

B-D Working Group (BDWG)

August 15, 2013, 2013

Location: Butte Archives

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Members present: Tony Colter, Pete Nelson, Leonard Wortman, Barb Cestero, Tom Rice, Dave Schulz, Sam Samson, Charlie O’Leary, Mark Thompson.

Forest Service Personnel: Tim Garcia, Shauna Brewer, Gene DeGayner

Facilitator: Karen DiBari

Absent: Rick Sandru, Ciche Pitcher, Joe Willauer, Paul Olson, Chris Marchion, Parke Scott, Maureen Connor.

1. Welcome: Tony Colter welcomed everyone.
2. Meeting minutes from July meeting: Barb Cestero moved to approve the minutes, Charlie O’Leary seconded the motion. Minutes were approved with no changes.
3. Public comment:
 - N/A
4. Updates/Announcements
 - Paul Olson sent some comments out to the group.
5. BDWG Support
 - National Association of Resource Development Councils (NARDC) funding – Joe Willauer is processing it. The funding helps advance the State Forest Assessment; it may be useful to invite someone from the Montana Dept. of Natural Resources (DNRC) to come since the money will be going towards that. The State Assessment does not prescribe action but assesses forest conditions and priority actions across agency boundaries. The group agreed to invite a person from the DNRC. The NARDC would like notice for the public for one of the meetings and the group was fine with that as well.
 - Action- Karen will talk with Joe Willauer about who to invite from DNRC.
 - State & Private Forestry funding – the agreement is in process and will be directly between the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (BDNF) and the National Forest Foundation (NFF).
6. Lodgepole Pine Committee
 - Barb Cestero spoke with Marnie Criley of the Montana Forest Restoration Committee (MFRC). Marnie proposed to the MFRC that they combine

efforts and have a joint meeting between the two subcommittees (ours and MFRC's). Marnie indicated the Southwest Crown Collaborative has indicated interest in lodgepole as well. Barb Cestero, Tony Colter, Pete Nelson and Paul Olson are our subcommittee members, and will report back after the next meeting.

- Per Tony Colter, MFRC has not specifically addressed lodgepole before. Now they are in the process with a subcommittee.
- *Next step: to schedule a joint meeting between our subcommittee and MFRC's subcommittee (Barb Cestero)*

7. BDNF Niche

Niche (Gene DeGayner)

- A niche is sort of a way of leveling outputs with outcomes.
- At the beginning of the year, the forests were asked to review their niche and send the regional office a program of work.
- The Beaverhead-Deerlodge niche centers around restoration key watersheds, lodgepole, restoration, bark beetle, support local communities and infrastructure.
- **Action: The BDNF will send a copy of the niche statement to Karen DiBari to distribute to the group.**

8. Landscape Restoration Approaches/ Proposal

(Gene DeGayner)

- Thinks it's a great idea for the BDWG to put together a landscape proposal.
- The most resilient forests are those that have a lot of diversity to them. The most effective collaboratives are those that have a wide variety of interests at the table.
- Important to set clear targets. The Regional Office is looking to support projects across the region with reasonable unit costs, clear objectives, and collaborative support. It's also about the outcome, overall result on the landscape.
- Recommends a large landscape in order to bring in a variety of interests.
- Forest Service resources to support such an effort include having specialists attend meetings to hear the BDWG's feedback, review GIS layers, review values at risk. Regional Office can help with modeling and resource expertise.
- The region has an integrated protection strategy, would be happy to come talk to the BDWG about it.
- The Helena collaborative is focused on their municipal watershed and fireshed. Turned out to be a very large landscape. They used the SIMPLE model to project what it will look like 80 years out. Then compared to what it looked like in 1700. Once you have that ecological departure, then you choose the 2 or 3 options to work on. The B-D had to run it for their forest plan. The region has 6 million acres of bugkill. The 11,000 acres

treated mechanically each year in the region are very precious acres and the Forest Service has to put them in the right spot. A major bottleneck is in the ESA – Endangered Species Act, Section 7. Suggests the group see the 10 mile municipal watershed for Helena presentation. Might help to figure out how to best figure out the BDWG’s agenda going forward.

- Suggestion to pick a community, grow that watershed to the fireshed. Look at how much of the landscape needs to be treated.
- Suggests making the proposal/landscape big enough to pull more people to the table and have more capacity. Make it big enough so people care. Make it marketable.
- Don’t feel pressured to make everything resilience or restoration.....call it what it is.
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Group comments:

- Would really like this to be a cooperative effort between the group and the Forest Service.
- Discussion of scale: Forest wide? Specific landscape? May need some additional technical resources. Scale becomes easier if there is a specific target/objectives in mind. Then develop an agenda to go forward.
- The nature of the BDNF lends itself to landscapes. We have to decide which are the highest priority landscapes and where to start. It may take starting into some of the analysis to answer the question of where.
- Question about whether this is “starting over”, since the BDWG has been talking about the Boulder and Big Hole/Pintler Face for the last two years. Discussion: This working group was not involved in shaping the Boulder Project and it doesn’t necessarily reflect the vision of the BDWG. The Forest Service is so far down the road with that project already. How do we bring our (BDWG and BDNF) visions more together? This landscape proposal concept is to develop a long-term restoration approach for an area that hasn’t already been designed by the Forest Service.
- Turnover at the line officer leadership level is a loss to the group. Comment from Gene DeGayner that the question for the new line officer to ask is “what is the collaborative thinking”? Losing continuity is a problem, but it’s also an opportunity to start off fresh.
- Tim Garcia – in the conversations he had with Dave, the BDWG is a big deal for him. It’s a priority to the region as well. We need to keep the momentum going.
- How to approach: question of where to start. Concerns about focusing on an area and then ignoring other areas with high risk.
- Other thoughts:
 - Whitebark pine important
 - Consider calling it a fireshed or watershed instead of a landscape.
 - Suggestion to use the fireshed map already completed for (Silverbow) County by Sonny Steiger.

- The group should be sure to recognize what's already been done in terms of prioritization by the Forest Service. For example, what drove the Boulder as a large project as a priority? Whatever we propose we have to realize that we are going to have to rely on resources from the Forest Service, which are limited. Focus on an area which is important for those limited forest service resources. Perhaps we can add value to something that isn't our highest priority.
- Next Steps:
 - Steering Committee (Barb Cestero, Tony Colter, Peter Nelson) will work with Tim Garcia to plan out action steps so the group can select a target area. General plan is to help the group see how the different interests align spatially across the forest and where fire threatens values at risk. Using mapping technologies we could see as a group where they line up into a target. Need the data overlaid on maps with towns, county boundaries, and geographical features to give contextual value.
 - Also an interest in inviting Mike Hillis to a meeting to talk about departure of the BDNF from historic conditions and the SIMMPLE model.
 - Ask for a Forest Service presentation about their prioritization of project areas.

9. Litigation, Appeals and Fire Update

- There are two new fire starts today in the Wisdom area.

10. Next Steps/Agenda Items

- The next meeting will focus on the issue of the GIS mapping exercise.
- Future meeting dates are: September 12, October 17, November 21, and January 23.

11. Member announcements

- The Gravelly landscape collaborative also got some government funding.
- Indian Creek fire – discussion about the high level of interaction between multiple agencies. The cooperation was outstanding.

12. Closing

- Meeting adjourned by Dave Schulz