

Located in the wildland interface community of Williams, Penny Stew was the first Stewardship Contract awarded by the BLM in southwest Oregon, and the first federal land project for Lomakatsi Restoration Project. Amid the Applegate Adaptive Management Area set up by the Northwest Forest Plan, the Penny Stew project is within the larger Scattered Apples Landscape Management Project originally proposed by the Medford District of the BLM in 1997.

A longstanding relationship with the federal agencies, conservation organizations, and many communities across southwest Oregon, helped to set the stage for this project. Since 2001, Lomakatsi Restoration Project has been awarded 13 BLM-administered National Fire Plan grants designed to support private land fire hazard reduction adjacent to federal land, provide ecological restoration training, and market forest thinning byproducts. Penny Stew, and subsequent Stewardship Contracts, help to provide ongoing jobs for the “green collar” workforce Lomakatsi formed, that continues to gain efficiency and experience on a wide array of projects.

Lomakatsi commenced work on Penny Stew in the winter of 2005, after Lomakatsi convened a multi-party interdisciplinary group that helped to design ecological treatment prescriptions, and established permanent biophysical monitoring plots. Community-wide workshops and field tours organized by Lomakatsi preceded and accompanied each phase of the project. Part of the project is directly adjacent to a private land neighborhood and shares road access.



The project took 3 years to complete, in part because seasonal restrictions in occupied Bald Eagle habitat precluded work between March 15 and September each year. In addition, the roads are not surfaced for rainy season operations, and in dry season there are fire hazard restrictions.



Fuel reduction and stand improvement objectives for pine-oak-woodland and mixed conifer forest types with dense encroaching Douglas fir pole stands were accomplished by thinning, small diameter tree removal and slash disposal, which reduced the Fire Regime Condition Class from 3 to 1.5. The basal area in dense understory of Douglas fir and madrone was reduced by 20%. The dominant trees, large pine and hardwoods, were protected by thinning more intensively around them. A primary goal was to enable fire to carry through the stand without destroying it, and under favorable conditions, this has been accomplished. BLM expects to



underburn part of the area after 5 years to control the resprouting madrone. All parties expect future stand management is needed to maintain and further improve the resiliency and diversity of the stand composition and structure.



Lomakatsi crews performed both pre-commercial and commercial thinning, and used their “swamper burning” approach for disposing of the slash generated by treatments. No biomass was removed on some steeper slopes. The two timber operators were the local Cascade Wildlands, Inc. using an all-surface vehicle (ASV), and Summit Wood Products used a combination cut-to-length (CTL) harvester and forwarder. Overall, the net cost of treatments was about \$920 per acre.



Penny Stew was primarily slated for non-commercial thinning, and almost a ton per acre of small diameter “biomass” material was generated – 100 tons total. A substantial quantity of this material was sold to Rogue Valley Fuel, 45 miles away, for about \$40-45 per ton. They use Posts & Poles for a wide variety of products. BLM provided the use of their land for a sort yard, so that many products could be sorted or processed on site for local use, including pole-peeling, portable sawmill operations for lumber, and firewood. Lomakatsi sold 35 sets of tipi poles. Nearby manufacturers produced character grade paneling and

flooring from pine and fir.

The project yielded 94 thousand board feet of commercial Douglas fir timber from 113 acres, and a small amount of Ponderosa and Sugar pine. The 25% drop in the market value of commercial timber over the course of the project adversely affected the economic benefits, but the small diameter utilization market improved over time. BLM funded the project with Silviculture and Fires & Fuels budget line items, and a Title II grant, so the product sales were not expected to cover expenses. The use of the Stewardship Contract authority did enable a 15% increase in the acres treated due to the revenue generated from the sale of thinned out trees. In 2006, two small units were added to the project, another benefit of Stewardship Contracting flexibility, bringing the total treatment area to 124 acres.



Penny Stew was a high-profile project in terms of conservationist attention in the area. In 2004, a Federal District Court ruled in favor of a lawsuit filed by Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands and Williams residents opposing the Scattered Apples commercial timber sale. Penny Stew helped to establish the areas of agreement for restoration thinning projects, and several organizations are now actively involved in collaborative processes advocating restoration of managed

stands (plantations) across the region. Use of the Stewardship model has expanded, and Lomakatsi continues to partner with light-touch logging operators in the region on two of the four additional BLM Stewardship Contracts in nearby parts of Josephine County. Many communities and conservationists continue to call upon Lomakatsi as the demonstrable model of practices that they prefer and the practitioners they trust. The practices are based on Lomakatsi’s Ecological Principles, and the practitioners are continually upgrading their skills, adapting their management prescriptions based on monitoring results, and incorporating current forest ecology, restoration silviculture and conservation science into their approach.

