

B-D Working Group (BDWG)

January 18, 2013

Location: Butte Archives

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Members present: Tony Colter, Chris Marchion, Dick Owenby, Rick Sandru, Charlie O’Leary, Barb Cestero

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

Facillitator: Karen DiBari

Absent: Dave Schulz, Paul Olson, Parke Scott, Maureen Connor, Sam Samson.

1. Welcome: Tony Colter welcomed everyone.
2. Meeting minutes from December meeting: Chris Marchion moved to approve the minutes, Charlie O’Leary seconded the motion. Minutes were approved with no changes.
3. Public comment:
  - Dave Myers has spoken with Eric Nyland from Senator Tester’s office. He may stop by a meeting at some point to see what the group is all about.
4. Updates/Announcements
  - USDA Secretary Vilsack will continue to be the secretary.
  - Wording for the definition of resiliency and the vision document will be ready to go out in the next week or two.
  - The Backcountry Horsemen group is working on a project in the Sugarloaf Mountain area. MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks has money for the Clark Fork drainage side; they are working on trying to adjust the boundary a little further south to include the California Creek drainage side.
5. Webinar and Discussion
  - The group watched a video of the Future Forests webinar that originally aired on December 11, 2012. The group focused on the presentation by Mike Hillis and Barry Bollenbacher, titled “Using Information & Approaches to Frame Future Forest Management.” The presentation focuses on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest and can be viewed at this link: [Video](#).
  - Seedling success is very dependent upon ground temperature. Is there anything that can be done to protect seedlings? Answer: Be selective about the kind of stock used, try to establish microsites with shielding from ground temperature. Lodgepole pine’s strategy is that it overwhelms the area with so much seed, there will be some mortality.
  - Interesting to see scientific research on a broad scale. Good tools and information for decision makers on a big scale. .

- The public doesn't understand the risks associated with fires. For safety, it would be helpful to illustrate to the public what a fire is really like, how it moves, how fast it can go, what to do if there is one in close proximity, how to react, etc.
- Basic message of the presentation: when comparing the current level of treatments vs. no treatments on the BDNF over the next 50 years, there is no impact on species viability for goshawk or black-backed woodpecker. Localized (treatment unit) impact is much higher, but at the forest level, it's minimal.
  - ✓ Treatments are currently happening on the periphery of the forest. If fires are allowed to burn in, there could be much larger impacts.
  - ✓ Treatment shown were prescribed fire and other actions besides logging. Treatment is something that prevents those large severity fires.
  - ✓ With regard to resiliency, do we want to see what we just saw in the last 10 years on the forest be replicated 100 years from now?
  - ✓ Lots of the forest the same age, enormous cycles, not much diversity. The species or conditions that depend on diversity cycle with that too.
  - ✓ It's questionable whether whitebark pine will retain any resilience to disturbances, especially fire.
  - ✓ Why are the lodgepole pine stands on the B-D abnormally old? Because of the amount that is all the same age that is abnormally old. Part of it is caused by fire suppression, but not all.
  - ✓ It would be interesting to see if there was any record on the effect of the mining industry on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF. Would guess the reach from the mining industry was pretty far and may have contributed to the even aged forest.
  - ✓ Forest diversity is very important.

## 6. Montana Forest Restoration Principles

- Proposal that the B-D Working Group approve the principles for the group's use and develop an appendix specific to lodgepole pine. The appendix would be useful to the B-D Working Group for its work, and the Montana Forest Restoration Committee might want to use it as well.
- Are we interested or ready to adopt these principles?
- Barb Cestero moved that we adopt the Montana Forest Restoration Principles. Dick Owenby seconded the motion. Group accepted by show of thumbs amongst all present.
- *Next Steps*
  - *Karen will send an email out to those not in attendance to get their "vote" on the Montana Forest Restoration principles.*

## 7. Membership and Communications

### **Membership**

- The committee was not able to get together so there was no report at the meeting. The committee will meet before the February B-D Working Group meeting and report back.
- The group discussed a few potential members:
  - ✓ Beaverhead County Commissioner Tom Rice
  - ✓ Peter Nelson, Defenders of Wildlife (Bozeman). The group asked Barb Cestero to contact Peter Nelson and to Karen DiBari – invite him to next meeting to observe,

and communicate that the committee is still trying to determine the criteria and process for identifying categories and new members.

