

Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group Meeting Record

1:00 PM – 5:00 PM, Wednesday, May 1, 2019

Butte Archives

ATTENDANCE

Members: Commissioner Dan Allhands, Madison County; Tony Colter, timber representative; Maureen Connor, citizen at large; Nick Gevock, hunting representative; Nick Jose, timber representative; John Kountz, agriculture representative; Chris Marchion, hunting/fishing representative; Commissioner Tom Rice, Beaverhead County; Rick Sandru, agriculture representative; Darcie Warden, conservation representative; and Commissioner Leonard Wortman, Jefferson County

Technical advisors: Dave Stone, Anaconda Sportsman's Club; Jeanne Dawson, Cheri Ford, and Dave Stone, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest; Cindy Perdue-Dolan, Office of Senator Steve Daines; Cory Davis, SW Crown of the Continent

Facilitators: Ben Irely, National Forest Foundation facilitator

MEETING OUTCOMES

Decisions

- April meeting record approved, with an amendment.

Action Items

- Call with Steve Kimball: Chris, Tony, Tom.
- Send email to Cindy to see if CFLRP has been funded and fully funded.
- Follow up with Cory on time spent for developing application.
- Include Jeanne in CFLRP subcommittee meeting.
- Ben to send out Cory's contact info to members.
- Ben to draft submission for MFCN annual report, distribute to members for approval.
- Cheri to get BDWG BDNF's direction on interested parties participating in objection calls.
- Ben to talk to Jeanne about contacts with Shoshone Bannock and Salish and Kootenai, Nez Perce, Blackfeet, Crow tribes for membership.
- Ben to contact Chris Edgington, the new Trout Unlimited rep. out of Dillon about membership.
- Chris and Dave bring BDWG funding before membership of Anaconda Sportsman.

Bin Items

- Craft a restoration strategy for the CFLRP application.

MEETING RECORD

1. Welcome & introductions, approve agenda, approve May meeting record

Ben Irely introduces the agenda and BDWG members review and approve April's meeting record. Add "leave politics at the door" on April meeting record to the meeting critiques.

Ben Irely reviews BDWG ground rules.

2. Congressional Updates

- SRS funds are out for distribution – should be showing up soon.
- Senator Daines offers support for RACs.
- David Bernhardt confirmed as Secretary of the Interior.
- Senator Daines part of bipartisan effort to provide full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). LWCF is now permanently reauthorized.
- Gregory Sopkin is the new EPA administrator for Region 8, which includes Montana.

3. BDWG member updates

Funding update:

- NFF is applying to the Catalyst Fund for facilitation of the BDWG.
- Commissioner Rice seeking forestry assistance funds from DNRC to increase collaborative engagement. Would need more participation in funding the BDWG. \$10k max from DNRC. Application due by May 10.
- Chris – Anaconda Sportsmen could pitch in a little. Maybe Montana Wildlife Federation as well. Probably can't come up with it by May 10 deadline.
- In-kind contribution counts as match.
- Everyone is going to need to step up to the plate if we put in for a CFLRP.
- We should call Steve Kimball to ask: does in-kind match count? Can we request the full \$10K with a bigger budget? Does it have to be spent in one year?
- We've got enough of a match already to apply (Jefferson Co., Beaverhead Co, Madison Co., Sun Mnt.).
- Apparently you can apply for \$20k.
- Suggestion: include a minimum you'd be willing to accept.

Ben flush out MFCN report update:

Include Pintler Face field trip, Boulder Lowlands field trip, input on Little Hogback and Meyers Projects, transition to new forest supervisor, and shared stewardship GNA on Boulder Lowlands.

Jefferson County Subcommittee report out:

- Current county elections for Secure Rural Schools (SRS) allocations cannot be changed until reauthorization of SRS by Congress.
- The subcommittee hasn't organized the meeting with Jan Bowey, but Leonard and Jeanne have been talking about how to get the work done (DNRC grant).
- Drone survey organized by Willy Peck.

- Dave Sabo proposes a “meeting of the minds” – Dave, Jeanne, Leonard, Jan Bowey – to find out what impact Red Rocks will have on the issue and see what needs to cover this issue.

Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) Subcommittee Report out:

- This will take a lot of capacity, both from the forest and the BDWG to pull this off. We’ll need commitment from the Region to support a CFLRP. BDWG is ideally suited right now.
- Need to have a restoration strategy for the application. Capacity may be our biggest issue. Cheri has a meeting with the Regional Forester to talk about this.
- Everyone acknowledges this is a big deal. Nobody was saying, “No”. Just nervous about moving forward.
- Cheri’s initial conversation with Timber Director in RO was that there can be up to two per region. (Region needs to finish up the CFLRPs they currently have). Funds cannot be used for planning (NEPA) but just for implementation and monitoring. There is a 50% match required for CFLRP funds.

