

**5B Restoration Coalition
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, January 7, 2015, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Community Campus, 1050 Fox Acres Road, Hailey, Minnie Moore Room, 301-2

Members Present: Lynn Campion-Waddell, Mark Davidson, Chip Deffe, Dan Drackett, Susan Giannettino, Harry Griffith, Jo Heiss, Jim Keating, John Kurtz, Chris Leman, Mike McDonald, Dani Mazzotta, Angenie McCleary, Kurt Nelson, Patti Lousen

Committee Members and Other Guests: Carol Brown, Holly Crawford, Sunny Healey, Erika Phillips, Deb Taylor, Keri York, Terry Gregory, Karen Bossick, Annie DeAngelo

National Forest Foundation: Karen DiBari and Emily Olsen

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS/ UPDATES

- The purpose of the meeting was to identify 5BRC action steps for the next 6-9 months, specifically in light of the work and goals of each committee.
- The 5BRC has four committees, including a steering committee, which involve additional people in the 5BRC's work.
- Announcement – The 2015 Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership workshop, “The Scale of Restoration: From Projects to Landscapes,” will be held in Boise February 18th and 19th. It's hosted by the Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership. 5BRC members are encouraged to attend. Registration is discounted through mid-January, and travel assistance is available.

TRAILS & RECREATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND DISCUSSION

- The Trails & Recreation Committee met twice (December via conference call and January 6th in person) prior to the January 7th meeting.
- The Committee developed a purpose statement in December, and from there started developing solutions. At the January 6th committee meeting, members took a step back and decided that first they needed to identify the problem(s) and gaps very clearly. They want to put as much specifics as possible on the problem before jumping to solutions.
- The committee hopes to develop clear strategies to address the problem, and then use the “case document” describing the problem and strategies as a tool to fundraise for prioritized projects, build public support, and build strategic alliances among community partners.
- *Discussion of gaps that need to be addressed now and into the future:*
 - Need to open closed trails, and identify the funding and capacity needed to open the trails. In the coming year the BLM and FS are both focused in rebuilding/opening trails; however, the longer-term vision and strategies need to be more fine-tuned.

- Need to address immediate needs, yet also consider resiliency and bouncing back quickly in the event of a future fire. Many aspects of the resiliency question boils down to sustainability – some trails and roads are sustainable, while others are not. There are different scales of impacts, and some existing trails could be modified to lessen the impact from future events.
- Knowledge of what recreation means to the Wood River Valley – How many people recreate? Where do they recreate? How can recreation be enhanced, and where does it make sense to build/restore trails? These numbers could help paint a good picture of recreation in the Valley.

Actions Items for the Trails and Recreation Committee:

- Meet in February to develop and refine a clear problem statement focusing on both immediate and long-term needs.
- Each member of the committee will respond to the following questions to help develop the problem statement:
 - What are your immediate post-fire needs, those that should occur in the next 1-2 years, and long-term needs (i.e., what do you need get on your feet, and stay on your feet)?
 - What is the funding and time-frame needed to address these needs?
 - What gaps in the work-to-date or planned work should be addressed?
 - What is your longer term vision for trails and recreational work?
- Prioritize how to spend seed money from the NFF during the upcoming field season, and quantify how much additional funding would be needed to address the problem statement.
- Invite Susan James from the Sawtooth National Recreation Area.
- Consider planning a trail survey (similar to the 2012 survey provided the FS) as a springboard for prioritizing efforts.

ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND DISCUSSION

- Among the five drainages most impacted by the fire, the Deer Creek drainage was identified as the Ecological Restoration Committee's highest priority.
- Deer Creek has major fisheries and water quality issues; recent survey showed dismal fish populations in the main stem of Deer Creek and some tributaries.
- Other needs include re-opening trails and access for recreation (there is a need to relocate one road, and repair many roads and trails), stabilizing slopes through vegetation work, and preventing the spread of cheatgrass and other noxious weeds.
- Other priorities discussed by the Committee included reinvigorating defensible space/Fire Wise programs, addressing noxious weeds (control, containment, prevention), and supporting the BLM's work in Croy Creek.
 - Members felt that the Croy Creek drainage was equally important, but realized that the BLM is already planning to complete major rehab in Croy Canyon. The Croy Creek drainage would also be more challenging for the 5BRC to work on due to the complicated land ownership system. Longer term, it could be an interesting priority for the 5BRC (even if the focus is just weed control, because

the biggest weed issues are on private lands, in the Cooperative Weed Management Area).

