

**B-D Working Group
Meeting Minutes**
Thursday, January 21, 2016
Butte-Silverbow Archives
1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Meeting objectives:

- Assess group progress and direction
- Develop action plan for the BDWG for 2016

Present:

BDWG Members: Dave Schulz, Mark Thompson, Rick Franke, Nathan Korb, Darcie Warden, Leonard Wortman, Rick Sandru, Maureen Connor, Karen Laitala, Tony Colter, Nick Gevock

Guests/Committee Members: Nick Jose, Emily Olsen

Facilitator: Karen DiBari

Welcome, introductions and approve minutes

- Karen DiBari updated the contact list for the full group and committees and distributed copies.
- NFF is working with the Forest Service and other partners to host a national collaborative restoration workshop in Denver April 26-27, 2016. Karen will send more information to the BDWG, including details about travel assistance.
- Motion by Maureen to approve the minutes as drafted. Second by Tony. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Public comment

- None

Updates/ Announcements

- Dave Schulz attended a League of Cities and Towns and Montana Association of Counties meeting in Dillon on January 20th. Participants mentioned collaboration many times.
- Updates on a softwood lumber agreement with Canada: the Canadians aren't feeling pressure to move forward because of their favorable exchange rate and the loss of markets in China; nothing has materialized.

Policy Updates

- None

Review of 2015

- **Discussion of successes:**
 - One year ago the group met with the Forest Leadership Team (FLT) in Dillon and asked to prioritize projects as part of a 5-year plan. It took a whole year, but now the discussion is beginning to happen.
 - The BDWG's support/advocacy helped the BDNF move forward on the categorical exclusion (CE).
 - The FLT has been willing to make changes based on the BDWG's priorities.
 - The BDWG's priority landscapes work was ready to go before the Farm Bill came out – the BDWG was prepared and ready to move.
 - The new aspen project proposal is encouraging. The project involves forest-wide NEPA that will act as an umbrella for the districts to tier from for their own projects.
 - Data sharing with the BDWG has improved on the BDNF.
 - Many of the successes are intangible – great relationships, improved understanding.
 - Upcoming opportunities to help prioritize projects and discuss lessons learned from the Boulder Lowlands CE are encouraging.

- **Discussion of challenges:**
 - Dave Schulz met with Melany Glossa and Scott Snelson in Dillon to dialogue about things that are/are not happening on the BDNF. Melany Glossa she said she could use \$1M for staff time to put a team dedicated to planning together
 - The BDNF asks for funding and other money for capacity, yet it seems like there are larger, systemic capacity issues. Leadership will be key to addressing capacity challenges.
 - Month to month, it's easy to be discouraged. The November meeting was useful, though sometimes it feels like the group is making little progress. For example, Boulder Lowlands is smaller than originally intended; it's hard to feel successful.
 - The BDNF doesn't have a mechanism to go back to the BDWG and demonstrate integration within a project across a landscape scale. The Selway project is a good example. The group heard the BDNF talk about a multi-faceted, whole landscape project, so they supported the project; however, the project hasn't turned out to be what they thought it was.
 - Still very disappointed with progress on the Greenhorns project and its slow progress.
 - BDWG could work harder to empower the Forest Service to make decisions.
 - BDWG senses that at times the BDNF views the group as an adversary instead of an asset. The group doesn't want to be a rubber stamp but is also trying to be supportive of moving projects forward.

2016 Action Plan for the B-D Working Group

1. Provide input to the BDNF on priority projects for the five-year plan based on integrated target accomplishment and impact on the resiliency and sustainability of the BDNF. Finalize the five-year plan with the BDNF.
2. Advocate for a three-tiered budget that is responsive to the five-year plan.

3. Initiate Boulder Lowlands implementation and monitoring/adaptive management.
4. Gain a better understanding of capacity issues on the BDNF. Advocate for the BDNF to have a full-time interdisciplinary team that is dedicated to integrated projects.
5. In anticipation of the ongoing out year planning process, develop three large landscape-scale integrated strategies (vision documents).

- **Consensus decision to approve the 2016 Action Plan**
- **How should the BDWG communicate the 2016 action plan?**
 - Share the action plan with the full BDWG as soon as possible.
 - Share the action plan with the Forest Service on February 17th.
 - Reschedule the BDWG meeting for February 17th and ask Leanne Marten and the FLT to attend.

Preparation for Resiliency Filters meeting on 1/27/16

- Who can attend? Darcie, Nathan, Rick, Dave, Nick J., Nick G. (afternoon), Leonard
- Alex Dunn will send project descriptions (one-pagers) to Karen DiBari, who will then send them out to the BDWG.
- Screens for the group to use:
 - Does the project help the BDNF achieve targets?
 - Is the project non-discretionary or discretionary? (Look at non-discretionary first to see what capacity remains.)
 - How much capacity will this project take?
 - Is there district enthusiasm?
- **Action items:**
 - NFF will plug quantitative aspects into a spreadsheet (the yellow items) and send the compilation back to the group prior to the meeting. (Rick Franke did this.)
 - Karen will ask Alex to identify “non-discretionary” projects. Is there a mandatory response time for permit applications?
 - BDWG members will read the one-pagers, and each person should identify their top ten projects. The group will compile the prioritizations at the beginning of the meeting next week, and then spend time working on those priorities.
 - If members of the BDWG have their own project ideas, they need to send them to everyone by Monday, January 25th so that everyone can see the project.
 - During the meeting, the group will start by using the screens to narrow their focus.

Review of recommendations/lessons identified by Boulder Lowlands Committee

- Karen presented the work of the Boulder Lowlands Committee to identify lessons learned during the process.
- Members noted that the discussion was beneficial and positive.
- The BDNF’s experience with a CE on this forest is that the scope was unnecessarily narrow, and it doesn’t fit with the BDWG’s goals. The members discussed the BDWG’s preference to try to be as risk-adverse as possible, and noted that the BDWG can help encourage risk-taking by helping the Forest create a project that stands up to litigation.

- The group wants to be able to whole heartedly endorse a project – let’s learn from Boulder Lowlands and do it differently next time. If the BDWG endorses the fact that they built a good project, they can help defend it in court and in the media.
- Decision: Karen will revise the lessons document based on the additions, make a draft letter, and send it out to the group to look at and refine. The item will be on the March agenda.

BDNF Funding applications for Greenhorns and Red Rocks (Boulder) – letters of support

- Karen asked the group to review and edit a draft letter in support of the Greenhorns and Red Rocks projects on-screen (see attached).
- **Consensus agreement on the letter of support.**

BDWG Roles document review and discussion – what does the BDWG want to do with this document

- Karen asked the group how they’d like to share the roles document that talks about the role of the group in interacting with the Forest Service.
- **Action item:**
 - Karen will send the document out to the group for discussion during the March meeting.

Action items to prepare for upcoming meetings

- Add the district rangers to the BDWG distribution list for future communications.
- Move the March 17th meeting to March 24th.
- Communicate with Congressional staff about attending meetings. Nick Gevock will call Erik Nyland about attending meetings. Dave Schultz will reach out to Jeremy. Karen will make sure the agenda notes “Congressional policy updates.”

Adjourn.