Nick Gevock updates:

- FWP budget is one of the best in 15 years – funded two grizzly bear conflict reduction staff, one in Red Lodge and one in Butte.
- A separate bill funding livestock loss passed this session. 2017 added lions to livestock loss.
- Statutory appropriation for Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) passed.
- Pittman Robertson, which funds Warden’s time is down to 15-17%. It was at 30% in 2017. Wardens cannot do enforcement work on their Pittman Robertson time.
- In the third year of carcass pick up on Front and Centennial Valley and talk of carcass facility in Dillon, which needs to be locally driven. Meeting between BDNF and APHIS – not going to be blasting carcasses any longer. Mention of Butte DOT trying to set up livestock composting facility. If there is a proposal, Nick can support, but must be locally driven. Ruby Valley has tried and tried, but people have a hard time getting past the idea that the site will bring bears in. Wisdom composting site in on MTDOT land. Drummond and Blackfoot both have them as well.

3. BDNF staff updates

- Red Rocks objection period ended last Tuesday. Two objections received, key points include doing an EIS instead of an EA for grizzlies, consultation on forest plan re: lynx, and other wildlife issues. BDNF feels comfortable addressing these objections. Entities have to participate in scoping to object. BDNF is currently drafting responses to objections, which are due next Tuesday. May 13-17 is the objection review. Objection review team made up of specialists from across the Region. Objection officer can 1) fully agree with Forest Supervisor. Then only alternative is to take FS to court. 2) Agree with decision with direction for the Forest Supervisor. 3) Remand it back to the forest and tell them to rework this, this, and this. By the June 5 meeting, will have a good idea as to where the BDNF stands. AFRC and FWP have expressed interest in being an interested party and being involved on the objection call. The two objectors have not agreed to an objection call.

- The game plan for BDNF staffing BDWG meetings is to have a ranger at each meeting, rotating through the rangers.
- Scot Schuler is headed to Alaska. 30 applicants interested in detail and position. Detailer coming in early to mid-June.
- Forest wildlife biologist retired, detailer in behind him.
- Strike Team has been working on Greenhorn and Rancho Delux. Currently filling strike team leader job. Filling a wildlife biologist position on the Team as well. Don't expect any delays with staffing change on Strike Team.
- Fire borrowing – no bills to attach the fix to. As soon as there is, it will happen. Probably late for '19 budget. The BDNF is still lacking trust funds because of fire borrowing. 2020 budget markup will be in May.
- Integrated Resource Strategy (IRS) is in the works. Next in the queue, will have geospatial specialist from RO in May. With the CFLRP coming up, the geospatial specialist will be a nice resource. Cheri is figuring out how best to plug in the Collaborative to IRS process. VMAP is out.
- Lynx biological opinion – USFWS wants a final, not a draft. BDNF will send shortly.
- Greenhorn (mid-August decision date) and Rancho Delux (decision mid-August) comment period is over. Need to review comments. Received a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. Draft decision memo expected in June.
- Little Hogback Project bull trout consultation going on this week.
- Archeological verification for Greenhorn is scheduled.
- No new timber sales since last meeting.

Jeanne updates:

- Resource Advisory Councils (RAC): SW MT RAC had 33 applications, Tri County RAC had 26. Ideally 45 applications for SW MT RAC and 39 for Tri County RAC. Around June 28 things should be moving forward so that Regional Forester can make nominations. Probably won't be until 2020 that this group is stood up.
- SRS money has come. 6.2% deduction from Title II funds for RAC.
- Need to address some expiring outfitter and guide permits on the Forest. Some outfitters and guides want to expand their uses. Want to have an EA done by end of September when permits expire.
- New range cons coming onto the districts to help out with capacity. Does not completely eliminate capacity for weeds and permit work. Working on weed agreements with Beaverhead and Powell Counties.
- About 20 to 30 outfitters and guides on the forest. Mainly big game hunting.
- Jeanne to get list of outfitter and guide names.

4. Southwest Crown of the Continent update – Cory Davis

- SW Crown came together in 2009 when there was talk of the CFLRP program. They put in a proposal, were accepted and first funded 2010. Cory came on in 2011. Cory was initially hired to be the monitoring coordinator. SW Crown decided that 10% of CFLRP funds would go toward monitoring. Wanted the monitoring coordinator to be through the university.

Also hired a FS liaison. Also The Wilderness Society (TWS) person hired as collaborative coordinator. Corry has since taken over many of the duties.

