

B-D Working Group (BDWG)
September 12, 2013, 2013
Location: Whitehall District Office
1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Members present: Pete Nelson, Ciche Pitcher, Leonard Wortman, Barb Cestero, Tom Rice, Dave Schulz, Sam Samson, Charlie O’Leary, Mark Thompson, Maureen Connor, Rick Sandru

Forest Service Personnel: Tim Garcia, Peri Suenram, Steven Kujala, Sandy Dueck

Facilitator: Karen DiBari

Absent: Paul Olson, Chris Marchion, Parke Scott, Tony Colter

The August meeting minutes were approved without any changes. Barb Cestero announced that there is a workshop scheduled to be held in Salmon, Idaho in October. Barb is attending and she asked if anyone else from the B-D Working Group was interested in going.

Lodgepole Pine

Barb Cestero reported that there is a meeting scheduled with the Montana Forest Restoration Committee’s lodgepole group on September 26th from 100 – 3:00 p.m. in Missoula.

Map Overlay Exercise

Tim Garcia asked Peri Suenram and Steven Kujala to attend the meeting today to share with the BDWG the process the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest used to prioritize where to focus attention and project work, based on questions that have come up at previous meetings and also to help inform the discussion about where to focus a landscape restoration proposal. Steven Kujala operated the computer to show different layers on the BDNF map, and Peri Suenram explained the prioritization process used for the BDNF Forest Plan.

The Forest Plan is built on restraints, meaning that the land base was narrowed down based on what the Forest Service could achieve. Removed from consideration:

- Wilderness
- Wilderness Study Areas
- Research Natural Areas
- Recommended wilderness

69% of the BDNF is inventoried roadless areas (IRAs). Projects can get done on IRAs but mechanical treatment draws litigation and they require a full environmental impact statement.

Fish Key Watersheds were identified in partnership with the State of Montana, NOAA, and others. West Slope Cutthroat are only in 1% of their previous habitat. Treatments or other activities in Fish Key Watersheds must benefit fish in them. Costs go up (heli and skyline logging).

Showing beneficial effect in Fish Key Watersheds is very difficult in the short time, but is much more possible longterm.

Restoration Key Watersheds (188,146 acres) are places that district staff and forest specialists think offer good integrated restoration opportunities. These areas were identified primarily using local knowledge. Watershed assessments are in progress on all of the Restoration Key Watersheds (# miles road, culverts, vegetation type, goshawks, etc.). The assessments are not a decision-making exercise, just data collection.

Questions about other sources of information:

- Watershed Condition Class (helpful at the project level)
- Vegetation mapping (doesn't display well at forest level – more useful at project level)
- Current ecological condition

In FY14, the BDNF will be monitoring the Lima-Tendoy allotment and the Forest Service invited the BDWG to be involved

Group discussion about potential project areas:

- Selway Restoration Watershed
- Municipal watersheds in Sheridan and Dillon
- West Big Hole, south of Rat Creek
 - Anderson Mountain (top of watershed; fire, mining restoration, limited logging)
- North of Fleecer, below the Table Mountains (NW of Twin Bridges)
 - Hells Canyon Creek watershed; dry, sagebrush, conifer encroachment, livestock, backcountry recreation, wood-cutting, rainbow trout spawning stream, adjacent to recommended wilderness)
- Tobacco Roots – east of Twin Bridges
 - Private inholdings on Potosi, lots of restoration opportunities from mining; some timber, mostly wildland urban interface
- Fred Burr
 - Municipal watershed, bull trout, lots of prior mining activity

Information asked about in the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program:

- Invasive species
- Timber/wood products
- Jobs/economics
- Watershed function/water quality
- Wildlife habitat/fish
- Risk of uncharacteristic wildfire
- Desired vegetation conditions
- Motorized/non-motorized recreation
- Travel management/roads
- Access (for treatment and data gathering)
- Wildland-urban interface acres
- Mining tailings cleanup

Next steps

- Steering committee will meet to discuss
- Compare each of the target project areas in terms of their needs relative to the bullets above

Fire/ Litigation report

- BDNF is doing a notice of intent to conduct supplemental environmental impact statement to the forest plan to say why temporary roads weren't considered
- Flint Foothills project has been held up due to temporary roads issue
- Fire starts are down
- The Eureka Fire closed down in early September
 - Impacted white bark pine (one genetically unique stand burned, one was spared)
- Beaver Creek is in the monitoring phase; rain helped

Next meetings

- October 17
 - Add Leonard Wortman to agenda re: mining reclamation
- November 21