- Carol Brown also updated the group about a climate change vulnerability assessment that may happen for all forests in Southern Idaho. The assessment could help determine which resources will be sensitive to climate change.
- The group discussed a need to do some level of needs assessment/mapping for each of the 5 watersheds/drainages (Baker, Greenhorn, Warm Springs, Croy, Deer Creek) so that anyone could know – to some extent – what’s happening in their back yard.
 - The scale would need to be very general in order to paint a picture of the full situation.
 - Members discussed the potential for extrapolating monitoring results/findings from one watershed into neighboring watersheds in order to make the assessment idea more feasible.
- Suggestion to put signage up at the trailhead to help educate users about the fire effects – something like “this area is 69% burned and the fish populations are decimated.”

Recommendation from the committee: 5BRC should adopt Deer Creek as a focus

- Discussion:
 - There are opportunities for the Deer Creek project to address needs and interests of both the Trails and Recreation and Ecological Restoration Committees.
 - Deer Creek offers a unique opportunity for all 5BRC member groups to be involved and take action due to the number of serious/significant problems in multiple areas.
 - Deer Creek is also a major usage area for people from the South – it’s the link from the South into the North part of the Wood River Valley.
 - Deer Creek is an exceptional opportunity because of work the Forest Service did (and data collected) in the drainage prior to the Beaver Creek fire. Sixty-nine percent of the drainage burned, so conditions are obviously different, but the Forest Service work still gives everyone a great head start.
 - There are opportunities (as early as this summer) to tap scientists from the Rocky Mountain Research Station to provide a snapshot of the landscape.
 - Deer Creek was also identified as an area that has a lot of interests from multiple user groups, is close to the community, and has many aspects that could be communicated clearly to the public.
- **Consensus Recommendation** (all thumbs up): The 5BRC, particularly the ecological restoration committee, will focus on Deer Creek and all of the pieces mentioned.

Action items for the Ecological Restoration Committee:

Deer Creek Action Items:

- The Forest Service will consider the feasibility of completing an assessment in the Deer Creek this upcoming summer to determine what actions are needed (there was a vision and community support for the work pre-fire, but now the situation has changed, so the vision is very different).
- Continue making progress on the project in monthly committee meetings.

Actions Items regarding other ideas and suggestions:

- The committee would like to collect information on the amount of money that has been spent so far on post-fire restoration on public and private lands. The information will help determine the amount of money needed to complete work in the future (i.e., \$10M has been spent in XX place, but the entire project will cost \$30M to complete).
 - Harry Griffith will create a spreadsheet to help members track spending on various post-fire work, and collect the information from 5BRC members.
 - NFF staff will update the post-fire restoration accomplishments document with the information collected on dollars spent.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT AND DISCUSSION

- During the December committee meeting, the group focused on new people to invite, and the development of a communications calendar with a multi-faceted, strategic communications plan.

Action Items for the Community Engagement Committee:

- Chris Leman will work on drafting the initial press release to include 5BRC organizational structure, goals, and website information. Dan will review the press release for catchy language.
- Develop a website for review at the next committee meeting in February.

WRAP UP

Actions Items for the full 5BRC:

- NFF will poll members to schedule quarterly meetings for the full 5BRC and schedule monthly committee meetings. The group would like to schedule meetings for March (to discuss an April event and communications tasks), April/May, June, and September.
- NFF will forward to members Deer Creek information the Forest Service produced in 2013 (from Carol Brown).
- Dani Mazzotta will invite Scott Shibley from Lost River (Fishing Outfitters)
- John Kurtz will try to reestablish communications with Bill Murphy from Deer Creek Ranch
- Karen will send out a reminder to everyone to collect bios from all members.