

**B-D Working Group  
Draft Agenda**

Thursday, March 21, 2013

Location: Butte-Silver Bow Archives  
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Members present: Barb Cestero, Tony Colter, Dave Schulz, Maureen Conner, Chris Marchion, Paul Olson, Rick Sandru,

Forest Service Personnel: Chuck Mark, Dave Myers

Guests: Ciche Pitcher, Peter Nelson, Tom Rice, Leonard Wortman, Zia Maumenee

Facilitator: Karen DiBari

Absent: Sam Samson, Parke Scott (?)

1. Welcome and approve minutes

Dave Schulz welcomed everyone and guests introduced themselves;  
Meeting minutes from February meeting: Paul Olson motioned and Tony Colter seconded;  
Approved

2. Public comment

None

3. Updates/ Announcements

- News from Chuck Mark: April 22 he becomes the Forest Supervisor for the Salmon-Challis National Forest.
- There will be a delay in filling the deputy forest supervisor position due to reduced Forest Service funds.
- Dave Sabo is the new ranger for the Butte District.

*Dave Schulz turned the meeting over to Karen DiBari.*

4. Membership

Karen DiBari explained the process the B-D Working Group was using to nominate and decide on new members, and that the group wants to ensure there's a diversity of interests at the table. Each guest introduced himself and described his interest in the B-D Working Group.

Leonard Wortman, Jefferson County Commissioner.

- Has participated in groups like this before working with Madison and Jefferson counties and environmental groups.
- Is chair of the liaison committee (20 people).
- Strong believer in the multiple use of our public lands.
- Would like to come up with ways that we can end the threat from fire.

- Business background in rodeo, ranches, construction, fence contracting, county accessor, county commissioner, cop, pole and post operation.

Tom Rice, Beaverhead County Commissioner

- Family has ranched since 1901
- Serves on several different committees as commissioner. Has been commissioner since 2005.
- Has served on many groups and boards on topics including Wild and Scenic Rivers, Big Hole recreation rules, Beaverhead recreation rules, stock growers on White Cliffs areas, Fish, Wildlife and Parks
- “Can’t sit in your own kingdom anymore.”

Ciche Pitcher: owner/operator of Discovery Ski Area, forest permit holder.

- Interests in forest, broader interest in business and personal quality of life involves recreation on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.
- Works with the Forest Service.
- Sees a changing dynamic in the forests financially
- Has not worked on similar groups, but was on planning commission and Five Valleys Land Trust, on the board of \_\_\_\_\_ Bank in Butte

Peter Nelson: Senior Policy Advisor for Federal Lands, Defenders of Wildlife

- Interests are in national wildlife conservation, forests and forest policy.
- Grew up in WA State, has a masters degree in forestry, worked on the west side of cascades and in Washington D.C., recently moved to Bozeman
- Sees this as a challenging time in forest policy and management. His program seeks to improve forest management and improve ecological systems and forest health.
- Defenders of Wildlife work in collaborative forestry and restoration. He’s engaged in a number of collaboratives and has found that through forestry and silviculture projects can meet multiple objectives.
- Works with the Southwestern Crown Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project (CFLRP) and also serves on the CFLRP Federal Advisory Committee, as well as the Forest Planning Federal Advisory Committee.
- He is interested in participating in the B-D Working Group (BDWG) so as to be directly involved in a local and regional effort. Given his policy background and national background, he feels he can bring something to the table.
- Improving management is difficult with the current financial strain. People are necessary for contribution of meaningful ideas.

Group discussion/comments

- The BDWG is working at the forest level, not focusing exclusively on projects. The forest leadership invites a higher-level review of what the Forest Service is doing and where the forest is going
- Accomplishments of the group so far:
  - In the first year of the group, foundational documents like protocols and a code of conduct were developed and issues identified. Recently

subcommittees have dug further into the “nitty gritty” and decided to work on one project (the Boulder project) as a test case for the lodgepole pine restoration guidelines that the group has developed.