- SW Crown works on three different districts on three different forests. The collaborative took the lead on the application but had to have the districts on board. Also important to have the Regional Office involved.
- SW Crown didn't have funds for planning either. Single biggest bottleneck for getting work done on the ground. First got money in 2010, had to spend by the end of that year, so need shovel ready projects for first year or two. 1.5 million acres, 65-70% FS.
- Tight funding issue existed for about the first three years. All veg management projects for SW crown were litigated, which slowed things down. Have only achieved about 50% of target for veg targets. But other targets are over on because had to shift funding. Greatest successes have been for aquatic restoration.
- How easy is it to amend the strategy and what you said you would get done?
- Lots of flexibility on spending the funds. After 1-2 years and 5-6 years, Washington Office said that they could revise their goals. Had to give a good reason for changing. Large fire would be a good reason to change goals. Good to put a statement in the strategy about changing conditions.
- It is forest service funding, they have the ultimate decision authority. As FS budgets declined, more CFLRP funds stayed in the forest instead of hiring contractors.
- Good to ask the question, are these funds to be used to support existing programs of work or develop new work you wouldn't otherwise do? Good to be clear on that in the restoration strategy.
- A lot of the match still comes from the FS. Allows opportunity for match from other organizations, TU for example.
- Act requires economic, ecological, and social impact.
- Cory is funded through CFLRP and a Partnership Agreement with a UM match.
- The role of collaborative has changed and continues to change. Early on, FS was a voting member. Several different roles for collaborative: active commenters on projects, identify where work should be done, really good working relationship with the line officers and staff. Review FS scope of work.
- BDNF is 3.3 million acres. Start with projects that NEPA has already been done on, then get started on new NEPA for year three, lets say. Most of the larger projects asked for the full 4 million every year. Landscape restoration strategies are on the web. BDNF has other proposal packages they are circulating. All project proposals are on the FS CFLRP website.
- Funding can only be used to do work on FS lands.
- Local organizations were putting out the word for what the program is about to private land owners. No projects happened on private land. DNRC is on the collaborative. Not enough cross boundary on SW Crown. Would be better to do more.
- Did CFLR get used for leverage for work to get done on other lands?
- Monitoring, yes. Implementation, no. Did not attract that much more money to the landscape. Sometimes it can work against you because "they have money".
- NEPA works the same under CFLRP as outside. SW Crown encouraged local organizations to lead those meetings.

- Lessons learned: Because of litigation, didn't get as much veg work done. Should have looked at quicker things to get done. Smaller things through CEs are good. Give it a year or two to develop what you are going to monitor, don't allocate \$\$ toward monitoring until you know what you want to monitor. Don't try to do too much monitoring. Getting partners involved in monitoring is good.
- Pleased to see that campsite rehabilitation was on there. The act doesn't talk a lot about recreation but restoring campgrounds and trails means making them less of an impact.
- Cory's position is full time since the inception. Cory is the only paid employee. Cory does the collaborative coordination as well. Cory is plenty busy, you will certainly need one full time person at a minimum.
- Filing for extension funding: don't exactly know how it is going to play out. What is the post-CFLRP plan for SW Crown. Group wants to stay together, but still talking about what their role is moving forward. For the extension, want to finish up targets they did not meet. Monitoring to go for 15 years, but hasn't said how it would be funded.
- Wouldn't be surprised if the districts saw less money because they are CFLRP.
- No requirement for a coordinator.
- Why UM?
- To get students and scientist involved in monitoring.
- Last year SW Crown did a survey in the landscape to see how people thought it was going. Have a draft report, will be on webpage soon. Survey went out right after Rice Ridge fire.

Discussion

- Application for CFLRP should be out early summer, decision in fall 2020.
- BDWG is in the exploratory phase.
- Have another subcommittee meeting between now and next BDWG meeting.
- Need more help picking the landscape. Need to continue talking about it. In May the IRS will kick off. That tool could help select the landscape.
- SW Crown took the tack of choosing an ecological landscape not an administrative landscape.
- SW Crown feels like they chose the right size.
- BDWG should consider rounding out its membership in light of a CFLRP application.
 - Trout Unlimited now has a staffer in Dillon – Chris Edgington.
 - Contact Shoshone Bannock and Salish and Kootenai, Nez Perce, Blackfeet, Crow.
- Ben Irej coordinate with Jeanne to reach out to tribe. Also reach out to CBC to see how they handle Nez Perce involvement.

5. Round robin: meeting critiques

[In round robin fashion, each member and visitor was given a moment to reflect on how this meeting has gone and to suggest changes for future meetings.]

- Next meeting, have Rich Stem come and talk about some basic things the BDWG could do to be more effective.

- Dave Stone – Anaconda Sportsmen going through a reorganization. Chris and Dave bring BDWG funding before membership.
- Follow up with Cory on time spent for developing application.
- Include Jeanne in CFLRP subcommittee meeting

6. Review decisions and action items

[Decisions, action items, and bin items were reviewed.]

7. Public Comment

[No public comment made.]

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.