Coordinated Resource Offering Protocol (CROP): Developing Levelized Supply to Manage Risk

Point of Contact: Scott Aycock, Program Administrator
Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council
2363 SW Glacier Place
Redmond, OR 97756

Tel: 541-548-9525
Fax: 541-548-9549
Web: www.coic.org
Email: scotta@coic.org

I. PROJECT SUMMARY

CROP is nested within the overarching COPWRR project, which has the following goals:

1) to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire in communities through the restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems and the development of defensible space;
2) to restore the structure, function and processes of forest and rangeland ecosystems in the project area;
3) to establish and nurture healthy, diverse markets for the by-products of fuel treatment and ecosystem restoration, and provide opportunities for sustainable jobs and income in local communities; and
4) to provide individuals and stakeholder groups in Central Oregon with opportunities and the capacity to engage in collaboration so that multiple values are incorporated into ecosystem management.

Within these overarching COPWRR goals, the goals for the CROP Pilot are to:

1) develop public and private land management capacity and commitment to engage in consistent, coordinated planning for fuel treatment by-product supply, based on longer-term resource planning and across multiple jurisdictions;
2) create and maintain a steady, predictable flow of small diameter material within individual "investor landscapes";
3) use the coordinated small diameter timber supply offerings to catalyze private investment in by-product-utilizing manufacturing capability; and
4) use the resulting market for small diameter materials to enable the expansion of fuel reduction and ecosystem restoration project acres.

The specific, measurable objectives of this project are to:

- Develop a set of planning protocols to coordinate and levelize supply offerings from the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and the Prineville District of the BLM;
- Produce and disseminate annual supply projections and economic data for the region in order to promote investment in woody biomass utilizing enterprises;
- Increase acres treated on National Forest and other lands;
- Decrease costs per acres;

- Stimulate job and wealth creation resulting from local business utilization of woody biomass;
- Implement a monitoring program to evaluate the economic, wildfire hazard, and environmental benefits of coordinating supply offerings and providing supply and economic data; including sharing lessons and potential replicability of CROP to other regions with significant public land hazardous fuels;
- Publicize the opportunities and benefits associated with utilizing woody biomass in Central Oregon; and
- Provide a public process and forum for stakeholder collaboration in forest ecosystem management

By levelizing the supply of small-diameter material from hazardous fuel reduction projects on the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and Prineville District of the BLM, this project will enable industry investments in woody biomass utilizing technologies. This will expand the local market for and increase the value of small diameter timber. An enhanced market and increased values for small diameter material will help to reduce the costs per acre of fuel reduction treatments and increase the number of acres treated on federal lands in Central Oregon. One of the greatest benefits of CROP is that it reduces a key area of risk and uncertainty – a stable supply of material – for businesses that want to produce marketable forest products and energy products from small-diameter trees and woody biomass. Through CROP, the risks of catastrophic wildfire will be reduced, the health of forest ecosystems and the environment will be improved, and the communities of Central Oregon will be strengthened and engaged in resource management decisions in a positive and constructive fashion.

There are many potential tangible benefits of CROP, but for this proposal we have used extremely conservative estimates. Conservatively, we are estimating at least $100/acre in savings over an additional 22,000 acres/year of fuel treatments, equaling a total savings of $2.2 million/year. Since CROP will not fully realize within only two years (due to investment and construction timeframes), we are estimating a total savings of $1.1 million/year by the second year of the project, which would steadily increasing after year two towards $2.2 million/year.

The CROP Initiative has the support and involvement of public and private land managers, environmental groups, private industry organizations, community groups, research institutions, tribal interests, state and local governments, and individual citizens. Twenty partner organizations have demonstrated that they are committed to implementing CROP by pledging human, financial and physical resources on a signed Declaration of Cooperation (DOC), and nine have agreed to serve on a Project Core Team.