

Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group

Meeting Record

Butte-Silver Bow Archives, Butte

December 6, 2017, 1-5pm

BDWG Members: Vice-chairman Tony Colter, wood products representative; Maureen Conner, at-large representative; Nick Gevock, wildlife representative; Brian Ohs, fisheries representative; Rick Sandru, agriculture representative; Chairman Dave Schulz, at-large representative; Mark Thompson, motorized recreation and mining representative; Darcie Warden, conservation representative; Commissioner Leonard Wortman, northern counties representative

Facilitators: Karen DiBari, National Forest Foundation; Ben Irely, National Forest Foundation; Jess Eller, University of Montana

1. Welcome and Introductions (*Dave Schulz*)

- **Approve Meeting Record:** Edit for November record - Darcie Warden joined by phone. VOTE to approve with that change: passed. October meeting record approved as well.

2. Public Comment: none.

3. Announcements

- K. DiBari: Montana Forest Collaboration Network and Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership are hosting a meeting in March. Karen will forward the info to group members.
- M. Conner and L. Wortman attended the Nov 6-7 Montana Forest Collaboration Network Meeting. Both thought it was a good meeting and provided an opportunity to talk to people in other collaboratives. There was a good diversity in attendance, and lots of collaborative members present were interested in the panel discussion on collaboratives and litigation.
- K. DiBari passed around extra handouts from the Timber Economics Panel in September.
- K. DiBari also re-introduced Ben Irely who is the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group's (BDWG) new facilitator starting in January. The group will be hearing from Ben moving forward, and Karen will be his backup. She will not be able to attend the January and February meetings.
- M. Thompson is helping to host a Red Rocks Meeting tomorrow night in Boulder at the Fairgrounds at 7pm. Initially the meeting was to bring the Helena and Butte motorized clubs together and invite the FS to discuss travel management on the Red Rocks project, but the meeting is now a public Forest Service meeting.
- M. Conner: Gary Burnett, Executive Director of the Blackfoot Challenge, has gone to the Heart of the Rockies. He was also the head of the Lincoln Restoration Committee. Maureen suggested that the BDWG have a dialogue with the Heart of the Rockies in January once Burnett is moved over into his new position.
- January Meeting: Brian Ohs will be gone in Helena at Water Policy Meeting, and Darcie Warden will be gone at a Custer-Gallatin Meeting.

4. Congressional Policy Updates: None

5. Review of 2017 (*Jess Eller, Karen DiBari*):

- **Survey Results** were presented by Jess Eller [see Survey Results PowerPoint]. Overall, the answers didn't seem to surprise the group and helped to aid discussion in action planning for 2018. N. Gevock commented that with any group, when they do good work they should let people know about it. That sentiment was echoed by several other members. Other comments included that the BDWG needs to keep pushing the USDA Forest Service (FS) to continue to get

priority projects done and that perhaps it was time to open dialogue about how to be more effective without getting to a point of frustration. T. Colter said that the group's relationship with the FS has evolved and is improving, which he thought had to do with personnel changes (like the hiring of Scott Snelson) and the FS being consistently present at BDWG meetings. D. Schulz suggested that Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (BDNF) employees should take the same survey and then compare BDWG and BDNF results. Others thought that was an interesting idea.

- **2017 Accomplishments:**

- ✓ Red Rocks: engaged in Red Rocks pre-NEPA project discussions; cohosted a public meeting (and scheduled another in conjunction with BDWG meeting)
- ✓ Completed the Big Hole Divide landscape strategy document
- ✓ Wrote 4 letters: 7/17 letter to Montana Congressional delegation on cuts to FS budget; 9/17 support of a FS funding proposal for west slope cutthroat trout restoration in Selway Meadows; 10/17 letter to Regional Forester on fire salvage; 10/17 comment letter on Greenhorn; 12/17 comment letter on Pintler Face
- ✓ Met eight times, plus Red Rocks and Pintler Face field trips
- ✓ Held May meeting in Boulder, MT
- ✓ Communications: Boulder Lowlands press release, Red Rocks press release
- ✓ Advocated for and shaped the Pintler Face project, Greenhorn, Red Rocks, and Big Hole Divide (Selway)
- ✓ Influenced assigning of regional resources to the BDNF for Red Rocks and Greenhorn
- ✓ Helped direct resources in the direction the group felt was important

- **2018 Goals (Review the goals set in January 2017):**

1. Continue on with rating system and push for prioritizing projects that get the most done – give them higher scores;
2. Push to have a landscape scale project ready for outside dollars; and
3. Advocate for a three-tiered budget.