- ✓ Someone involved in the Big Hole Watershed Committee
- ✓ Managers/owners of Maverick or Discovery Ski Area
- ✓ Mining or mining restoration representative
  
- Group discussion about new members and process:
  - ✓ Anyone interested in the group should come and sit in on meetings first to get a sense of how the B-D Working Group operates and to give Working Group members a chance to meet prospective new members. Proposal to give a potential member 5 minutes to introduce themselves and share their background.
  - ✓ Members of the group need to share a deep appreciation and love for the BDNF.
  - ✓ Karen DiBari commented that scientists and academics are often better to look to for research than as sitting members of collaborative groups.
  - ✓ Adding to the number of members will enable the B-D Working Group to keep business moving forward, but also allow individual members the latitude to miss a meeting here and there.
  
- *Next Steps*
  - *Committee will meet and bring it up again at the next meeting.*
  - *Barb Cestero will invite Peter Nelson to attend the next meeting.*
  - *Dave Myers will email a list of outfitter and guides, resort permittees, etc. for the committee.*

### ***Communications/Funding***

- We are waiting to hear back on a proposal for \$15,000 from State and Private Forestry in the Washington Office.
- BDWG Overview Powerpoint
  - ✓ Barb Cestero developed a draft powerpoint presentation that she showed to the group.
    - Could be useful to recruit new members.
    - Add a slide that talks about what the challenges are on the BDNF. There is narrative on page 2-3 of the Forest Plan that captures a lot of that.
    - Add slide for accomplishments as we they are achieved.
    - Add a slide about our adoption of the Montana Forest Restoration principles.
  - ✓ *Next steps: Barb Cestero will revise the powerpoint.*

### **8. Litigation and Appeals Update – Dave Myers and Chuck Mark**

- The B-D was litigated on the Trapper Creek vegetation project. Have not briefed on it yet.
- Received a very large Freedom of Information Act request on riparian information on rangelands from Western Watersheds.
- Responding back to the Regional Forester on domestic sheep and bighorn proximity.
- Consultation with the USFWS on the grizzly bear is due next month.
- There have been a couple of lawsuits lately on lynx. Better technology and research is available now compared with the past. Thoughts have changed on what is truly lynx habitat. We are in a state of flux with lynx management in the Northern Rockies. The BDNF is not critical lynx habitat. Lynx habitat that is not occupied has been mapped.

The last validated observation was well over 10-15 years ago. Occupied does not mean they are not passing through.

#### 9. Next Steps/Agenda Items

- Upcoming meeting dates are February 21, March 21, and May 23. There is no meeting in April.
- MACO conference is upcoming; it is either February 12 or 19<sup>th</sup>.
- The next meeting agenda items:
  - ✓ Report from the lodgepole pine committee
  - ✓ Boulder project interdisciplinary team leader and pertinent staff will present
  - ✓ Membership discussion
  - ✓ NEPA project snapshot from B-D
  - ✓ Funding opportunities and niche discussion

#### 10. Member announcements

- The Regional Forester was out to the B-D last week. Each forest in the region will be developing a “niche” when it comes to accelerated restoration. Dave Myers and B-D Working Group’s assistance in developing what the niche looks like for accelerated restoration.
- Should the group be reviewing some of the projects down the road a little bit to give our stamp of approval? Will this group ever be in a position to be a friend of the court on these things that are being litigated?
  - ✓ The BDNF has a big NEPA list and a small NEPA list. The Forest Service will bring information to provide a snapshot at the next meeting

#### 11. Closing

- Meeting adjourned.