

B-D Working Group (BDWG)

November 15, 2012

Location: Butte Archives

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Members present: Tony Colter, Paul Olson, Rick Sandru, Charlie O’Leary, Barb Cestero, Sam Samson, Parke Scott, Dave Schulz, Chris Marchion, Maureen Connor, Charlie O’Leary

Forest Service Personnel: Chuck Mark, Dave Myers, Shauna Brewer, Jim Brammer

Guests: Tom Rice

Facilitator: Karen DiBari

1. Welcome: Dave Schulz welcomed everyone.
2. Meeting minutes from September meeting: Minutes were approved with no changes.
3. Public comment: No public comments.
4. Updates/Announcements
 - Membership
 - Members Jim Flynn and Laurie Schmidt tendered their resignations.
 - Dave Schulz asked Karen DiBari to draft a letter of appreciation to each of them.
 - Discussion of how to maintain a diverse membership.
 - Decision to continue to meet monthly as best as possible in order to maintain momentum, but to be more flexible with dates (instead of the 4th Thursday of every month) and to accept that members will not always be available due to work-related busy seasons. Will need to have a process for members who miss meetings to stay up to speed with BDWG activities.
 - Need to have a process to orient new members.
 - Consideration of adding several “seats” to the group so the group would have more people to maintain continuity.
 - Need to replace the people we lost.
 - Maureen Connor suggested lightening up a bit on the attendance rule and coming up with a way to update those who have missed a meeting.
 - *ACTION: Bring forward name suggestions for potential new members to the next meeting.*
 - Discussion of what value the group provides
 - Helps provide input toward the Forest Service’s future management, setting priorities and designing future projects. The collaborative effort is valuable to the Forest Service.
 - Discussion of whether the BDWG should delve into project-level discussions at the front end of projects versus the 30,000

foot, big picture level that was originally agreed upon? The West Big Hole has led the group into the lodgepole pine issue.

- The Flint Foothills draft EIS is out and the BDWG could discuss the purpose and need and provide input.
 - Need to establish BDWG as a credible collaborative group and need to be careful with project selection and commenting process. Also, several members expressed that they'd want to be involved from the very beginning of a project rather than commenting on something that's already developed.
- Dave Myers gave an update from his time spent on detail in Washington DC.
 - Chuck Mark advised there has not been any concrete direction given regarding possible sequestration/fiscal cliff at this time. The Forest Service is also under a continuing resolution at this time.
 - Dave Myers passed out the Fiscal Year 2012 fact sheet for the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.
 - Commissioner Conference
 - Dave Schulz has been elected the Second Vice-President of Montana Association of Counties (MACo). It is a 4 year obligation. With the constant changes with Montana legislature and with Montana itself, MACo has become an important resource for legislators looking for research or direction.
 - Maureen Connor, Dave Schulz and Tony Colter will contact Carol Brooker (chair of the Forest Counties group) to schedule a presentation at the February meeting, and will keep coordinating with Gordy Sanders from the Montana Forest Restoration Committee.

5. Fish Key Watersheds

- Jim Brammer, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Fish Biologist, presented the revised dichotomous key. The intent of the key is to be a tool for both the public and internal FS employees. It starts really broad. The bulk of the key is about interpreting the sideboards of the forest plan.
- Discussion points:
 - RMO = Resource Management Objectives. (e.g. how much woody material is in the stream, how stable are the streambanks, amount of sediment in the creek, etc).
 - RCA = Riparian Conservation Areas
 - Short term effects = defined as anything that is two years or shorter in duration.
 - One generation for fish population is about 5 years.
 - Key Restoration Watersheds are those that have been identified as those in need of restoration.
 - All standards apply Forest-wide unless they are defined differently.
 - Effects are evaluated on individual populations.
 - "Focal" RCA = one that contains Westslope Cutthroat Trout (WCT) or Brown Trout (BT) populations; or that is connected to downstream WCT or BT populations in a way that measurable effects to habitat

will likely be conveyed and imposed. Note: a “focal” RCA is still within a fish key watershed.

- *ACTION in response to comments: Add trails to the relevant parts of the dichotomous key where they aren't mentioned (in addition to roads) as they pose sedimentation issues as well.*
 - With fish key watersheds the general objective has to be about improving the general fisheries there or having no measureable effect – this translates into no net sum increase in crossings and roads/trails in RCA's.
 - Temporary = structure in for 2 years or less.
 - *ACTION in response to comments: Remove the temporary verbage from #8, leaving the 2 years. Would make it easier to understand.*
 - Jim Brammer would welcome any further discussion/input on the dichotomous key.
 - Wildfire falls under a completely different set of management prescriptions. The dichotomous key is not specifically set up to deal with wildfires. However, it can be used in reducing the risk of wildfire to fish key watersheds.
 - Chuck Mark – the value this provides to the Forest is not only for project design but also to show rationale. It is not a policy document.
 - BDWG members are encouraged to share the dichotomous key document is shareable with the caveats that this is a draft and work in progress. All feedback should be directed to Jim Brammer.
- *Next Steps:*
 - *ACTION: Will check in on it at the next meeting and funnel any comments to Jim Brammer.*

Lodgepole Pine Committee Report

- *ACTION: Karen DiBari will send out via email all of the reference documents*
 - Interview with Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell in *The Forestry Source* (October 2012): http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/saf/forestrysource_201210/index.php#0
 - *The Status of Our Scientific Understanding of Lodgepole Pine and Mountain Pine Beetles – A Focus on Forest Ecology and Fire Behavior* (2008): http://csfs.colostate.edu/pdfs/LPP_scientific-LS-www.pdf
 - *Increasing the Pace of Restoration and Job Creation on Our National Forests* (2009): <http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/restoration/restoration.pdf>
 - Big Hole Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic PDF (1940)
 - Discussion: There are opportunities to encourage species other than lodgepole. Other species can be values at risk in a dominant lodgepole community.

- What tools to use to try to mitigate the effects of huge fires that will happen? Do we want this to continue to be one even age forest again (current condition)?
- Any study done on sheep/goat grazing in areas of new lodgepole seedlings? To reduce density.
 - Dave Myers – has tried grazing in stands of trees, it was not very effective.
- Lodgepole pine tends to thrive in stand replacement type fires.
- *Next Steps*
 - *ACTION: BDWG members are asked to please review the lodgepole pine ecology and the lodgepole questions/issues (particularly the “Needs More Discussion” section) documents in advance of the December meeting. Lodgepole pine will be a primary agenda topic at the meeting.*

6. Litigation and Appeals Update

- The BDNF has decided to re-consult on grizzly bears, waiting on Biological Opinion (BO) from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. East Deerlodge is waiting on the BO before moving forward.

7. Next Steps/Agenda Items

- Lodgepole pine discussion.
- Look at list of commissioners from all the counties to determine outreach strategy.
- Set 2013 meeting dates at December meeting.
- Take a look at changing attendance rules.
- Potential project level work
- Dave Myers will work on a presentation on projects ongoing and in the hopper on the B-D.

8. Member announcements

- Please try to make an effort to attend the December meeting.
- Encourage everyone to bring a name and possibly a guest to the December meeting.
- Laurie Schmidt represented southern part of the B-D and was a permittee. Jim represented the northern part of the B-D and at large. Keep these in mind when thinking of potential new members.
- Parke Scott is unable to attend in the summer months.

9. Closing

- Meeting adjourned by Dave Schulz.