Feedback on CFLR Field Trips – What We Appreciated

Field Trips

1. Field trips were exceptionally well planned and executed (thanks to Dick and Jeff and their teams)
2. Materials that accompanied the field trip, including detailed prescription information, also Dave Haddis seeking feedback and input on the prescriptions, team members going back to refer to prescriptions after the field trip. (2x)
3. Liked the temporal progression demonstrated of what we used to do, what we learned, what we changed in response.
4. Good turnout at both trips from LR team and Wildlife team – everyone has other jobs and still showed up. Showed how important you think what we do is. (2x)
5. Having contract administrators there to explain what their doing on the ground – like taking someone out to see your artwork for the first time, the Contract Administrators were very professional, courteous, appreciative of feedback. Implementers very open to feedback and discussion, very brave thing to do by foresters to show us their work. (3x)

CFLR Implementation

6. Implementers definitely thinking about landscape context, e.g., enlarging meadows, treating ridge tops, north/south facing slopes.
7. Looked great – overall, wonderful to see amount of openings and changes in stand structures, and diversity of the structure that is being created. (2x)
8. Pleased by outcome of 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 effort on the AR – visual response, came out pretty nice, achieved what we were looking for. (5x)
9. Liked the clumpiness of catamount with openings on ridge tops, felt like we're getting at landscape scale with denser north facing slopes and more open south facing slopes.
10. Good question raised by AR silviculturalist: what are the functional characteristics of a clump? We need to flesh this out more from wildlife vs. timber perspective.
11. **So far we seem to be trending towards desired conditions as far as stand and landscape structure** (but unknown about wildlife, understory and fire behavior). We do not appear to be going backwards or in the wrong direction from a landscape scale perspective.

Feedback on Field Trips – Requested Changes: Field Trips

Before Field Trips

1. Before field trips: Take aerial photos of treatments we're going to see before we get out there, so that we can reference the broader landscape from where we're standing (especially for discussing clumpiness) – at minimum have aerial photo of pre-treatment, if possible post-treatment too – not to be used for analysis but for reference. Hard to visualize from looking at stumps what the site looked like before. Does CSE do photo points?
2. Need to be armed with some evaluative criteria about questions we need to answer rather than "show and tell" – e.g., do we think as a group that this treatment is getting at the kind of clumpiness that we want to see here? Make a sheet like the ID team uses that needs to be filled out before people get in cars to go home. Get sample of qualitative assessment from TNC led trip to Eglend AFB.

During Field Trips

3. Need to build in more time for discussion and balance against desire to "hit all stops"
4. Trying to show as many areas as possibly to show variety of different things. We haven't been able to go further in an area to observe more of the whole picture. Should we look at fewer areas and see more of one area? Photos would help, bringing poster size photos. Have more field trips in general, but they take too much prep time to do more field trips.

After Field Trips

5. Do visualizations / virtual tours / panoramas of demonstration areas that we like and places we don't like (field crew currently working on this for Long John) – also do panoramas before treatment for comparison (easier than aerial imagery).
6. Establish landscape metrics of areas we like and areas we we would recommend as demonstration sites versus areas that do not appear to trend toward desired conditions.
7. Team members must be open to GIVING feedback (in appropriate forums) – give honest feedback at the trip and after

Feedback on Field Trips – Requested Changes: CFLR Implementation

1. Want to see even more openings and less thinning – is it a waste to thin somewhere when you can be opening elsewhere?

2. Want more snags and downed woody debris, possibly consider girdling trees to create snags (for wildlife habitat) –less of an issue in the AR due to beetle kill.

3. Red Feather 2 but in general in both forests: Surprised by amount of soil disturbance.

1. Red Feather 2: Disappointed to see that a nice old tree in a clump of denser patches, surrounded by dog hair, that would have been a nice tree to have as an individual tree, not part of a dense patch. Also an old tree had been cut, it had four fire scars on it (living tree). More emphasis should be put on working around / enhancing older trees to protect them by thinning around them and not cutting them.

