

Panhandle Forest Collaborative

9/25/13 meeting minutes

Sandpoint District Office

1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Present

Members: Liz Johnson-Gebhardt, Bob Boeh, Mike Petersen, Phil Hough, Brad Smith, Glen Bailey, Jeff Connolly, John Finney, Paul Sieracki

Forest Service: Chad Hudson, Coeur d'Alene River District Ranger

Facilitator: Karen DiBari

Introductions and Meeting Minutes

All those present introduced themselves. The group approved the 7/17/13 meeting minutes unanimously with several changes (Forest Service staff name additions and correction regarding source of culmination requirements on National Forests being the Forest Service Manual).

Organizational Housekeeping

Chair and Vice-Chair

Liz Johnson-Gebhardt has been serving as Panhandle Forest Collaborative (PFC) chair and Mike Petersen as PFC vice-chair since November 2011. Liz is willing, and her board supports her in staying on as chair for an additional two-year term. Mike Petersen is willing to stay on as vice-chair for one-year, after which a new person will become vice-chair with the anticipation that that person will take over as chair when Liz's term is over. The group unanimously approved this plan.

Membership Issues

- Glen Bailey is participating as an active member.
- John Finney will reach out to Nate Sparks at Idaho Parks & Recreation to invite his participation in the group.
- Karen will add Kajsa Stromberg to the Forest Projects Committee list.

Declaration of Cooperation Statements

- The group reviewed the statements that several members shared (Priest Community Forest Connection & Idaho Forest Group) and members renewed their commitment to bring their own "declaration of cooperation" to the next meeting (November). The statements shall address:
 - A commitment to adhere to the protocols
 - Expression of commitment to participate in good faith in the collaborative process

- What the organization/individual brings to the collaborative table

PFC Protocols

The PFC unanimously approved the revised protocols.

Committee Updates

Recreation Committee

- Recreation planning has been on hold. The new forest plan is unlikely to be finalized until March 2014, and action really can't be taken until the plan is done. In addition, there is no funding currently available for recreation planning.

Lightning Creek – *Treasured Landscapes*

- Phil Hough provided an overview of the volunteer crews and their work over the summer in surveying whitebark pine and native plants, and assessing weed populations in the Lightning Creek drainage.
- Karen DiBari reported that the Mud Creek road to trail conversion has been completed. It is now a non-motorized trail in the summer and a winter motorized trail. Also, weed spraying will be done this fall.
- 9/26 – community meeting planned in Clark Fork (at the High School, 7 p.m.)
- 9/28 – volunteer work day being coordinated by Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness in conjunction with the District and the NFF (this was postponed until 10/5 due to major rain on the originally scheduled date).

Forest Projects Committee

- Mike Petersen provided an overview of how the PFC came to be working on Bottom Canyon and the plan to develop an alternative. He also reviewed the work that was done this summer (field trips, meetings)
- Idaho Forest Group contracted with Northwest Management to conduct a preliminary analysis over the 12,000 acre Bottom Canyon watershed to answer the following questions:
 - Where can we harvest?
 - What road system is required?
 - What harvest systems would be required?
- Based on NW Management's analysis, the Forest Projects Committee recommended to the Forest Service that data be gathered in more areas. This will take more time and money.
- Chad Hudson reported that the Forest Service has prioritized 3,100 acres for further data gathering and are extending their timeline for that phase. They have contracted for more data collection with TEAMS, and will do as much as possible before it snows.
- Timeline:
 - This fall – gather further timber data and field test road/sediment trade-offs; Bob Boeh suggested picking some representative samples of stand exams and identifying potential prescriptions
 - March/April – have an alternative “on the map” to help guide summer field work
 - Next summer – botanical, archaeological, and wildlife surveys

- Winter 2014/15 – effects analysis
- Chad will send out information about prioritization methodology to the Forest Projects Committee and will send a GIS of roads and trails.
- Chad expressed that there is no guarantee how all of this will turn out but that he is fully committed to working with the PFC.
- The Black Canyon Project will most likely be offered under the new plan but it will be based on when the decision is made; intention to be a 2016 sale
- The whole area has significant root rot.
- The intent of both the Forest Projects Committee and the CDA District is to have this be a shared approach throughout.
- The PFC unanimously approved (all thumbs up, one “sideways” thumb from Paul Sieracki who raised the concern about developing the alternative without the wildlife/botany data in hand) the Forest Projects Committee moving forward with engaging in the Bottom Canyon as described.

Bottom Canyon Next Steps

- Forest Projects Committee will meet on October 8th
- Will work with Chad Hudson about potentially scheduling another field trip this fall
- Discussion about the need for facilitation of Forest Projects Committee meetings and a request that Karen look at how much is left in the budget for facilitation

Forest Plan

- The group had a short discussion about the draft forest plan and a subset of the group may get together to discuss responses. Mike Petersen and others have received calls from the media looking for comment. The group was clear that comments on the plan are not being made by the PFC as a whole.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule

- Wednesday, November 13, 2013 – Fernan office (focus on Bottom Canyon)
- Tuesday, January 14, 2014 – Fernan office (focus on Bottom Canyon)
- Wednesday, February 19, 2014 – Fernan office (focus on Bottom Canyon)
- Tuesday, March 18, 2014 – Fernan office (focus on Bottom Canyon)
- Wednesday, April 9, 2014 – Sandpoint office
- Wednesday, June 11, 2014 – location TBD
- Wednesday, August 13, 2014 – location TBD
- Wednesday, October 1, 2014 – location TBD
- Wednesday, December 3, 2014 – location TBD