

**B-D Working Group
Minutes**
Thursday, April 17, 2014
Butte-Silverbow Archives
1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Meeting Objectives:

- Focus in on the key things the BDWG wants to work on/achieve
- Identify action items to advance those objectives
- Identify next steps with regard to the Farm Bill nominations

BDWG Members: Dave Schulz, Tony Colter, Barb Cestero, Paul Olson, Tom Rice, Mark Thompson, Sam Samson, Maureen Connor, Rick Sandru, Pete Nelson

Forest Service: Melany Glossa

Facilitator: Karen DiBari

Guests: Rick Franke, Sun Mountain Lumber

Business

- March 20, 2014 meeting minutes approved without any changes.

Announcements

- Karen DiBari reminded people about the Southwestern Crown of the Continent workshop on mixed-severity planned for May 7 at Lubrecht Experimental Forest

Farm Bill Nomination Next Steps

- Melany Glossa reported that Governor Bullock nominated 5 million acres across the state under the 2014 Farm Bill. She thanked the BDWG for the excellent job the group did in developing the nomination, and said the work done by the BDWG is reflective of what the Farm Bill is about.
- The Forest Service is excited about opportunities the Farm Bill offers. Last week the regional leadership team (RLT) met to discuss how to do the associated work, and are getting researchers involved to use fuels models that have already been developed.
- The RLT is thinking about how to achieve use of the categorical exclusion (CE) in an efficient, effective manner. All recognize that the first CE will be highly scrutinized and likely litigated, but Faye Krueger thinks it is important to test the new authority. Intent is to have two projects in Idaho and two in Montana. The 10-mile project on the Helena NF will likely be one of the first projects. Melany Glossa expects some direction from the Regional Office about what the CEs will look like. Some fire modeling has already been done for the BDNF so that may make the BDNF a candidate for early project. Concerns: limited BDNF staff capacity, need to complete legacy projects, temporary road issue.
- The “left flank” of the environmental community is very concerned about the Governor’s recommendations, as evidenced by the media coverage.
- Colorado and several other states drew a circle around the entire state. Washington chose not to nominate any landscapes.

- Barb Cestero sent the BDWG nominations package on to elected officials and others sent it on to people in their networks. The group discussed the need for an educational effort about the landscape needs on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF (BDNF).
- What are the next steps?
 - The Secretary of Agriculture needs to nominate the landscape treatment areas; that process is unclear.
 - Once the landscapes are designated:
 1. Can do projects under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act provisions
 2. Under certain conditions, can use the CE (up to 3,000 acres, project developed through a collaborative process, no permanent roads, and others...)
- NEXT MEETING: Invite Jan Bowie to clearly explain the differences between an environmental impact statement (EIS), environmental assessment (EA), and categorical exclusion (CE) and when each is used.

Review and refine BDWG purpose statement

- The group reviewed the BDWG purpose statement and decided to leave it the way it is, but identified its work plan for the coming year in answer to the question “What are the key things the BDWG wants to accomplish?”
- All present unanimously supported the following work plan.

WORK PLAN for 2014-2015

- *Work across large landscapes to:*
 - *Reduce the risk of severe wildfire to communities and infrastructure*
 - *Improve resiliency and desired regime/quality of terrestrial and aquatic habitats that are degraded*
 - *Identify opportunities to use timber harvest to generate economic benefits*
 - *Demonstrate responsible recreation opportunities*
- *Demonstrate integrated restoration on the ground*
 - *Selway Meadows – Support FS on project and also consider scaling out to add other resource objectives.*
 - *Explore Selway Meadows for whether it’s appropriate for a CFLRP-style proposal if significantly expanded in acreage.*
 - *Develop an integrated restoration approach to Boulder as probable test of Farm Bill CE. Could also be a CFLR-proposal candidate.*
 - *Support Gravelly restoration project as appropriate*
- *Clarify BDWG role in projects*
 - *Help with prioritization*
 - *Engage early in project design to help identify where, why, what and then continue throughout process*
 - *Decide on which projects to engage; key decision point is that there are a variety of integrated restoration opportunities*
 - *Enlist other, local interests in engaging in projects based on geography*
 - *Level of engagement might vary depending on project (broad vision vs. specific input)*

- *Help get more money and capacity for the BDNF*
 - *Elevate the BDNF and BDWG's work*
 - *“Constant” presence – nurturing relationships*
 - *Stay visible with RO*
 - *Intentional outreach to Congressional delegation*
 - *BDWG raise money to add capacity (such as through ERG)*
 - *State of Montana (Governor's Office and DNRC)*
 - *Invite Congressional staff to a “show and tell” meeting*
 - *MACo*
 - *Develop an outreach and communications plan for events/announcements (external)*
 - *Media*
 - *Power of 10 lists*
 - *Plan for who will reach out to whom*
 - *Messaging*
 - *Develop a communication plan within the BDWG (internal)*
- *Serve as a bridge to broader constituencies and interests and build broader support amongst the public for restoration on the BDNF*
 - *Enlarge BDWG membership and develop orientation plan for new members/ buddy system*
 - *DNRC*
 - *Engage people through committees*
 - *Engaging “locals” on projects*
 - *Tie into communications plan*
 - *Outreach strategy to watershed groups*

NEXT STEPS on action plan:

- Karen DiBari will send out the “power of 10” information
- Tony Colter will call Melany Glossa to ask what the obstacles are to the Boulder Project.

Metrics

The following was approved by consensus:

The BDWG will use the following metrics/outcomes to track progress and improving conditions on a landscape restoration project area.

Purposes:

- *Review of projects to determine diversity of issues represented*
- *Review of landscapes to determine appropriateness for CFLR-style proposal*
- *Quantify what is in current condition (acres) as well as change to desired condition (acres), etc.*

Metrics:

- *Invasive species (acres)*

- *Timber/ wood products (mbf)*
- *Jobs/ economics (jobs)*
- *Watershed function (WCAT)*
- *Water quality (TMDLs)*
- *Wildlife & fish habitat (acres or miles of stream enhanced)*
- *Wildfire uncharacteristic risk (Fire Condition Class; acres resiliency)*
- *Desired vegetation conditions (historic range of variability)*
- *Motorized/ non-motorized recreation/ travel management/ roads (total miles, road density, trails improved)*
- *Wildland Urban Interface risk (acres)*
- *Mining cleanup*

Action Items

- The group agreed it is interested in scheduling a summer field trip (June) to Selway Meadows

Items for the next meeting:

- Invite Jan Bowey to present on National Environmental Policy Act EIS, EA and CE definitions (Melany Glossa)
- Invite Jim Brammer to present about Selway Meadows (Melany Glossa)
- Schedule field trip to Selway Meadows for summer
- Invite Tim Baker to make comments at the next meeting regarding Farm Bill next steps (Barb Cestero)
- Invite Sean Steinbach to the next meeting (Karen DiBari)

Excellent quotes from the meeting:

- Home run hitters strike out a lot
- White hat, black hat or gray hat? (in terms of projects)