS decide to intervene re. bark beetles?

Resource limitations make it difficult to get ahead of bark beetle spread

Would start dealing with this as soon as the issues is recognized if resources were available

How much revenue can local organizations expect from timber sales?

25% generally comes back to schools, etc.

Temporary impact of worker influx
Will often hire local contractors to re-vegetate

NEPA and available resources (Rich Stem)

Complexity and size increases from CE > EA > EIS

How long does it take do an environmental assessment (EA)?

Length is based partly on the amount of public engagement required, resources

CE takes \geq 4 months

EA takes \geq 7-8 months

EIS takes \geq 1 year

Breakout groups (draft recommendations)

- 1: Specific projects
- 2: Objectives to be met (purpose and need)
- 3: Preferred methods to consider

Field trip to Grover Park

Next time

- Remaining projects
- Vote on draft recommendations
- Adaptive management