2. Saw campground, power line areas with "clumps" that didn't seem like clumps. Seemed more fuels driven by power lines, trees were 30 ft tall without interlocking crowns, didn't seem like a clump which would be more relatively dense. Clump should have shrubs under the Ponderosa Pine.

3. Need more discussion about benefits of designation by prescription vs. leave tree marking vs. integrated marking teams. Contractor prefers leave tree marking. DBP leaves too much judgment in hands of contractors. (AR is planning this discussion already). Consider integrated marking teams, identify important character trees. Instead of going out afterwards to say "that doesn't look good," why aren't we ahead of this by participating on the ID teams?

4. Jury still out on leave tree marking – the aesthetics of the paint on the trees, how long it will last, who will we tick off that we need on our side? Using water based paint, should be gone in 5 – 7 years, might be able to mitigate on areas of high visibility by painting over with brown paint. Want to see monitoring that the paint truly is gone in 5 – 7 years. Need research on what the public thinks.

Feedback on Field Trips – Lingering Questions: CFLR Implementation

1. Jury still out on how the leave tree areas were identified, seemed to be associated with inoperable ground (e.g., rock outcroppings). Are we biasing the landscape such that dense clumps are only in rocky places and does that have long term implications for ecology of the system? Some evidence that rocky places were historically dense, so this may be an ecologically appropriate action.

2. Maybe relic of logistics of field trip, but seemed like a lot of work being done by roads. Can restoration be achieved it it's always by roads? Without full sweep of treatments especially in landscapes with rough terrain and limited access, unlikely to achieve all objectives with mechanized treatment and service work. Will prescribed fire ever be possible? If we want biomass removal, we need to be near roads, and we can't build any more roads (roadless rules).

3. Prescribed fire: major constraints against us using fire – unrealistic given current climate – just not going to happen. Big societal barriers – public doesn't like it, smoke regulatory issues, can only burn 100 acres / day for smoke requirements, so it's expensive to treat a 500-acre site. But if we don't burn, we're not likely going to affect fire behavior. Are we having any effect on the landscape scale or are we just running around doing things that aren't going to have any effect on the local scale or the landscape scale? If there are regulatory, policy, or conception constraints, we need to work to change them. Forests are either going to burn in a wildlife or in a condition that we have a little more control over (prescribed fire). Prescribed fire is one way to deal with all the seedlings and saplings, one of the less expensive ways. We treat the operable ground that we can get to with mechanical treatments as anchor points around polygons where we can do prescribed fire in between. The point is that to continue talking about prescribed fire as just something that is going to start happening is unrealistic. We have to really work on it as a Roundtable. It will take a seismic change in regulations to move forward. Societal problems are less than the regulatory problems. It's ridiculous to put fire fighters in the position of possibly being killed in a wildfire (not protecting homes or infrastructure). We need to push for regulatory change a lot more. This isn't a problem we can solve by ourselves or even at the state level. There is a role for Congress here, changing rules or providing incentives for resource managers. At least PF should be discussed and planned for as part of the landscape perspective. That's what we're doing with UMC, plugging it in to the NEPA process and try to make it happen, by being selective on where to apply it.

4. Question on if 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 follows environmental gradients or is more arbitrary – does the proportion vary depending on topography, moisture? Always want to emphasize variation across the landscape. Maybe need 2/3, 1/3, etc. in some areas.

5. Need to keep in mind that we're not trying to achieve every objective on every acre out there. There are going to be some things that individual people won't like because we're trying to achieve certain objectives (e.g., removing old trees to mitigate bark beetle risks). Also mistakes happen due to human factor, can't prevent all mistakes. In prescriptions, we should outline what are the top priorities, second priority, etc. (e.g., fuels, bark beetle, wildlife, etc.) so that we're all on the same page. Should we not call everything restoration if it's more fuels driven? Have the honest conversation about the needs out there. Not everything is restoration, you have misconceptions if you try to group it all under one box. Restoration is the new buzzword; now there is concern about credibility – there are other types of restoration besides ecological (social and economical)