



University of Nevada, Reno
Research & Innovation

Whittell Forest Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

Wednesday, July 27th, 2022
2:00-4:00pm

Present: Sarah Bisbing (Chair) & Hunter Noble (Secretary); Members: Ryan Shane, Anna Belle Monti, Pat King, Tom Hall;

Absent: Chris Pritsos, Vic Redding

Guests: Ahmad Itani, Mridul Gautam, Jimmy Voorhis, Pat Martinez, Troy Miller

Meeting Summary

Previous Meeting Minutes

Hunter asked for any edits or comments on the previous meeting minutes, there were none. Pat motioned to approve and Sarah seconded, motion passed.

Education and Research

- 1. Guest Presentation** - Jimmy Voorhis of Kodama Systems presented on their soil carbon storage technology. A potential collaboration between Whittell and Kodama is being pursued with Whittell providing feedstock material for the pilot from thinning projects on the forest.
- 2. Experimental Field Ecology Course** - For the first time in 6 years, Biology 322, experimental field ecology, was taught on Whittell. The course took place over the summer, with 3 weekends field trips and one day trip. The class had twelve students enrolled, and students camped on site in the wall tents.
- 3. USFS Common Gardens** - The Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station is utilizing Whittell as one of their research sites for *Balsamorhiza sagittata* common gardens.

4. **UNR Faculty Research at Whittell** - The Leonard Lab is conducting several studies on bumblebees at Whittell, including investigating bumblebee gut microbiome, population and species presence, and bumblebee behavior. Floris Van Brugel's lab is conducting studies on gas dispersal in relation to insect pheromones. Mridul provided some additional background on Floris' research. Troy asked about expanded use of Whittell by colleges and departments outside of CABNR. Hunter detailed other departments that are currently using or planning to use the Forest.
5. **Artist in residence** - Sarah described how Whittell is interested in supporting an "Artist in Residence" at the Forest to help support members of the UNR campus outside the natural sciences. Pat King added that Whittell would likely also have value for the History and Anthropology departments. Sarah explained how the marketing team at R&I has been increasing the visibility of the forest vastly through the work. Mridul added that the development of the Forest is a long-term investment. Ahmad added that hands on experience is incredibly value and Whittell can be used for this. Troy agreed and stated the importance of field labs. Sarah added how Whittell Forest presents and incredible amount of opportunity, and that once students are on site they are hooked on the space.
6. **Lodgepole Pine Meadow Transects** - Sarah and Hunter are going to re-measure Dr. Ed Kleiner's pine encroachment transects in the meadow. Dr. Ed Kleiner, former Whittell Board Member, measured lodgepole pine encroachment in the meadow in the 80s and 90s. The remeasurement will document change over the last 35-40 years. Ahmad suggested that a professional interview should be conducted with Ed to document his knowledge and the history of Whittell.

Whittell Graduate Student Fellowship

Sarah reviewed the Whittell Graduate Student Fellowship that supports graduate student research on Whittell. She provided background and history on the fellowship, R&I's increased financial support, and how the fellowship helps support underrepresented fields. Sarah reviewed the last two year of fellow recipients and added that they can be viewed on the [Whittell website](#). Sarah added that the heled bring an increase of interest to the Forest, especially by new faculty. In the future, fellowship recipients will present to the Committee.

Planning & Infrastructure

1. **Management Plan Update** - Hunter provided an update on the status of the forest management plan, specifically how the forest inventory data his summer crew is collecting is key to developing the plan.

2. **Equipment and Facilities** - Hunter provided updates on road repair and future road maintenance needs. He then reviewed new infrastructure, which includes a TuffShed for storage, wall tents for classes, a portable sawmill, and the refurbishment of the existing storage shed.
3. **Whittell Boundary Survey** - Troy explained the need to know what the exact boundaries are important for a number of reasons, and the need to do it efficiently. Pat Matinez added details on the logistics of a survey, and that Real Estate Office can assist when the time is needed. Discussion shifted to how acquisition of land adjacent to Whittell but inside the Tahoe Basin could change opportunities, and that this had been explored but not pursued in the past.
4. **Access Updates** - Sarah reviewed all historic/previous access points, including whether or not they can be used. Anna Belle detailed the Forest Service acquisition of property in Washoe Valley and adjacent to Little Valley, which includes a road. Sarah added details on the property and the potential opportunities it presents for Whittell and UNR. Anna Belle added that community was concerned about public access, but that this road is administrative access only.
5. **Landscape Scale Restoration Grant (LSR)** - Sarah described how UNR was awarded the \$292k LSR grant for post fire restoration and 100 acres of fuel treatments on Whittell. A large portion of the funding will be used for DroneSeed aerial seeding on private parcels affected by the Little Valley Fire. Anna Belle added she wants to connect on additional funding opportunities for Whittell.

Forest Outreach

1. **Washoe Tribe of NV & CA** - Hunter updated the Committee on his site tour with members and staff of the Washoe Tribe of NV & CA. The tour was to facilitate and discuss use of Whittell by the Washoe Tribe for tribal youth and cultural activities, as well as firewood collection to help reduce fuels on the Forest and provide firewood to Tribal Elders.
2. **2022 Whittell BioBlitz** - Hunter and Sarah reviewed the 2022 BioBlitz which was attended by roughly one dozen people. Scheduling conflicts and poor weather limited attendance, but the event still resulted in increasing visibility of Whittell for research and teaching.

Meeting adjourns