- Worked with Jim Brammer, fisheries biologist, to develop guidelines for actions in fish key watersheds.
- Adopted the Montana Forest Restoration principles.
- Have begun work on lodgepole pine guidelines
- Provided input to Dave Myers about the forest niche
- BDWG members are striving to establish a respectful and constructive discussion. Every time we do something this is new ground.
- The forest plan adopted, but it’s been difficult to implement.

#### Discussion of other membership slots

- Guides and Outfitters: Joe Willauer of the Headwaters RC&D had some suggestions. Other names include:
  - Craig Fellin: Big Hole River.
  - Russ Kipp: Grasshopper, hunting and snowmobiling.
  - Tim Tollet, Frontier Anglers, Dillon

**Next steps:** Tom Rice will reach out the Russ Kipp to see if he is interested. Follow up with a letter to let him know the date of next meeting.

- Motorized recreation: Benny Finecum does not have time to participate. He suggested Friends of Pipestone. Potential names are Mark Thompson, Russ Ehness (who is on the Federal Advisory Committee) or Ted Dodge. Tony Colter will follow up.

#### 5. Lodgepole Pine Committee report and discussion

- Desire to share the drafts with a wider audience to get feedback.
- Discussion about designing projects as experiments with a robust monitoring component. It would be important to set the project up to learn. Do some classic treatments, some patchwork, some leave alone and monitor all of them. Roadless lands could be a control area. Merit to thinking about it across the forest as a whole.
- With regard to fire, maybe our efforts can be to reduce and evaluate risk. Need to clarify in document that prescribed fire is considered a treatment.
- Need to take climate change into account. Look to the past as an indicator of what might be sustainable, but then overlay climate and other factors.
- Assumption is that even aged stands were influenced by fire suppression. 50 years from now we want uneven aged forest. Encourage more diversity of species and age, including both wildlife and plants.
- Suggestion to design projects with different treatments in an experimental approach across a large landscape, and see what leads to resilience. Put priority for treatments on areas where values are at risk from large fires. Large roadless areas could serve as controls.
- Further outreach:
  - Paul Olson has shared the documents with Bruce Farling of Trout Unlimited.

- Chris Marchion sent the documents to Skip Kowalski of Montana Wildlife Federation.
- This document could be an appendix to the MFRC principles; the next Montana Forest Restoration Committee (MFRC) meeting is scheduled for May and will be on the agenda.
- **Next steps:** Barb will revise the document based on input to send out to the BDWG and also Gordy Sanders of the MFRC.

#### 6. Boulder Project Committee report

- The committee (Tony Colter, Barb Cestero, Chris Marchion, Leonard Wortman) met with Anton Brennick, FS silviculturist on the project the morning of 3/21/13.
  - Discussed why the unit size was determined, the legal implications of the road issue.
- Discussion points:
  - BDWG would like to see multiple issues (such as vegetation, restoration, aquatics, road density/travel management) handled in an integrated fashion. Concern from Forest Service that handling so many issues, particularly travel management, can bog down the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process on a project. There is definitely a wish to keep things moving forward though, as delay in projects leads to danger to communities due to potential wildfire.
  - Boulder project- objection process – nationally, the appeals process has changed. The driving concept is to get different perspectives together on the front end and find common ground. An interested member of the public must participate in the objection process in order to be able to go to court in the end. The model for the new process is the Healthy Forest Restoration Act. This issue will be put on the agenda for the May meeting, and Forest Service staff will present about the new objections process.
  - Is stewardship contracting going to be used? No decision yet, and the question needs to be answered whether this project lends itself to stewardship
  - Project size: Lodgepole pine ecology requires projects to be large in order to have an impact.
  - Both motorized and non-motorized interests have been involved in the FS-led Boulder Project group. Leonard Wortman participated in the group.
    - Suggestion to the Forest Service to have the group meet more often (at least monthly). Concerns about Federal Advisory Committee Act issues need to be resolved.
    - **BDWG could help with identifying strategies to make collaborative processes on projects more effective**
- **Next steps:**
  - Barb Cestero and Tony Colter took notes from the 3/21/13 morning meeting with Anton Brennick. They will schedule conference call and review with committee in the next 2-3 weeks and will draft a letter for BDWG review.
  - Coordinate with Anton Brennick and Dave Sabo regarding 6/13 field trip
  - Schedule a teleconference to talk about recommendations for Forest Service led collaborative processes (like Boulder).

