

**B-D Working Group
Draft Meeting Record**
Thursday, January 19, 2017
Butte-Silverbow Archives, Butte
1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

BDWG Members: Dave Schulz, Mark Thompson, Maureen Connor, Tony Colter, Karen Laitala, Leonard Wortman, Rick Sandru

Committee Members/Others: Nick Jose, Chris Marchion, Dave Stone

Forest Service: Alex Dunn, Andy Kies, Jeff Shearer, Hilary Rigby, Tera Little, Diane Probasco

Facilitator: Karen DiBari

Action items

None

1. Welcome and introductions

- Tony Colter opened the meeting; all at table introduced themselves.
- November Meeting Record was approved without changes.

2. Public comment

- Chris Marchion – talked about Montana Wildlife Federation challenge of a project on the Helena NF. This is not a shift toward litigation by the MWF but a specific instance in which they felt they needed to take action. Members expressed their appreciation to Chris for sharing this information.
 - ACTION: As a result of discussion, the group identified a future agenda item– elk security (bring in state wildlife staff, potentially discuss elk in the context of Pintler Face).

3. Announcements

- Mark Thompson – Montana Resources is tasked w/ implementing a deterrent program to keep birds away from the Berkley Pit. Over the last 21 years, 100,000 waterfowl have been in the area with fewer than. On the night of 11/28/16, tens of thousands of birds made their way into area from Freezeout Lake. Due to weather conditions, the Berkeley Pit was one of only open areas on their fly route. People were hazing the birds all night; got half of the birds to leave the next day, tried lots of different approaches including drones. Birds had flown a long ways and were exhausted. Was a very challenging situation. No one had ever anticipated that situation and the high # of birds. The plan was based on past expectations, which wasn't adequate for the situation.
- DNRC/State update –Mo Bookwalter has taken a job w/ the Forest Service to implement the Good Neighbor Authority. Neil Simpson is working in her prior position through June until a replacement is hired. Sean Steinbach reported that there is a new 30,000 acre aspen restoration/insect & disease/forest health project under the Good Neighbor Authority that involves the Pintler District. The partners are putting together a proposal for MT/Dakota Strike Team.
- Forest Service Updates:
 - Melany Glossa is on a detail through April to serve as Deputy Regional Forester for the Northern Region. Scott Snelson is Acting Supervisor and Jim Brammer is Acting Deputy Supervisor.
 - Reiss Riebe retired end of Dec. New District Ranger is Molly Ryan; she will start at the end of January.
 - Boulder Lowlands is currently being logged.
 - One of Flint Foothills sales has started implementation.
 - Prepping aspen restoration for implementation in spring.

- BDNF – has a \$1 million budget shortfall out of \$16 Million budget in FY16 (BDNF met its targets last year; cut not related to forest performance)
- New hiring on hold due to the new administration’s hiring freeze
 - This means that hiring for the interdisciplinary team lead position is in a holding pattern.
- [Montana Forest Collaboration Network](#) workshop -> Leonard & Matt reported top two priorities for MFCN (from workshop in December): communicating w/ public and disseminating information.
- [From Theory to Practice: Landscape-Level Restoration Principles to Implementing Priority Work on the Ground](#) – Karen DiBari that this workshop offered lots of relevant information to the BDWG.
- ACTIONS
 - Follow-up: Alex Dunn will get info about budget cuts in region to share at the next meeting
 - Karen DiBari will share link to webpage on the Landscape-Level Restoration workshop.
 - Future agenda items:
 - Congressional Staff Updates– make sure to extend specific invitation (Karen Laitala can help reach out to them)
 - Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest budget shortfall
 - Elk Security (get Nick Gevock, Maureen Connor, Chris Marchion to plan approach to this item); how does elk security relate to Red Rocks and Pintler Face; 2) general Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks approach
 - Ask Nick Gevock and Brian Ohs to give a short legislative update on the phone

4. *No Congressional Updates*

5. Membership: Peter Nelson is not able to continue his participation on the BDWG. Steering Committee

- ACTION: Ask Darcie Warden if she could serve on the Steering Committee from a conservation perspective since Pete is no longer available.

