

Greetings Co-collaborators!

As many of you have heard I am now located north and maybe slightly east, and serving as the Petersburg District Ranger! I have to admit equal parts excitement and remorse over the decision to leave, as the progress we've made there on POW will no longer be my task. Next week, I will begin exciting new work with new partners, new communities, new stakeholders and hopefully building some new and productive relationships that can replicate the same good outcomes in Petersburg and Kake that we've been building there on Prince of Wales.

I am confident that my full-time replacement for Thorne Bay will be announced in the not-too-distant future, and am pleased to announce that Kent Nicholson has been asked to fill in as the Acting District Ranger, for the next few months. Kent will arrive on POW later this week, starting officially on 2/13. Kent is currently working for Charley Streuli out of the Forest Supervisors Office, as the Tongass Timber Sale Program Manager. Kent offers you a lot of SE AK experience, including some time well-spent on POW. After spending several hours with him this morning, I am confident that he'll hit the ground running.

In this note, I share with you MY final update on efforts in the Stoney Community Forestry Area, in addition to sharing some parting thoughts with those who have sacrificed their valuable time and energy in the name of collaboration.

An Outlook on FY12:

As many of you are aware, federal agency budgets are in sharp decline, a trend I suspect will continue into the foreseeable future. The good news is that POW and Stoney more specifically, are target rich environments for those funds that are available.

In coordination with Tom Cady, the POW Watershed, Fisheries and Wildlife Staff Officer, here's what we're planning for 2012.

1. Continue to acquire data (terrestrial and aquatic) across the greater Stoney Community Forestry project area (expanding our knowledge of the existing condition).
2. Continue to implement upland improvement and aquatic restoration projects as opportunities and funding present themselves.
3. Work on drafting a **comprehensive Watershed Restoration Plan (WRP)** either for individual watershed units or the area as a whole. The agency is funded to complete this task this year, and at present, island staff are not sure how far we will get considering a number of fiscal 'unknowns' and as always, **competing priorities**.

For potential progress on the Economic and Timber Sectors, we're intending to begin field inventory efforts this summer on the Naukati Timber Sale (EIS) which is located at the North end of the Stoney Community Forestry Area. Progress on Naukati this season will depend much on the current Big Thorne EIS, a large and complex project planning area that is the top priority for the POW Planning Team. The team is also expected to work on the Kosciusko Veg. Management EA, which has been playing second fiddle to other projects for the past 4 years.

As I have shared before, I believe it is the potential Economic opportunity in traditional timber sales that are most likely to accelerate other land management actions in order to comprehensively meet all 5 of

the Sector DFC's for the Staney Community Forestry Area. Stay tuned and stay involved, your comments and input on the Naukati EIS will be just as useful as the Sector DFC's you helped create for agency consideration prior to defining a project. Once the Naukati EIS is ready for a Record of Decision, your investment of time as stakeholders could be very useful to crafting Best Value Criteria, which is necessary to use the much discussed Stewardship Contracting authority presently available to the Forest Service. I would also remind stakeholders that this authority expires in 2013, unless Congress chooses to reauthorize it...

A Refined view of FY11:

Much of the following was reported to you in my previous update, and at least one item has been added by Tom Cady. In keeping with the Opportunity Sectors defined by the working group, I have included the sector groups I felt were most represented by the items below (**bold text** in parentheses). As a reminder, the 5 opportunity sectors the group defined are... **Subsistence, Terrestrial Habitat, Aquatic Habitat, Economics and Timber**

- 100 Acres Wildlife Thinning – complete – (**Subsistence, Terrestrial Habitat, Economics**)
- Identified and prioritized additional wildlife habitat improvement thinning opportunities throughout the greater project area (Shaheen/Naukati). A comprehensive thinning CE should just about cover all the opportunities throughout the project area. That CE should be in place before any substantial funds arrive to perform the desired work. (**Subsistence, Terrestrial Habitat**)
- Completed NEPA and permitting for Staney tributary in-stream and riparian restoration efforts. Restored two 0.5 mile length Staney Tributary streams and 15 acres of riparian thinning with hand crews. The work involved adding ten large wood structures to riparian harvested streams. The work was a collaborative effort with the SO Watershed Effectiveness Monitoring (WREM) group, and was completed with FS personnel and local YCC crews. (**Aquatic Habitat**)
- Completed data gap assessments on more than **200** culverts, identified **19** new fish streams and completed **12** upstream habitat assessments on non-fish passing culverts (“red”) identifying **2.25** miles of potential habitat to be restored in the greater Staney area. (**Aquatic Habitat**)
- 24 miles of road storage - this work yielded the removal of 12 red-pipes which reconnected more than 3,200 meters of fish habitat in the greater Staney area. (**Aquatic Habitat**)
- Completed Tier II surveys on the North Fork and South Fork of Shaheen Creeks (total approximately 1000 meters) (**Aquatic Habitat**)

As this will be my last update to you all regarding our collective efforts on Staney, I wanted to share some parting thoughts for you to consider...

As Agency officials spend more time and energy dealing with internal affairs (declining budgets, increased bureaucracy, new initiatives and an upcoming election) it is important to understand the looming impact that will have to time and capacity. I believe Collaboration is a valuable forum for discussing and ultimately weighing the value of openly crafted actions on public lands. I believe it is most fruitful when local, knowledgeable stakeholders engage the process and that it must be open to all participants regardless of their location. I am also aware that collaborating in this way takes more time

from everyone involved; public officials and the public alike. And, I suspect that in the face of the potential changes that may soon begin to affect public agencies, it will be most critical to continue to approach these collaborative processes with great patience.

As many of you know, we've been talking about this massive "greater than Stoney" landscape, for more than 4 years. In that time, some good work you supported has been done, and your local public servants have learned much from your input. It will take much time to do everything desired - much time to see those Desired Future Conditions become the Existing Condition that the future generation inherits from your efforts. It will also take funding, and where those funds will come from is uncertain. Working locally to increase business capacity and be more competitive for the work that is eventually funded may help to achieve more work on the ground. And it may also help meet local economic objectives that so many stakeholders have supported. This is a place where the non-agency stakeholders can continue to focus and hope that you will.

I believe it will also be very important to build a relationship with your new Ranger(s). That position is key to moving these objectives forward, to advocating for the scarce funds available, and to correct course if needed. Make yourselves known and get to know the new Ranger.

With these thoughts, I wish you all the best in your future efforts and will state again that I am encouraged by what's been done to date. I will be watching for your successes from here...

J.

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