

Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group
March 24, 2016 Meeting Record
Metals Bar & Grill, Butte

Members: Dave Schulz, Tony Colter, Rick Franke, Tom Rice, Darcie Warden, John Kountz, Leonard Wortman, Mark Thompson

Forest Service: Scott Snelson, Alex Dunn, Betsy Herrmann

Committee members & visitors: Nick Jose, Matt Arno

Facilitator: Karen DiBari

1. Welcome and opening business

- Dave Schulz welcomed everyone to the meeting, and all introduced themselves and greeted each other.
- The members approved the January meeting record. There is no February meeting record because Karen DiBari was unable to attend.

2. Public Comment

- There was no public comment.

3. Announcements/Updates

Workshops and Conferences

- Karen DiBari reported that Alex Dunn, Pete Nelson, and Leonard Wortman will be attending the Collaborative Restoration Workshop in Denver that the National Forest Foundation is hosting in May.
- Dave Schulz is planning to attend a biofuels meeting in Wyoming. John Prinkki will also be attending.
- Karen DiBari attended the Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership meeting in Boise, which was a great opportunity to hear about collaborative activity in our neighboring state.

Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF Updates

- Scott Snelson reported:
 - The Region has hired the Farm Bill Strike Team, and Tera Little is the team leader. The Boulder River (Red Rocks) project is at the top of the list for the team. The Maxville and Greenhorn projects are also on the priority list, along with some projects on other forests.
 - The Region is also putting together a NEPA Strike Team, which will be housed on the Beaverhead Deerlodge NF (BDNF). This team will work on projects in Montana and South Dakota. The Region is six months from hiring.
 - The BDNF is preparing to work closely with the teams; they want this new approach to staff resources to result in success in terms of projects moving forward.

- The BDNF has also been able to fill out several positions on their standing interdisciplinary team (hydrologist, team leader). These have been critical vacancies that have impeded progress, so it is very positive to have them filled.
- Sage grouse funding has been allocated to the BDNF to implement recommendations regarding protection of the species. BDNF has some priority and some general sage grouse habitat.

Actions:

- The group requested information from the BDNF to help the BDWG understand how the new staff capacity will impact BDNF projects.
- The BDNF will share the forest's "rainbow chart" which shows project planning over the coming years.

Boulder Lowlands

- The contract for Boulder-Lowlands is being prepared. There have been no signs of any intent to sue.
- Need follow up with Breck Hudson (Timber Mgmt Officer) to determine timing for implementation.
- The group discussed the desire to see the project move forward quickly, and the history of public engagement (particularly from John Kountz and Leonard Wortman who have been involved for a long time in discussions about this area).

Actions:

Karen DiBari will:

- Set up a Boulder-Lowlands Committee meeting (Nick Jose, Leonard Wortman, John Kountz, Pete Nelson, Mark Thompson, Rick Franke).
- Email the decision memo to the BDWG as a refresher.
- Share the document Tera Little developed about collaborative engagement in the Farm Bill.

Selway Meadows

- Tom Rice reported on the Selway Meadows project. The Forest Service met with the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks fish biologist and is encouraging them to prioritize the Selway project over Medicine Lodge.
- Nathan Korb provided a written report (he was absent):

Summary from 3/8/16 meeting with Scot Shuler, Jim Brammer, Kevin Weinner, and Nathan Korb: Interest was expressed by the FS in having a working group develop a vision with key stakeholders: local landowners and community, FWP, UM-Western, TU, and others. Specific issues that this vision would address include: irrigation management, westslope cutthroat trout restoration, timber harvests, and stream restoration. Nathan spoke with Tom about this and agreed there would be value in convening (re-convening?) such a group. One concern among last year's participants was how the time invested in collaborating would result in the delivery of on-the-ground actions. The last thing the BDWG/collaborators want to do is slow progress!

