

SOFAR Landscape sub-group – General Sherman Project Planning Field Visit

8/31/2017

In Attendance:

Dana Walsh (ENF)

David Zelinsky (Sierra Club/Republicans)

Heather Campbell (EDC Fire Safe Council)

Ben Solvesky (SFL)

Dan Smith (ENF)

Teresa Riesenhuber (ENF)

Kayanna Warren (R5 FS – SPF/FHM)

Beverly Bulaon (R5 FS – SPF/FHM)

Eric Nicita (ENF)

Trip Notes

Where the FS is in the planning process: ENF staff is in the process of putting together the project. General Sherman is just west of the Caples proposed wilderness and is identified as one of the remaining areas within the Forest that has remained largely untreated for fuels and where loss to a fire is a high probability given potential starts, fire history and stand conditions. The collaborative group being invited in during early planning and identification of treatments. This project likely to go out to public scoping late this winter or early in the spring.

Stop 1 - Near Silver Creek and the Caples Creek Equestrian area.

Dense mixed fir stands with a history of salvage logging. Stands progressed from wetter, lower slope area to upper slope pine dominated.

- Discussed stand history, looks largely dominated by fire suppression and salvage from the drought in the 70s/80s.
- Discussed treatment options including thinning that maintain higher canopy cover and more of a focus on maintaining clumps of fir at lower slope positions and more intensive thinning with a focus on pine on upper slopes.
- Nice remnant sugar pine! Definitely an opportunity for raking prior to burning to protect some of these trees.
- Heather suggested allowing cutting of live cedar up to some diameter (perhaps under 10 inches) with fire wood permits.

Stop 2 – 10N91 Road

- PAC on north side of road, identified stand to be treated on south side of the road.
- Concerns for fuels inside the PAC. Discussed options for PAC treatment under current Forest Plan: hand thin some material up to six inches and burn vs. a potential for a Forest Plan Amendment to do some non-commercial mechanical work to protect the PAC and facilitate burning. Dana will follow-up to see what would be required for a Forest Plan amendment in this case.

Stop 3 – Plantation off 10N91 spur road

- Lots of small, few acre plantations distributed through the project area, likely a result of salvage of pockets and small clearcuts. Some like this one were definitely treated with herbicide during establishment and had a PCT. There is patches of shrubs, primarily white thorn here, but also patches of grass. There are some trees that could/should be reduced, but patchy mortality has introduced some heterogeneity into these stands
- Discussed potential effects from burning as is. Likely to not be very effective in reducing white thorn or killing trees without some efforts. Could come in and lop/scatter some trees, maintaining most canopy cover to keep shrub component inhibited. Also discussed potential of herbicide use to kill shrubs prior to burning for efficacy. In these stands thus far the shrub component has been fairly suppressed due to past treatment and canopy cover where herbicide treatment may not be needed if canopy cover post-harvest is maintained.

Stop 4 – Red Fir dominated stands near Silver Fork and Mormon Emigrant Trail.

- Stand is very mosaic with dense patches, openings, flowers, red fir regeneration, and aspen. Salvage looks like it was fairly heavy. Current conditions are pretty favorable for many of the areas. Soils are well protected in open areas with recovery of vegetation. Current conditions are meeting most objectives across this stand.
- There is not currently a proposal developed for this stand so there was a lot of conversations on possible actions and options.
- There are concerns in dense areas with heavy fuels. Discussed if there was really a concern if some pockets burned up, since it wasn't a connected fuel profile across a large area. Concern that burning may not result in desirable effects to maintaining these areas with large trees and covers, or reducing fuels. Dense fuels layer also is a concern for soil response and erosion. Teresa indicated that burning on the Iron Trap project had a couple units with similar composition where burning was successful, and which could be used to refine prescriptions for burning in these stands.
- Thinning could produce more conducive conditions for understory development.
- Aspen present with some well-established saplings that you would not want to kill through burning. Perhaps thin to open around aspens and burn some of the aspen areas.
- Beverly noted that there was lots of root disease (annosus) across the area.
- Some dense areas exist along the lower road that have been observed, but extent and continuity is uncertain. Eric suggested using the LiDAR information to determine dense patches where fuels may be a concern to focus thinning within the larger area. Ben was interested in using the LiDAR to pick out dense patches of tall trees (5D in the stands, specifically in the HRCAs) to be evaluated for treatment intensity based on habitat contribution, slope position and species composition and potentially modify treatment intensity in those patches when such patches are in areas one would expect to have higher densities of larger trees.
- Discussed need for ridgetop treatments in these stands to provide for access and safety for MET and Silver Fork road.
- David mentioned that the Iron Mountain Road/Mormon Emigrant trail bike lane had brush overgrowth issues that needed to be addressed for safety.
- Teresa mentioned that there were some areas nearby that were missed for fuels treatments in Iron Trap that might be a good opportunity to include in General Sherman. Dana will follow-up

with Teresa and with ENF specialists to evaluate whether additional surveys could be conducted, or if this will need to be considered for a future project.

Next Steps:

- Discuss project at Landscape meeting as development progresses. Make sure Rob Allan is involved!