

B-D Working Group
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 19, 2015
Butte-Silverbow Archives

Meeting objectives:

- Identify next steps for Boulder and Selway Meadows and 5 Year Action Planning/Program of Work
- Discuss outreach regarding BDNF budgetary needs, longer term planning

BDWG Members: Maureen Connor, Leonard Wortman, Rick Sandru, Chris Marchion, Paul Olson, Pete Nelson, Tony Colter, David Schulz

Committee Members: Rick Franke

Forest Service: Dave Sabo, Scot Shuler

Guests: Jeremy Carpenter, Nathan Korb, Erik Nylund, Spenser Merwin

Facilitator: Karen DiBari

1. **Welcome, introductions and approve minutes** – Dave Schulz opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. All introduced themselves around the table. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously with one correction (should be Rick Franke not Rick Sandru listed as participating in the Selway Meadows meeting).
2. **Public comment** – No public comment.
3. **Updates/ Announcements** – Rick Franke shared that Chris Marchion was profiled in the recent issue of Montana Outdoors and is recognized for the Conservation Hall of Fame Award. Chris commented that “all he did in conservation was show up to work with good groups like this one”.

Karen DiBari distributed the executive summary of a report that was developed by the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources & Environment with the help of the National Forest Foundation: *Restoring Forests & Communities: Lessons from the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP)*.

The 5 Year Report to Congress on the CFLRP will be released in the next few weeks.

Leonard Wortman announced that the Jefferson County Commissioners made a decision to provide funding to the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest for Boulder Lowlands implementation. They have not yet allocated a specific amount.

Karen DiBari shared that the State of Montana has awarded the BDNF \$17,000 for support of the B-D Working Group to engage in the Boulder Lowlands project in the coming year. (\$12,000 for facilitation; \$5,000 for technical work such as ERG)

4. Policy Updates

- Congressional delegation is eager to see the 2014 Farm Bill categorical exclusion working.
- The Chief testified before House Appropriations that week.
- Montana members of Congress saw Melany in DC earlier in week.
- Concern about loss of additional law enforcement staff (3 are left on the BDNF; lost 2 in past year)
- Offer to research questions and get back to Working Group.
- General support for collaboratives like this one.
- Payments in Lieu of Taxes and Secure Rural Schools still being worked on – no resolution yet

5. Gravelly Landscape Collaborative (GLC)

- The GLC has been working together for 3 years; have developed a proposal for the Greenhorn project (presented at a previous BDWG meeting)
- Is not scheduled for the BDNF docket for NEPA to begin until FY17; GLC is frustrated at that
- GLC also interested in looking at new ways to approach NEPA to be innovative and more efficient; Greenhorn is just a pilot to figure out how to do things better
- Discussion of developing a more formal relationship with the Gravelly Landscape Collaborative in order to ensure that groups are working together; overall support amongst the BDWG for this due to mutual benefits
- DECISION: Unanimous support of having Nathan Korb join the BDWG as a member, both to serve as a conservation voice and also as a liaison between the GLC and the BDWG.
- ACTION ITEM: Karen DiBari and Maureen Connor will review the operating guidelines to determine if any changes are needed so as to be clear about expectations with GLC.

6. Boulder Lowlands update and identification of next steps

- Bruce Higgins, Tera Little, Melany Glossa, and Peri Suenram met and discussed roles and responsibilities, project direction, etc. Plan to narrow the Purpose and Need to be responsive to the Farm Bill CE requirements. Working with TEAMS, they are aiming to have minimal impacts on the BDNF staff. Plan to complete the project in a timely fashion and within budget. Bruce Higgins is working on the timeline. The plan is for Melany Glossa to sign the decision memo by September 30, 2015. No new or temporary roads will be built (very high road density area) to be consistent with forest plan standards.
- Public Involvement Plan – are planning one open house, and determining where it will be.
- Bruce Higgins is scheduling one ID Team trip (likely in May).
- BDNF is putting together a mailing list.
- ACTION ITEM: Pete Nelson will send the BDWG lodgepole guidelines to Bruce Higgins and Dave Sabo.
- ACTION ITEM: Pete Nelson will draft a two-page vision statement for Boulder Lowlands, using the Farm Bill nominations package information.
- ACTION ITEM: Pete Nelson and Bruce Higgins will talk about how the BDWG can work with TEAMS on the Purpose and Need.
- The BDWG is interested in a lot of productive interaction.
- Committee members are: Tony Colter, Pete Nelson (lead), Leonard Wortman, Paul Olsen, Sam Samson
- NEXT MEETING: Need to discuss how to leverage the funds that the BDWG has to be most effective.

7. Selway Meadows update and identification of next steps

- Selway Meadows committee met in mid-March.
- Committee members are: Chris Marchion, Rick Franke, Paul Olsen, Nathan Korb (plus some others from MT Fish Wildlife & Parks: Matt Yeager and Craig Flager).
- The BDNF is moving forward with a CE to handle the water issues; plan a decision this summer. The BDNF would like the BDWG's input on screening criteria to help determine how to prioritize ditch management and also determine required actions. Want to have a plan for each ditch by the beginning of FY16.
- The BDNF would like to address the water and some road decommissioning now, and then look at the larger landscape later in order. Concerns were expressed about this approach because if native trout are reintroduced to the stream before timber harvest, there are likely to be limitations on allowable activities. The BDWG is interested in developing the big-picture vision in order to map out a timeline of activities that can be done in a logical order and all objectives can be accomplished.
- Selway Meadows is outside of the BDWG identified landscapes (Farm Bill)
- Timeline –NEPA will be initiated in FY17 for timber sale
- ACTION ITEM: Develop a two-page vision statement of the multiple objectives for the April BDWG meeting.
- ACTION ITEM: Next committee meeting scheduled for April 28. The BDNF plans to contact Karen Boyd, a geomorphologist, to review the water situation and make recommendations.
- ACTION ITEM: Provide feedback on water document in July. Schedule a field trip for August and invite public
- ACTION ITEM: Ask Jim Brammer if the creek restoration activities and reintroduction of native trout will make this a fish key watershed?
- ACTION ITEM: Ask Jim Brammer if using poison in the creek will affect the native mussels?
- ACTION ITEM: Use the Greenhorn vision statement as an example.

8. Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest budget and 3-5 year project timeline

- Concerns expressed about decline in BDNF budget and reduction of ID team
- BDWG very interested in providing input on 3-5 year timeline
- Concern about ensuring that there are projects in the pipeline so there's no gap between implementation of legacy projects and next set of projects, and that collaborative energy/engagement can see results

9. Housekeeping items:

- Karen DiBari will call Joe Willauer about whether he is able to continue as a member.

10. Identify action items and plans for next meeting

- Plan to schedule committee meeting time in agenda for April

11. Other Announcements

- Search for Deputy Sup has started over.
- ACTION ITEM: Dave Schulz and Karen DiBari will work on drafting the letter to the Congressional delegation.

12. Closing – Meeting adjourned.