#### 7. Presentation from Dave Myers for schedule of integrated restoration projects for the coming 5 years (see attached handout)

- 5 Year Veg Plan:
  - Timber action plan tied to metrics of volumes in board feet, which is the traditional approach in the Forest Service. Program work is tied to doing NEPA and generating outputs.
  - Grizzly bears are coming into the BDNF from the north.
  - Agency is overrun with work load.
  - Haven't started a veg project in 2 years. Boulder was very large and implementation took a long time.
  - East Deerlodge project addresses bark beetle, aquatics (bottomless arches to support aquatic organism passage); agency is looking for partners to help pay for this.
  - Foothills: burning on higher elevation, cutting on lower
  - Fleecer: in court, large sale. Question about when/how to move forward even though a project is litigated? The forest can award a contract.
  - Boulder River: Restoration and prescribed fire are large components of the project. The Boulder is a fish key watershed. The project is intended to maintain or improve forest prime standard, regenerate aspen.
  - Other areas discussed amongst the group as priorities
    - Greenhorn mountains have old harvest units, Douglas fir, could use some mechanical treatment, roads causing problems with aquatic habitat
    - Gravellys: high priority landscape
    - Yellowstone ecosystem and the North Continental Divide over to Tobacco Roots
    - Pintler Face – BDWG could help with 1) size of project area; 2) elements of purpose and need
  - Group discussion:
    - Suggestion to build on this document and create a restoration document to move from traditional to a bigger, more integrated project list. A planning document like this could help the B-D for the next 5 to 10 year planning.
  - **Next Steps:**
    - The FS asked the BDWG to review its mission at the next meeting and to discuss engaging in other projects besides Boulder River.
    - There's an opportunity for the BDWG to suggest priorities to the BDNF regarding projects.
    - Put together a schedule for upcoming years/quarters to identify the work of the BDWG.
- Bark Beetle Maps: newest maps from last year won't come out for another month.

#### 8. Litigation and Appeals Update (15 minutes) (Dave Myers/ Chuck Mark)

- Fleecer - Waiting for the court to rule; this is a challenging situation because field season is approaching.
- Trapper project - complaint that sage grouse needs were not adequately analyzed.
- East Deerlodge project - waiting on biological opinion on Grizzly bear.

Sequestration (see attached document provided by Dave Myers)

- Impacts are budget reductions
- Budget cuts were already in affect and 2014 is going to get worse.
- Cost pools for offices that BDNF leases are reduced, may not fill deputy supervisor position, NFRR is \$500,000 short
- Vacant positions: fisheries, NEPA coordinator, range management, wildlife biologists, recreation techs, noxious weed positions...Not many funded field positions, trails, wilderness, and recreation,
- Still have a 14 mil budget. Priority work is getting done.
- Sequestration will affect Resource Advisory Committees.

9. Next steps/agenda items (5 minutes) (Karen DiBari)

- Upcoming meeting dates
  - No BDWG meeting scheduled in April
  - Thursday, May 23, 1:00 – 5:00 p.m., BDWG meeting at Butte-Silverbow Archives
  - Thursday, June 13, potential Boulder field trip
  - Wednesday, July 24, BDWG meeting Butte-Silverbow Archives
  - Thursday, August 15, BDWG meeting (Silverbow County Library conference room, 226 West Broadway in Butte)
  - Understanding Travel Management

*Karen turns the meeting over to Dave/Tony to close out.*

10. Member Announcements (5 minutes) (Dave Schulz/ Tony Colter)

Issues raised:

- State water plan
- Senate Bill 217: Drinking water supplies at risk in fire areas.
- Montana Association of Counties – Maureen is working to arrange a presentation at the September meeting (the BDWG PowerPoint is ready).

11. Closing (Dave Schulz/ Tony Colter)