BEF Cooperator’s Meeting Notes – January 9, 2013

Introductions and safety message -- John Brissette

* Introduced the possibility of a BEF field day for cooperators
* Station-level brochures available for Experimental Forests
* Data sharing policy is in a draft stage of review
* National-level EF Sharepoint site available on FS intranet

BEF research requests discussion – Mariko Yamasaki

* Need to better organize the requests system – two submission opportunities/year (April 1 and October 1) for FS review and approval, rejection or need for further information within several weeks of the submission deadlines
* Increasing level of research on BEF requires timely submission of plot coordinates; please use compartment numbers in plot descriptions/proposals
* Cooperators will be responsible for sorting out the possibility of starting new work in areas currently used for other research activities
* Review process requests cooperators to have a research end date clearly marked on proposals; and let FS know annually if cooperators plan to work on existing BEF projects
* FS is increasing the emphasis on cooperator safety in the research requests – be prepared to address daily cooperator check-in/out procedures, job hazard analyses, special sampling issues (shotgun sampling, tree climbing, etc)
* Additional NEPA reviews will be required of any proposals involving tree cutting, significant earth-disturbing activity, chemical application. The burden will fall on the researcher to provide the necessary information
* Shotgun sampling of canopy vegetation requires special notice efforts. Requires following all required procedures – especially notifying FS Law Enforcement Officers in the involved districts (Saco, Pemi, and Andro RD’s) of upcoming shooting activity in addition to the necessary local law enforcement, public information and BEF community awareness efforts
* Remember that research proposed for the greater WMNF requires a similar research request and approval process – coordinated out of the WMNF Supervisor’s Office by Erica Cate.
* Finally, research detritus (flagging, sample gear, etc) needs to be removed when the studies are completed

Facilities update and discussion – Chris Costello

* Bathroom renovation in the old office has commenced; lab counter and cabinet replacement has begun
* Everyone needs to work together to keep the lab, conference room, and garage spaces clean and tidy
* Chemicals need to be stored properly in the flammable closets; make sure Chris has the necessary MSDS sheets for anything placed in the closets by cooperators
* No overnight dogs at BEF; well-behaved day-visiting dogs must be under control
* BEF has inside accommodations for roughly 25 people. We will begin to limit tent numbers to 6 people tenting in specific sites due to the additional strain on kitchen, bath, and laundry facilities
* BEF does not currently charge for accommodations (WMNF personnel are charged through their system) but the facilities continue to age and will need repair and maintenance which comes out of ever-shrinking station funds. How long we can continue to offer no-charge lodging is not clear.
* Several cooperators raised the notion of beginning to build a housing estimate into future grant proposals so that larger grants would have some housing element included; smaller unfunded research and educational field trips stays would be treated differently
* Potential ways to fund internet access for BEF cooperators in the future were discussed – and need further investigation.
* Good dependable, higher speed internet access would be desirable considering cooperators’ research needs, safety checks, etc
* Other business before break included: announcing the availability of the UNHCE on Uneven-aged management Proceedings; and a new, very informational entomology publication on Asian long-horned beetle was now available through the NAS&PF website; also the UNHCE nhbugs.org website was a great site for up to date information

Current and future activity discussion – Jon Janelle

* Current timber sale is on-going; please be aware and stay safe driving and when parking vehicles
* Potential timber sale planning in the future includes: C-47 20-ac clearcut, C-44 and 45 patch cuts, C-11 aspen regeneration large patches; C-4 shelterwood; C-5 and 6 group selection (30 groups); C-32, Expansion C-1 and 2 shelterwood; and C-7 strip cuts
* Conversations with cooperators on proposed treatments and long-term plots will occur; cooperators will be part of the project scoping process; 100% of each proposed compartment will not necessarily be treated; another reason to get plot locations to FS
* Replacement of the aquatic passage on the Stanley Road will occur sometime in late summer 2013. Multi day road closure is expected.
* NEON will potentially be running power and equipment on the Lower Road in 2013; but we are unaware of the specifics yet
* NEON has tentatively said construction might begin in June 2013; could potentially disrupt cooperator work schedules
* WMNF collaboration on public safety, any temporary road closures, etc need to be coordinated with FS LEOs and public information personnel in a timely manner
* Any construction timetables and information will be shared with cooperators; and feedback on potential impacts requested

NEON update – John Brissette

* Current planning information suggest a June 2013 construction commencement; we’ll ask for a construction schedule; forward concerns on work impacts, parking, and access to those working in the neighborhood of the construction site
* Construction includes: raised boardwalk to sample sites, larger tower, small equipment monitoring building

Hubbard Brook Research Foundation educational update – Geoff Wilson

* Provides research experience for teachers at HBEF and BEF
* Middle school science teachers are rotating through BEF on Yanai plot as well as small mammal plots
* Working to develop BEF data sets for classroom use; how to better use BEF in science education
* Check with Geoff if you have a specific teacher in mind

Other topics for further discussion

* Forming an ad hoc group to investigate/discuss potential opportunities to contribute to BEF upkeep; set a date in a month or so to investigate/report on various aspects of the discussion
* Concern that any proposed fee structure (if utilized) accommodates non-UNH students/researchers; minimizing excessive paperwork
* Topic of meeting scheduling was discussed – every other year during winter break sounded okay with a science update opportunity possible; use technology where possible
* PL Brissette asked a visioning question for research direction at BEF in 5 to 10 years? Many felt that question needed some pre-work questions to consider and a subsequent discussion. Continuing a strong timber/wildlife vegetation management focus into the future is important – many cooperative research efforts have capitalized on the types of vegetation treatments, their relative proximity and the time since last treatment at BEF; and ecosystem services comparisons between HBEF and BEF possible.

Attendees: Matt Vadeboncoeur, Karen Bennett, Heidi Asbjornsen, Mark Ducey, Ken Desmarais, Andy Ouimette, Geoff Wilson, Roger Simmons, Erica Cate, Bob Evans, Dave Hollinger, Wally Shortle, Ted Howard, Coeli Hoover, Rick Alimi, Andrew Richardson, Brady Hardiman, Pete Pekins, Michelle Day, Chris Costello, Jon Janelle, Bill Leak, John Brissette, Mariko Yamasaki