6. Red Rocks Project (Tera Little)

- The interdisciplinary team (IDT) met this morning; finished up the analysis for the Custer-Gallatin project but it will probably be litigated so that will affect the IDT’s workload.
- Looking at grazing allotments
- Coordinating w/ fire & fuels
- Do not plan any winter harvest due to big game in a certain area that Dave Sabo identified (there is a small corridor north of main road that is a critical portion of the winter range)
- Group discussion - differing opinions about elk/logging
- Jefferson county updated their Community Wildfire Protection Plan in 2015; only a small sliver of the Red Rocks project area is in the wildland urban interface (WUI)

Aquatic Issues (Jeff Shearer)

Stream prioritization is done using three major criteria

- a. Westslope Cutthroat (WSCT) trout populations (being overtaken by Eastern Brook Trout) so working to isolate WSCT by putting in barriers and restoring the connectivity of upstream areas where pure WSCT with culvert improvements. Rock Creek and Sullivan Gulch are priorities for WSCT
- b. Sediment – Delivery Points. Focusing on haul routes as priorities; using a “WEP” Model that predicts sediment load
- c. Riparian Zone Vegetation Restoration and water table support - Red Rock Creek likely a priority area
 - Plant willow cuttings for bank stabilization

- Encourage natural colonization of beaver and install artificial beaver dams
- Road Density 2.9 miles/sq mile so over forest plan goal
- Have identified locations of new temp roads and use of existing prisms
- This is not a travel management effort, but BDNF open to decommissioning functionally closed roads.
- Not likely to close any roads currently open to public
- Projects likely to be funded by KV funds – tying rest to timber receipts
- Partnerships can help achieve work on ground through funding matches.
- Lowland creek – mine tailing piles – this area is disconnected from watershed and cleanup of the mine tailings won't be achieved in Red Rocks Project.
- Scott Snelson is working with the Region to be strategic in terms of using pots of funds
- FS has to ensure they are very careful about considering trade-offs of short term negative vs long term positive benefits.
- Discussion about how implementation will be funded; that will be determined later; the Farm Bill Strike Team's job is to complete the NEPS analysis.
- Potential funding from partner opportunities with Trout Unlimited, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, National Wild Turkey Federation
- Several group members made positive comments about beaver; want to make sure there's adequate food for beavers (Forest Service explained this is part of the consideration)
- High mortality of lodgepole, timber folks are estimating there's 2 years left of timber value
- Helpful to have the BDWG and county tell economic impact story, as well as Health/safety
- Forest Service wants to have public meeting at 5:30 p.m. on March 16 (after the BDWG meeting)
 - 2 hour meeting – this will be the initial public meeting, prior to scoping
 - ACTION: Ask about whether archives available on 3/16 for public meeting 5:30-8pm
- Timeline for public participation:
 - March - 1st public meeting
 - Early May – Field trip
 - May/June – Scoping
- The group discussed the value of holding a Red Rocks meeting in Boulder.

7. Jefferson County Trails Survey Presentation by Jennifer Cox and Cyndy Andrus

- Assessment of growth potential in Whitetail-Pipestone Trail System – surveyed people to learn:
 - Motivations for coming to area
 - Who's coming?
 - Where are they coming from?
 - Interests (what are they doing?)
 - Spending
- Methods: Surveys of:
 - On trail users
 - Community/businesses
 - Business influencers
 - Non-resident users
- Looked @ all seasons except winter
- SEE PDF FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
- Discussion:
 - Leonard Wortman – thinks we have an opportunity now to consider how more users can be accommodated by the trail system, including non-motorized
 - Alex Dunn– had a preliminary meeting about travel management process on the Jefferson, Butte, and Pintler Districts
 - Huge interest in and need for non-motorized trails in Boulder area

8. Committee/Project Updates

- Pintler Face:
 - Committee met the morning of 1/19/17 and will meet again after the release of the draft environmental assessment in May
 - Discussion of the value of letters from commissioners regarding the project (Deerlodge County, Powell County)
- Boulder Landscape
 - Boulder Lowlands
 - The BDWG approved the press release
 - ACTION: Karen DiBari will make the changes recommended by the group and will run the final draft by the steering committee before distributing
 - The BDWG approved the Boulder Landscape Strategy by consensus, with the recognition that it is a living document and can be updated as needed. Discussion of the value of documenting overarching agreements.
- Selway Meadows
 - The NFF is working with a graduate student in the University of Montana Natural Resources Conflict Resolution program named Zak Reimer. He has been emailing the committee members to set up a meeting, and will be working with the committee to develop a landscape strategy document for Selway Meadows. The group was pleased with this news!
 - The group talked about the importance of discussing sequencing of activities in this landscape.
- Greenhorn – Gravelly Landscape
 - Collaborative met 2 weeks ago
 - Montana-Dakota Strike Team met
 - Considering a traditional environmental assessment approach
 - Not all treatments are within the Farm Bill priority landscape
 - Looking at timeline and innovative app to NEPA
 - Similar public involvement strategy to Red Rocks
 - 1.5 year NEPA promise

9. February meeting

- The group decided to cancel the February BDWG meeting.

10. Dave Schulz closed out the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

<p style="text-align: center;">Upcoming Meeting Dates (generally 3rd Thursday of the month):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• March 16, 2017• April 20, 2017• May 18, 2017• June 15, 2017• July 20, 2017
