



University of Nevada, Reno
Research & Innovation

Whittell Forest Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

Monday, March 7th, 2022
2:00-4:00pm

Advisory Committee: Sarah Bisbing (Chair) & Hunter Noble (Secretary);
Members: Ryan Shane, Anna Belle Monti, Pat King, Chris Pritsos, Tom Hall, Vic Redding;

Guests: Ahmad Itani & Mridul Gautam

Meeting Summary

Welcome and Introduction

Sarah welcomed everyone and introduced Ryan Shane, the new member of the Committee, who will be replacing John Christopherson as the NDF representative. Ryan expressed his excitement to what Whittell can bring to forestry across the state and the opportunities it presents for research and teaching. Sarah then asked for any changes to the previous meeting minutes, to which Tom motioned for approval and Anna Belle seconded.

Forest Planning & Progress Updates

1. **NDF Burn Scar Felling** – Hunter described the ongoing discussion with NDF about snag felling in portions off the Little Valley Fire burn scar on Whittell Forest, with work hopefully beginning this spring. Sarah added that new MOUs are being developed with NDF. Ryan suggested that language regarding flexibility and adaptability is important to include. Ryan also explained the limitations surrounding the work. Hunter agreed and provided additional details and expectations. Anna Belle added that Little Valley has identified as nationally prioritized fire shed which could provide additional funding for rehabilitation work.
2. **Internet Access** - Sarah reminded the group about the ALERT WILDFIRE Camera. Hunter explained the process he and Kent lab staff have been looking at to get internet

to the Little Valley with the existing infrastructure. Tom asked about general access and timing (summer versus winter) and the importance access during winter for teaching and research to which Chris agreed.

3. **Infrastructure & Equipment-** Hunter updated the group on current equipment and work which included the skid steer (for mastication and road maintenance), woodchipper (fuels reductions both at Whittell and Washoe Valley) and portable sawmill. Mridul asked about other equipment that would be valuable like the mini-excavator and grapple rake attachment, to which Hunter provided additional details on their value.

Forest Outreach & Teaching

1. **Post Fire Restoration Independent Study** – Hunter provided details on the continued work with students in the West Washoe Valley. Chris asked about the relationships with the community members. Hunter replied they all have been overwhelmingly positive for those they have worked with. Sarah commented about ensuring Hunter and student’s time is used correctly. Anna Belle suggested a mission statement to help guide what kind of work Hunter and students perform.
2. **Courses at Whittell** - Sarah described the increased use off Whittell for education and teaching. This included the silviculture class doing an overnight trip last fall, proposed use for a new dendrology course, and the exploration of bringing back the summer field ecology course by biology faculty. Hunter added that facilities have been improved to increase hosting capabilities. Sarah then provided details on the seconds annual BioBlitz that is in planning, with this year’s being expanded to the public and agency partners.
3. **Washoe Tribe of NV and CA** – Sarah detailed how she and Hunter and coordinating with Sarah Cowie, an anthropology faculty, to work with Washoe representatives to increase utilization of Whittell by tribal members. Sarah Cowie’s grad student is also developing a heritage management plan for best practices of cultural resources onsite. Sarah has also requested funding to help support Washoe use of Whittell. Vic added that a Director of Indigenous Relations is about to be hired and they will be a valuable resource as well.

Forest Research & Management

1. **Whittell Summer Internship** – Hunter explained how students will continue the internship this summer semester, with a shift of working more on Whittell.
2. **Summer Planning** – Hunter provided details on the summer planning which includes fuels reduction work along the road, increasing forest inventory sampling, and continuing facility and road maintenance.

3. **Forestry Technician Hiring** – Hunter is hiring three student technicians who will work 10 weeks during the summer conducting forest inventory and assisting Hunter will other forest related work.

Access Updates & Discussion

Sarah updated the group on the status of access, which she stated has not changed drastically. Sarah briefly reviewed all current access points into Little Valley (both usable and not usable). Tom provided an update on his research regarding historic access into Little Valley and the variety of historic documents and information he uncovered. He is waiting on next steps and suggested a separate meeting to discuss. Anna Belle provided details regarding access on Big Canyon Road and the intentions of the community below. The community is very concerned about public access, but Anna Belle reiterated that the road is strictly administrative and will not be open to the public.

Forest Use Policy Updates & Discussion

Sarah explained the progress on the use policy for Whittell, and that the biggest question is how to handle public access. She asked the group for their thoughts which resulted in a group wide discussion on types of access, easements, prohibited activities, signage requirements. The group was in general agreement regarding the type of access that should be permitted, what prohibited activities are, and that updated signage would be to be posted.

Open discussion of agenda items

Tom told the group how Jane Tors asked him to do an interview about the Whittell Forest. Anna Belle explained that a Sierra Nevada red fox was sighted at Bowers Mansion and to keep an eye out on the trail cameras.

Meeting adjourns