Several "no regrets", important tasks were discussed for completion in 2016:

1. *Irrigation upgrades: three irrigation diversion structures are failing, have been identified as necessary long-term, and need to be address ASAP: Selway, upper CL, and Short Creeks. NRCS has completed design on one and is completing the design on the other two structures. Scot will work with Kyle Schmitt to secure materials and lessee will contract the installation in 2016.*
2. *Geomorphic assessment: a geomorph assessment was identified as a key need before comprehensive watershed and fisheries restoration plans were developed. Karin Boyd visited Selway last fall (paid by TNC) and Jim Brammer will contract her to complete the modelling and reporting ASAP.*
3. *Willow planting will be central to restoration and is a long, slow process that requires significant site-based learning. Approx. 1500 willows will be planted in an existing livestock enclosure along ¼ mile of Selway. Nathan will work with Kevin Weinner and Jesse Salix to collect willows in April and plant in May; Scot will consider necessary analysis and decision.*

Other less urgent items discussed include: DEQ TMDL water quality sampling, water tanks to change livestock use, fencing to change livestock use, biochar for soil water holding capacity, forage production monitoring, and potential funding sources for work.

4. Congressional Updates – none

5. Membership

- The group discussed the desire to have a fishing/hunting representative. Tom Rice has been making inquiries but hasn't found anyone willing to commit yet.

Action: Dave Schulz and Tom Rice will work on identifying a potential member representing these interests to invite to the next meeting.

6. Review 2016 Action Plan and BDWG roles

Action Plan

Action	Status
Provide input to the BDNF on priority projects for the five-year plan based on integrated target accomplishment and impact on the resiliency and sustainability of the BDNF. Finalize the five-year plan with the BDNF.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BDWG provided input into the three-year budgeting process • Currently working through process to provide input on 5-year plan; devote April meeting to prioritizing projects
Advocate for a three-tiered budget that is responsive to the five-year plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with Leanne Marten and Dave Schmid in February
Initiate Boulder Lowlands implementation and monitoring/adaptive management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule Boulder-Lowlands committee meeting in February
Gain a better understanding of capacity issues on the BDNF. Advocate for the BDNF to have a full-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDT now staffed

time interdisciplinary team that is dedicated to integrated projects.	
In anticipation of the ongoing out year planning process, develop three large landscape-scale integrated strategies (vision documents).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following April meeting prioritization exercise, identify which projects these are.

Roles

- The group discussed the roles document. Generally people like it, but wanted to be sure that all members had a chance to review it and provide input.
- The BDNF staff at the meeting provided positive feedback on the roles document. From the FS perspective, there is something collective to gain through the collaborative process.
- Group members discussed the desire to go beyond “us and them” and more building common understanding.
- The group discussed how membership is structured; Forest Service staff are not members of the BDWG and do not vote on group decisions, but exchange of information is open and the relationship is critical in order to build understanding.

Actions:

- Karen DiBari will email roles document out to the full group with a request for review and input.
- April meeting agenda will include finalization/approval of the document.

7. Project Prioritization

- The group discussed how to best provide input in ranking projects using the resiliency criteria.
- Decision to devote the April meeting to this exercise.

Actions:

- Karen DiBari will circulate the Project Information Forms (shared already in January) with instructions to group members so they can prepare for the discussion in April.
 - Read one-pagers and 1/27 “workshop” notes
 - Read definitions
 - Review project list and rainbow chart
 - Think about what is missing – are there other projects or priorities that aren’t showing up on the list?
 - APRIL MEETING: Discuss the projects that aren’t on the rainbow chart and value them

The group discussed the following potential criteria/considerations that BDWG members might want to add to or emphasize in the resiliency chart:

- Meet targets
- Diversity of vegetation treatments
- Two-age lodgepole stands; where was that prevalent on the forest if anywhere?
- Doug Fir for forest resilience
- Species compositional diversity
- Opportunities for prescribed fire
- Range management
- Salvage opps to remove hazard/dead trees
- Transportation/travel management a huge issue (and a limiting factor as stated above)
- “visual production” – exposure to public of work getting done (for example, the ski areas)

8. Next Steps/Scheduling

- April meeting will be in person
- Group discussed excitement about all of the positive things happening on the forest, and about the action plan for 2016

Action:

- Send a letter to the Regional Forester to reflect the BDWG’s appreciation for the resources being made available to support the BDNF

9. Meeting adjourned.