Pumice Plain Litigation Meeting Notes 9/15/20

Broads Members: Susan Saul, Sarah Madsen, Laurie Kerr, Felice Kelly

Partners: Sierra Club, Native Plant Society, Individuals (Susan Saul)

Susan Jane Brown, attorney for Western Environmental Law Center, discussed (3) items:

 1) Complaint

 2) Declarations

 3) Press Strategies

Susan Jane said that the complaint was in good shape and that there were just a few minor questions she had for the scientists. She also noted that we would hold off on filing the complaint until after Christmas, probably January. Most likely, we can delay filing until after January 20, so as to get news coverage and not to compete with the election/inauguration results. She is expecting the Record of Decision to come out soon.

We don’t need the declarations in order to file the complaint. The declarations will be submitted later in March or April, but we should be working on them at this time. Susan Jane will edit them and send them back if she has questions. Pictures and photos are great.

When dealing with the FS and the press, we need to tell them why it is important to sue. The Pumice Plain is alive and is a rich and sensitive ecosystem. Susan Saul noted that it is important to have the legislative history of the Pumice Plain out to the FS as well as the press. Maps, photos, and pictures as well as videos are great tools for use with the press. Linda Mapes, environmental reporter for the Seattle Times, is our prime target for a press release. Charlie will reach out to Linda and let her know of the upcoming litigation, but the press release will not occur until the Record of Decision is out. It is our hopes that the actual news coverage will not happen until Feb 1st, and that the AP will pick up the story from the Seattle Times and publish it in local papers.

 Susan will reach out to Eric Wagner, author of the book, “After the Blast”. Eric is a writer for HCN and will feature the coverage of the litigation in publications other than newspapers.

The question about how much to share with reporters if they contact us came up. Susan Jane suggested that we should express how we feel and say, “We are taking a hard look at all of our options”. Be honest and candid. Express what is important to you but still construct your sentence so that the safety issue cannot be pulled out by itself. Do not speak for others. Possibilities including saying, ”I am very concerned about the research that has been done. The situation is and has been stable for some time and there is no immediate threat to the downstream communities. Have your key points written out.

We need to start developing a press release now and call Linda and Eric to tell them we are planning on suing. We would like to get a feature press release. Susan Jane will call both Linda and Eric and give them the same info.

Susan Jane will keep us posted on the ROD.