



University of Nevada, Reno  
Research & Innovation

## Whittell Forest Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022

10am-12pm

**In Attendance:** Hunter Noble (Secretary); Members: Ryan Shane, Anna Belle Monti, Pat King, Troy Miller (for Vic Redding), Pat Martinez (for Vic Redding), and Tom Hall;

**Guests:** Ahmad Itani

### Meeting Summary

#### House Keeping

##### 1. Previous Meeting Minutes

Hunter asked for any edits or changes to the previous meeting summary (7/27). No edits were suggested. Tom motioned to approve the minutes; the motion passed.

##### 2. Committee Member Tenure

Ahmad provided background on the appointment of members to the Whittell Forest Advisory Committee, including the numbers of members and tenure length. Several members of the Committee tenure are currently up for renewal, which will be administered by Sarah and VPRI. More information regarding Committee governance can be found in the [UAM](#).

#### Planning & Infrastructure

##### 1. Equipment & Facilities

Hunter provided updates regarding recent equipment acquisitions, which includes a Flat Bed F250 truck acquired through Federal Surplus, a mini-excavator, UTV, and a grapple rake attachment for the skid steer. Hunter also provided updates on the use of the portable sawmill, and the addition of two new Connex containers for secure storage on the Forest. Pat King added that Connex containers can be used for drying lumber.

##### 2. Property Boundary Survey

Hunter then provided details on the property boundary survey being conducted by CFA. This included their current progress from work this Fall, and anticipated work in the Spring. Pat Martinez provided additional details regarding the logistics of survey completion. This led to a discussion on signage, public access, the different types of public access, and how to protect research and infrastructure from vandalism. The discussion then switched to the history of fencing and grazing on Whittell, as well as current policies regarding these two topics. Discussion focused on grazing allotments versus targeted grazing and the pros/cons of using grazing as a management tool. It was noted that grazing is currently banned on Whittell Forest by the Board of Regents. It was ultimately decided that the topic of public access would be tabled for a future discussion.

## **Forest Outreach & Collaborations**

### **1. Washoe Tribe MOU**

Hunter explained that UNR has entered into an MOU with the Washoe Tribe of NV & CA. The MOU will allow the Whittell Forest and the Tribe to collaborate on the removal of fuelwood from the Forest. This will support fuel reduction efforts on Whittell Forest to reduce fire risk while also providing fuelwood to heat Tribal Elders' homes.

### **2. LSR work**

Hunter provided updates on the Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) grant. This includes trials by [DroneSeed](#) on both private property in Franktown and on Whittell Forest. These trials will identify the best microsites for future seeding efforts by DroneSeed to maximize success. Hunter and Sarah have also begun to connect with landowners in the Franktown area which the LSR grant can support restoration efforts. Hunter then explained the intent of UNR to enter into an MOU with the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD). This MOU will allow TMFPD sawyers to fell the remaining standing dead trees on the "arm" of Whittell, with financial support for the project coming from the LSR Grant.

## **Forest Research**

### **1. Meadow Transects**

Hunter updated the group on the meadow transect data collection. One third of the transects have been re-measured. Preliminary data estimates that the density of lodgepole pine since Dr. Ed Kleiner's measurement in the 80s and 90s has increased by between 200% to 2300% depending on the transect. Completing the re-measurement of the remaining transects is a top priority for next summer.

### **2. Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS) Common Gardens**

Hunter provided an update on the RMRS balsam arrowroot common gardens. The garden has been completed installed at Whittell and will be monitored yearly to track success of the different populations. It was recommended that a sign be installed that describes what research is occurring.

### **3. Archeology Work**

Hunter reminded the group of the Graduate Student Fellow who is conducting research related to archaeology of Whittell Forest. He then updated the group on her work including finding new documents and artifacts in the UNR museum, as well as relocating some sites on Whittell. He added that all her work will be vital when a full archaeology survey will be conducted.

### **4. Whittell Forest Fellows**

Hunter transitioned into reviewing the Whittell Forest Graduate Fellowship and the graduate student research it supports on the Whittell Forest. He announced that the Fellows would each do a short presentation on their research at the next meeting. Ryan and Anna Belle added that research conducted at Whittell is important to managers across the Eastern Sierras and that an open channel for this research is critical. It was suggested that research be compiled into an easily accessible format.

## Teaching

### 1. Engineering Capstone Course

Hunter detailed the Engineering Capstone project taking place at Whittell. A student group will design a wood structure, specifically an outdoor awning for the picnic area. The structure will provide shade and protection from the elements and be an upgrade to current failing wood awning. The wood for the project will be provided by milling lumber onsite using the portable sawmill. The discussion then transitioned to Hunter and Tom describing the water rights that Tom helped the University acquire, and how these can be used for beneficial use at Whittell.

### 2. Graduate Student and Summer Class Updates

Hunter provided an update on the classes that occurred at Whittell this Fall, which included Sarah's silviculture class, where students spend the weekend at Whittell, and a class from UNR at Lake Tahoe who hiked in on the Lonkey Flume Trail.

## Potential Collaboration Opportunities

### 1. USFS Shared Stewardship

Hunter detailed the intent of UNR to enter into a shared stewardship agreement with the Forest Service. Anna Belle provided details on the agreement and how it would allow for Whittell Forest and the USFS to collaborate and conduct cross-boundary, landscape level management and achieve shared objectives. Ryan and Anna Belle also added that the Nevada Shared Stewardship program could also support cooperative management across Whittell Forest.

### 2. SNPLMA

Hunter explained to the group of the intent to apply for a [SNMPLA](#) hazardous fuel reduction grant. This grant would be in collaboration with TMFPD and would support widespread mechanical treatments on Whittell to reduce the risk of high severity wildfire, restore forests to a healthier condition, and help protect the Franktown community.

### 3. Nevada Land Trust

Hunter provided brief details on his and Sarah's work to facilitate collaboration between the Nevada Land Trust (NLT) and TMFPD. TMFPD has funds to conduct fuel treatments within 1000ft of NV Energy powerlines, which falls within some NLT properties.

## Open Discussion

### 1. Friends of Whittell Forest

Pat King introduced the idea of a "Friends of Whittell Forest", a group that could provide outside support to the Whittell Forest. Similar non-profit groups exist for a variety of causes and entities and provide auxiliary support including fundraising.

### 2. Little Valley Photo Collage Entry

Tom shared information on the Envision Washoe 2040 photo entry contest. He suggested that photos from Whittell Forest be entered as a way to help increase public knowledge of the Forest and the work that is being done.