

## Building Collaborative Stewardship, North Fork Crooked River

### Building capacity for collaborative stewardship

**Location:** Far West Region: Oregon

**Project Summary:** Project is a model for future efforts as partners work together to forestall lawsuits and establish improvements on private land as well as Federal.



Mutual learning and joint fact finding support collaborative decision making

### Resource Challenge

The North Fork Crooked River is located within Crook County, OR – a place where agriculture and natural resources are valued in the face of on-going demographic and economic transition. Designated a National Wild and Scenic River (WSR) in 1988, the North Fork Crooked River has existing outstandingly remarkable scenic and botanical values as well as a sensitive species of frog and redband trout. Issues and concerns include: effects of de-watering (irrigation) and increased water temperature (303(d) list) on fish; grazing impacts and whether livestock grazing is a suitable use in WSR; strongly held values tied to the protection of historical grazing use and water rights; concern over upland condition with heavy concentration of small diameter trees; disparate opinions regarding restoration approaches; and inconsistent implementation of the 1993 interagency management plan. With the proliferation of lawsuits regarding WSR management in Oregon, the Ochoco National Forest contacted the NRST to help them initiate a collaborative process to address the management of the North Fork Crooked River.

### Examples of Key Partners

*Principle partners:* U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Crook County Natural Resources Planning Committee (CCNRPC), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), permittees, private landowners and managers, National Riparian Service Team (NRST) and members of the Riparian Coordination Network (RCN)

### Results and Accomplishments

**Pre-work** - The Forest Service, CCNRPC and NRST hosted a series of meetings with principle partners and other interested parties to develop an inclusive involvement strategy. A situation assessment included a series of interviews conducted with key stakeholders to get a sense of existing concerns and issues. Finally, an electronic communication network and website were created for interested parties who were unable to directly participate in the process.

**Creeks and Communities Workshop** - Held on a Friday and Saturday to increase community involvement, a workshop was conducted to build a foundation of understanding based on riparian-wetland function and the Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) assessment method, and to create a common vocabulary while building relationships among diverse stakeholders.

**Community PFC Assessment** (5 days, 20 stream miles) – An experienced interdisciplinary team and diverse stakeholders together assessed the NF Crooked River and engaged in facilitated discussions regarding current condition, limiting factors and opportunities.

**Community Briefing** – The PFC assessment results along with management and monitoring recommendations were presented to the community at an evening meeting providing a forum for questions and discussion

**Outcomes** - Individual and institutional capacity for collaborative stewardship were strengthened by providing training and mentoring opportunities in a “learn by doing” approach while working to resolve water and riparian issues on-the-ground. Information gathered during the community assessment will be used for the next phase of collaboratively designing a management and monitoring strategy. Participant

*Others involved:* U.S. Fish and Wildlife, OR Dept. of Agriculture, OR Dept. of Forestry, OR Dept. Fish and Wildlife, OR State University Extension Soil and Water Conservation Districts, interested citizens, county planners, Crooked River Watershed Council, Juniper Chapter of the Sierra Club, OR Fly Fishers, OR Natural Desert Association, and the Deschutes Resources Conservancy.

efforts to forestall lawsuits, potential improvements on private land as well as Federal, and a model for future efforts have been initiated.

### **Innovation/Highlight**

**"The outcomes are more than I had hoped for. The education, collaboration and joint assessments are a wonderful model." Larry Timchak, Supervisor, Ochoco National Forest Supervisor**

### **Project Contact**

Janice Staats  
Hydrologist  
National Riparian Service Team  
3050 NE 3rd Street  
Prineville, OR 97754  
(541) 416-6891  
janice\_staats@or.blm.gov

Mike Lunn  
Facilitator  
Crook County Natural Resource  
Planning Committee  
2400 Century Drive  
Prineville, OR 97754  
(541) 416-7671  
mcalunn@bendnet.com

### **Website:**

[www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon/projects/units/paulina/northfork/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon/projects/units/paulina/northfork/)