



February 8th, 2022 Meeting Minutes

The meeting took place at the New Meadows Community Center from 11:00am to 3:00pm with 17 in-person participants and 22 virtual participants. Captured minutes are from group discussions and presentations. The recorded presentation is available on the [LSRWC website](#).

Meeting Participants

In person

Aaron Humpherys
Al Becker
Craig Utter
Darrell Clay
Dean Dryden
Emmit Taylor
Gary S Thompson
Gina Bonaminio
Jared Everson
Johanna Stangland
Keisha Miller
Linnea Hall
Madison Gates
Randy Fox
Vicky Purdy
Wendy Green
Wes Keller

Zoom

Adrianna Cardoso
Bill Lind

Zoom Continued

Brian McMorris
Cal Low
Colby Blair
Colin Chambers
Craig Johnson
Darren Parker
Jason Greenway
Jerri Eller
Joe Slichter
Jordan Messner
Josh Poole
Kyla Gardner
Melinda Ellison
Micki Eby
Mike McConnell
Mitch Silvers
Lance Holloway
Leigh Bailey
Rex Eller
Stacy LaFay

Gary asked participants to introduce themselves and state why they are part of the collaborative group. General themes included: Maintain way of life, provide technical assistance, represent private land ownership, improve water quality in the Little Salmon River, retain water rights, concerns of the group wasting taxpayer dollars and ranchers' time

Grazing Management in Riparian Areas

Presentation from Melinda Ellison, University of Idaho Range Specialist

*Due to video cutoff, notes begin with the slide titled "Soil Moisture." Full Presentation slides available at <https://littlesalmonriverwatershedcollaborative.com>

Mesic Meadow Grazing Management Study

- All pastures saw a dramatic decrease in soil moisture in 2020 due to drought conditions
- Early season, high-intensity grazing increased forb cover in pastures from one year to the next for high importance forbs for sage grouse
- Early season grazing also produced a higher average daily gain over late season

Riparian Willow Browse Study

- Short duration grazing: 3 days per pasture; 3 different pastures in Northern Idaho
- Willow measurements in early spring, pre-grazing
- Comparisons of field versus drone measurements of forb coverage resulted in 90% confidence of drone tool.
- Drone used to assess long term trends of willows
- Willow utilization ranged from 6% to 57% from pre-graze to post-graze. Wildlife grazers significantly contributed throughout the season
- 3 most common willow species were observed to decide which animal species preferred which willow
 - Plain leaf willow and lutea willow were grazed most but when the cattle were removed, the geyer species was the one in which the wildlife continued to prefer
 - This information can guide restoration management plans to decide which species are most viable for watershed restoration in grazed areas
 - Sandbar willow was heavily preferred by cattle over geyer willow
- Rinker Rock Creek Ranch Project was 3 years long and the Beyeler Ranch Project is concluding its third year presently

Questions

Q: Can you explain why you were trying to remove willows?

A: Where I'm from, riparian systems in Colorado are bigger and have higher elevation. Willows come in at a high rate and get overwhelmingly large which inhibits movement of wildlife, cattle, and competing grasses. In Idaho, this is not the same issue. Willows require some disturbance to put up shoots. If there is disturbance with water and nothing to keep them in check, they will come in heavier.

Q: Is management of willows beneficial and is using cattle a beneficial way to manage?

A: That was not a particular focus in the study so we don't have the data. What we're seeing is that a lot of wildlife stay in the areas year round, so would need to look at that more specifically.

Q: What were the zone sizes and what was the stocking rate?

A: 3 or 4 acres on the Rock Creek Ranch per pasture/60 cows at 60% utilization. Stocked it based on biomass available. In Ledore, the stocking rate was only 30-40% and grazing was pretty light.

Q: Rotational management, have you tried different times of year?

A: Only looked at June and August. We are in the process of extending this project and looking at other times. Since it was a two-year trial project, we would like to look at longer term/duration projects of five to ten years.

Q: Did you take soil profiles or root measurements of the willows, forbs, grasses?

A: No, we did not, but we are considering adding root measurements to future studies. That question would work more for a longer duration study.

Q: Did you use any fencing in your willow studies?

A: We didn't use fencing at Rock Creek but did use some electric fence in Beyler Ranch. Type of willow made a big difference in what cattle grazed on as smaller shoots. I do have the data available to share if anyone is interested as we continue to analyze the data. There are some companies starting to sell electric collars for cattle to delineate the grazing area.

