

**B-D Working Group  
Draft Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, August 20, 2015  
Butte-Silverbow Archives**

**BDWG Members:** Tony Colter, Maureen Connor, Mark Thompson, Nathan Korb, Dave Schulz, Tom Rice, Leonard Wortman, Pete Nelson

**Guests:** John Kountz, Mo Bookwalter, Rick Franke, Erik Nylund

**Forest Service:** Melany Glossa, Scot Shuler, Dave Sabo, Scott Snelson, Alex Dunn, Bruce Higgins

**Facilitator:** Karen DiBari

**ACTIONS**

- Schedule Steering Committee meeting
- Schedule Ad hoc Resiliency Factors meeting
- Add timelines/sequencing comments to vision for Selway Meadows

**2015 Meeting Dates (generally  
3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month):**

- September 17, 2015
- October 15, 2015
- November 19, 2015
- December 17, 2015

1. Welcome and introductions; meetings approved unanimously.

2. No public comment.

3. Updates/ Announcements

- Fire Season updates from Melany Glossa:
  - 3 firefighters died in Washington this week.
  - Lots of BDWG staff on fires.
  - 26,000 firefighters on the ground, teams from all over the world.
  - Preparedness level 5.
  - Anticipate \$250-400 million in fire spending.
  - ID forests seeing conditions compared to 1910.
  - Unclear about the number of fires because of the smoke.

4. Policy Updates

- Policy update from Erik Nylund:
  - Congress in recess.
  - Senator Tester met with Regional Forester, Leanne Martin.
  - Fire borrowing in place and Forest Service (FS) doesn't have the money
  - 1<sup>st</sup> week of September FS will run out of money due to fire costs
  - Most of western senators support finding a fix but not clear on what that will be.
  - Working on legislation
    - Forest Jobs and Recreation Act
    - Invited BDWG input
- Farm Bill Funding:
  - Interest in funding the bill but it is hard to convince Eastern members of Congress about its importance.
  - Metrics that would speak loudest to Congress to show Farm Bill impact?

- Acres
- Roads
- Leveraged funding
- Return on Investment

5. Boulder Lowlands update with BDNF and identification of next steps

- TEAMS has completed effects analysis.
- Consultation with USFWS should be completed by the end of September
- Vegetation, fuels, and scenery reports will be finished soon.
- Completed heritage surveys; planning on winter logging in some areas to protect cultural artifacts.
- Considered and documented comments and responded.
  - Still reviewing Sara Jane Johnson comments
- Plan to move forward with project. The BDNF does not feel concerns raised in comments would require canceling the project.
- What is the process for securing Regional Forester approval of having forest openings larger than 40 acres?
  - Public notice of plan to go bigger done earlier in the summer.
  - Interdisciplinary Team assembled information justifying exemption and sent that to regional silviculturist.
  - RO silviculturist is currently reviewing.
- Outside scope of the Boulder Lowlands project to analyze at landscape level; categorical exclusion (CE) doesn't allow discussion at the landscape scale.
- Melany wants there to be opportunity to start talking about Boulder Landscape.
- Need to identify where that would fit into the timeline.
- The group discussed that there is a lot to learn about the broader landscape from Boulder Lowlands.
- Question whether the BDWG could look at 142,00 acres in original Boulder project?
  - Answer: Yes, just need to determine a manageable approach.
    - Discussion about a project on the Kootenai National Forest in which the Forest Service is planning to treat 400,000 acre EIS of young growth; instead of an integrated approach in a project area, they are planning to treat one structural stage across landscape.
- Discussion about why the Boulder Lowlands CE doesn't include more varied restoration activity
  - Answer: limited amount of time, want to be in position for best success.
  - Wanted a narrow focus: no hydrologic issues, threatened and endangered species, roads, etc.
  - Foregoing opportunities but intentionally kept focus narrow.
  - BDNF intentionally risk-averse.
- Jefferson County has commitment to legally intervene if Boulder Lowlands is litigated. The County has offered to support the project with up to \$10,000 in funds.
- Perhaps bring a Dept. of Justice attorney up to speed early on project
- Boulder Lowlands decision target September 26, 2016.
- Farm Bill expectation of implementation:
  - Monitor effectiveness of aspen treatment (who is eating starts?).
  - Regeneration survival.
  - Identify lessons learned that can be applicable to broader landscape.
  - Go out on field trip during or after implementation (spring?).
- Plan for FY16 implementation of Boulder Lowlands if not litigated. Contracts 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of FY16.
- Discussion about Discussion about why BDWG made the decision to just do notice of this meeting on the website vs. anything more extensive Rationale
  - All BDWG meetings are open

- Seemed it would be better to have a specific public meeting on Boulder Lowlands
  - FS comment- would have been a good gesture to more broadly advertise the meeting
6. Pintler Face (see ppt presentation used by Alex Dunn)
- BDWG members thanked Alex Dunn and Melany Glossa for the invitation to provide input into Pintler Face, since engaging early in project development is something the group is very interested in.
  - Concern about losing energy on other projects
  - BDWG very interested in spending resources (time/energy) on integrated restoration
  - Pintler Face is adjacent to FWP lands - Opportunity for good neighbor authority
  - Suggestion to package it like a CFLRP project.
7. Review of “BDNF Resiliency Criteria”
- Alex, tony, Scott Snelson, Maureen will be committee to work on program of work "resiliency filters"
8. East Deerlodge Valley Landscape litigation
- Sun Mountain developing an amicus brief. Watershed Restoration Council joining as well as a few others.
  - Trout Unlimited is not intervening.
  - Viability of sale is questionable.
  - BDWG needs a system to evaluate whether to weigh in on projects.
  - In this case, the BDWG decided against speaking out in support of the EDVL because of the lack of knowledge about the details of the project, and the mixed perspectives on how the collaborative functioned.
  - ACTION: Schedule a meeting with the ranger and several people from EDVL project to hear about lessons learned so the BDWG can benefit from that experience (after litigation done).
9. Selway Meadows update and identification of next steps
- NRCS designing a diversion structure plan.
  - Currently FS has funds to do that work. Hopefully still will after fire borrowing.
  - The Forest Service drafted talking points about West Slope Cutthroat Trout - need more review but will share.
  - Decision memo for irrigation work has been written but not signed yet.
  - Group discussion: would be helpful to have a “road map” for the area.
  - ACTION: Next meeting discuss how to deal with Selway.
- ACTION for discussion at next meeting:
- 4 potential CFLR projects
    - Pintler Face
    - Boulder Lowlands
    - Selway
    - Gravelly
  - Identify timetable under current budget for each and decide where BDWG efforts will best be placed
  - What does it look like when BDWG and FS are working together on a project?
10. Gravelly Landscape Restoration update
- 2 field trips – Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks on board:
    - Asking for specialist time to lead crews to measure sagebrush canopy cover.
    - Inventory roads.

## 11. Membership

- The BDWG agreed unanimously to approve the following members:
  - Rick Franke, Roseburg Forest Products
  - John Kountz (Chair of Jefferson Watershed Committee, rancher, permittee)
- Send invitations to:
  - Karen Laitala, Powell County Weeds, backcountry horse -- Karen DiBari will contact
  - Nick Gevock, Montana Wildlife Federation – Dave Schulz will contact
- Justin Hartmann – fishing interest (Tom Rice will follow up)

Meeting adjourned.

DRAFT