6. **Action Planning for 2018:**

- Continue to strengthen and improve the relationship between the BDWG and the BDNF
 - Continue to schedule six month reviews of 5-year plan and discuss project prioritization
 - Advocate for FS interaction and partnership with local government on projects (Red Rocks example where Jefferson County is helping map roads, host public meetings, etc.)
 - Communicate regularly with the Regional Office and be an advocate for the BDNF
 - Actively engage other district level FS in BDWG meetings
 - Communicate regularly with the Forest Supervisor
 - Welcome the new Deputy Supervisor to build on the positive relationship built with previous Deputy Supervisors
 - Nurture individual relationships with FS staff
 - Document lessons learned and share them with the FS (open discussions and letters)
- Broaden BDWG involvement in FS decisions
 - Assist the BDNF in incorporating local knowledge into operations and decision-making
- Helping the Forest identify their blind spots in working with local communities
- Raise funds to support the work of the BDWG
 - Develop an overview document to use in approaching potential funders
 - Acquire part time staff
- Develop an external communications plan
 - BDWG talking points that all members can use

- Regularly monitor project progress (more detailed short term rainbow chart and longer term 5-year plan)
- Continue to advocate for increased capacity, funding and resources on the BDNF
 - Work with the BDNF to define and agree on the “right” level of resources for managing this landscape
 - What is the scale of restoration activity needed to support ecological resilience and wildlife protection in the wildland urban interface and what is the staff and budget needed to get there? (Does the BDNF have a way to get to the answer?)
- Assist counties with Community Wildfire Protection Plans
- Keep forest planning on the radar (plan approved in 2009)

7. **Funding Needs and Plan** (*Karen DiBari*):

- The BDWG will need funding starting January 2018 to continue operating. The Steering Committee has reviewed a funding solicitation letter. Once the document is complete, all members should help reach out to potential funders, including constituents, nonprofits, counties, etc.
- Group members discussed a potential increase in ask amount to pay for a part-time staff position. NFF helped to get the group started but maybe they’re not a permanent fixture. M. Conner and others thought keeping the NFF as a fiscal agent is a smart idea and makes finances easier. It also provides a tax deduction for donors.

8. **Membership** (*Ben Irely*):

- B. Irely compiled a list of BDWG members and their original stakeholder seat in the working group. Members were asked to make sure they were still representing the right category. The group then discussed the few positions that could be filled to provide a better balance of interest groups in the BDWG. Stakeholders that could be added were aquatic/fishing, science/technical/GIS, federal FS policy expertise, commercial outfitter, and tourism (potentially someone from the Chamber of Commerce or an event coordinator).
- There is also a large discrepancy in gender balance within the group’s composition, which should be considered when recruiting new members.
- Within the groups and stakeholders currently represented on the BDWG, all should try to provide an alternate if they’ll be absent from the meeting. With some members being gone more than present due to other meetings or the legislative session, it is difficult for the group to have a balanced discussion or keep all interests in mind when discussing issues.
- Members offered names of individuals that could potentially fill out the BDWG roster.
- BIN ITEM: Discussion was tabled for a future meeting.

9. **Pintler Face Comment Letter:**

- The Pintler Face Committee compiled a list of bullet points the BDWG could include in a letter during the project’s draft EIS comment period, which closes in a few days. The letter will have an introductory paragraph like the Aspen letter, the bullet points with the group’s targeted suggestions, and a summary paragraph. Overall, the Pintler Face Committee had positive comments about the draft EIS with the exception of the confusion in the wording in the Purpose and Needs section. VOTE to write a letter to be submitted during the comment period: all in favor. The letter will be polished by Karen and circulated to group member’s in the next day or two for edits before the submission due date.

10. Carcass Management Program Update (*Nick Gevock*):

- N. Gevock presented on the carcass removal program for Sage Creek ranchers. Nick became involved to provide matching grants from the National Wildlife Federation. His personal motivation is to help conserve grizzly bear populations, but conflict reduction between predators and ranchers is something everyone can agree on. The Centennial Valley is a focus because it's a corridor for wildlife between Yellowstone and central Idaho. Not many people calve in Centennial but in Sage Creek they do. This first year of the program, they picked up 68 livestock carcasses. There are still some kinks to be worked out, like where they can haul carcasses in future years. Wisdom did not want the carcasses because of the potential to spread brucellosis.
- The group discussed issues with getting a facility put in closer to Sage Creek. R. Sandru didn't think they would get a facility unless a private landowner donated a piece of property. M. Conner mentioned the one in Drummond was put on county ground. The public (especially on social media) hasn't always reacted favorably to the facilities, but in Drummond they were able to compromise and put the facility in as long as it doesn't smell. The Drummond run is called "dead truck Tuesday".
- Nick also mentioned the benefits of carcass removal for other species. One facility had 300 whitetails put through it in a year. That's 300 animals that aren't being drug to the side of the road where other animals (birds, bears, etc.) are attracted to it and potentially get hit by a car.
- Rick thought that Ruby Valley residents might have more buy in to the program soon. There is a meeting soon to discuss purchasing an old truck from the fish hatchery for carcass disposal. They'll bring their carcasses to the dumpster, which is legal and more smelly than a compost facility.

11. Future Meetings – Agenda Items

January 10

- Headwaters Economics presentations and fire tools
- Recreation activities and priorities on the BDNF (including campground closures and accompanying statistics such as how many closed, costs, savings, etc.)
- Funding
- Steering Committee (Update protocols: When are elections held? Should there be a specific number of steering committee members?)

12. Closing (*Dave Schulz*)

- Jess Eller will be completing her practicum hours soon. January will be her last meeting with the group and a new practicum intern will be joining then. Jess' email is jessica.eller@umontana.edu.
- BDWG group members discussed reaching out to Melany Glossa, BDNF Forest Supervisor, while Scott Snelson's position is filled. They all agreed that a good working relationship with the BDNF is important for the productivity of the working group and projects on the forest.
- ACTION ITEM: R. Sandru offered to arrange a lunch with working group members and Melany to continue dialogue.