Collaborative Work: Action Items from last meeting

1.) Little Salmon River - What is the current status of its water quality?

- Lance Holloway from IDEQ shared that there would be some monitoring occurring this summer in the LSR watershed.
- Latest data can be found on the website. IDEQ website link in on our website.
- Lance will try to put something together to show the most up-to-date information, unfortunately we don't have any recent data sets

2.) Request more participants on the purpose statement.

- Need for a steering committee, who can help guide the discussion. Steering committee would help develop meetings, decide where to go on field trips, think about how to be productive.
 - Linnea Hall agreed to join the Steering Committee.
 - Adrianna Cardoso offered through chat to assist in the effort.
 - Randy Fox agreed to join
 - Wes Keller agreed to join as well

Nez Perce Tribe Cultural History and use of the Little Salmon area

Presentation from Nakia Williamson, Nez Perce Tribe Cultural Resource Director

- Sharing information on indigenous connection to the area
- Federally determined Tribe identity through treaties with the US Government in 1855
- There is an area of exclusive use designated for hunting, fishing, and foraging which is a small portion of the original aboriginal territory
- Many interactions with over 13 land managers in five contiguous forests
- The Nez Perce people moved in strategic patterns based on seasonal gathering and ceremonial practices
- Core of their identity is the land; it is a relationship they engage with intentionally
- Water is a sacrament and start of their ceremonies
- Ancestors gathered at mouth of what is now named Boulder Creek and Hazard Creek.
- Burgdorf area/Secesh River is called Tuxpolisnima (Place of Beavers) from the historical significance for the Nez Perce peoples
- Stories of personal connections to the land go back thousands of years

- Preserving life isn't only for the benefit of their way of life, it is for the benefit to all peoples, land, and animals
- The Tribe works with good faith effort to find common ground with everyone - based on good relationships, not only pieces of paper

Questions

Q: Was the original 1855 treaty boundary Smokey Boulder Road?

A: Not sure of the road but could be in the area.

Q: Do you have any memory of the Indian Burial Grounds by Indian Springs?

A: Well that brings up a good point of why it's so important to restore these areas. My great grandfather was arrested because the treaty land wasn't being recognized. Our peoples were discouraged from continuing to be on our land.

Q: Are you aware of the Sheepeater campaign?

A: That was the Shoshone.

Q: Are you aware of salmon in the Meadows valley?

A: This area was where grazing took place for our horses. Most fishing took place between the falls and Riggins. We fished more than Chinook salmon, we utilized all the species of the river including white fish.

Collaborative Work- Opportunities for improving water quality in the Lower Little Salmon River (below the Little Salmon Falls)

Table 1 (Jared, Al, Keisha, Johanna):

- Natural Resource Conservation Service annual restoration programs
- Large scale options if want to look at a watershed
- Conservation easements w/ NRCS or Payette Land Trust
- Shared Stewardship/Good Neighbor Authority opportunities
- Idaho Department of Fish & Game might have monies
- County weed departments

Zoom Group 1 (Colby, Stacy, Lance):

- Didn't come up with specific opportunities.
- Stacy would like to hear more about IDFG's pool of reservoir water at Brundage Reservoir and find out if they are willing to be part of the process to help improve water quality, without affecting any ranchers in Meadows Valley. Josh Poole, IDFG, will put Stacy in touch with someone that can answer that question.

Zoom Group 2 (Craig, Jerri, Rex, Josh):

- Addressing fish entrainment
- Planting/bank stabilization
- Educational campaign for anglers to be better stewards
- Identify what has been done in the past and could be added to

Zoom Group 3 (Leigh, Adrianna):

- Planting
- USFS can promote restoration on Forest Service lands through improvements within projects- Boulder Creek road improvements and decommissioning

Table 3 (Vicki, Darrell, Aaron, Wes, Madison):

- Boulder Creek opportunities
- Need clearly defined objectives and issues before bringing in solutions

Table 2 (Emmit, Dean, Linnea, Randy):

- Who was involved previously with water advisory groups?
- Increase outreach to private property owners to the North for their voices to be heard
- Exploring additional hatchery in cold water areas below the falls

Other thoughts:

Brundage ski resort- how will the new 1200 unit expansion affect water use in the future?

Removing the barrier at Little Salmon Falls

Next meeting: **March 8th, 2022, 7:00pm-9:00pm**, New Meadows Community Center and Zoom

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<https://littlesalmonriverwatershedcollaborative.com>