

Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group

September 15, 2016 Meeting Record

Butte Silverbow Archives, Butte

Attendees: Dave Schulz, Peter Nelson, Tony Colter, Nick Gevock, Tom Rice, Rick Sandru, Darcie Warden, Leonard Wortman,

Forest Service: Alex Dunn, Betsy Herrmann, Scott Snelson, Pam Fletcher, Dave Sabo (part of meeting)

Committee members & visitors: Matt Arno, Mo Bookwalter, Nick Jose, Sean Stenebach

National Forest Foundation: Karen DiBari (facilitator), Haley Wiggins

1. Welcome and opening business – Dave Schultz

- Dave Schultz opened the meeting and all attendees introduced themselves.
- The July meeting record was approved.

2. Public Comments

- There was no public comment

3. Announcements

- Tony Colter was awarded Timber Man of the year by the Montana Wood Products Association!
- Upcoming events
 - Western Governor's Association meeting on Forest and Rangeland Management, September 20-21, Missoula
 - Montana Counties Forest Summit, October 19-20, Holiday Inn Downtown, Missoula
 - Montana Forest Collaboratives' Network workshop, December 5-6, Radisson Colonial Hotel, Helena

Forest Service Announcements

- Flint Foothills decision signed in July, and the first contract will be advertised 9/16.
- Aspen CE decision memo signed in July.
- Boulder Lowlands contract awarded to RY in the last week of August. The timeline for implementation isn't settled yet.
- The second sale on the East Deerlodge Valley Landscape project (Gerard Perkins) was awarded to Sun Mountain.
- There have been no Freedom of Information Act requests or notices of intent for any of the projects.

State of Montana Announcements

- Governor Bullock is starting his term as chair of the Western Governor's Association.
- Parts of the Western Governor's Association workshop are available as a stream on the WGA website: <http://www.westgov.org/initiatives/forest-and-rangeland-initiative>
- Funding was awarded through Forests in Focus to the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (BDNF) for the Greenhorn and Pintler Face projects. Over the last two years, the BDNF received a total of \$207,000 out of the \$1,823,000 allocated (11% of the total).

This includes \$17,000 of funding in the first year to support BDWG collaboration on the Boulder-Lowlands project, and \$15,000 in the current year to support collaborative engagement in Pintler Face and Greenhorn.

- The State's Forests in Focus funding for restoration on state/private/county/Tribal lands is offering \$1.5 million through a third round of applications.

Actions:

- Request to compare the BDWG aspen letter with the aspen restoration CE decision memo at the October meeting.

4. **Congressional Policy Updates**

- Congressman Daines has co-sponsored a bill supporting use of fuel reduction funds in Good Neighbor Authority projects.
- http://missoulian.com/news/local/daines-introduces-good-neighbor-forestry-bill/article_0bfcff49-791b-5faf-a8ac-dd09c1f9031c.html

5. **Membership**

- Nothing to report.

6. **Western Governor's Association Panel**

Tony Colter was invited to present at the WGA workshop on a panel about collaboration. He asked the BDWG to provide thoughts about the keys to successful collaboration.

- Field trips
- Lunch, beer, cookies
- Build relationships
- Persistence
- Sustainable support
- Technical support
- Measure wins, evaluate effectiveness
- Facilitation and coordination
- Diverse membership
- Make each member feel valued and respected, and make sure everyone feels they are getting something out of their participation.
- Patience
- Willingness to hear constraints

7. **Pintler Face**

Pam Fletcher, interdisciplinary (ID) team leader, provided an overview of the Pintler Face project.

- The scoping period is open through Tuesday, September 27th.
- The BDNF has received a lot of comments regarding the vagueness of the scoping, lack of acreages, etc.
- The FS has now posted three detailed maps online.
- The FS is in the early stage of data collection.
- The area is likely to shrink once the data is gathered.

- This fall, the BDNF will review scoping comments, field data, etc.
- In early 2017 (January ?), will work to develop the environmental analysis
- The BDNF is interested in engaging with the BDWG on the project.
- The BDNF's intent is to make the project development process iterative, and that's why they intentionally scoped it broadly.
- Assessing 5500 acres of commercial harvest of lodgepole pine; 300 acres precommercial thin of Douglas fir, 4800 acres conifer removal (noncommercial removal using saws and fire for conifer encroachment).
- 350 miles of roads and trails are officially in the project area, but many of the roads on the project are already "haired in" – functionally closed.
- The total project area is 150,000 acres (entire Pintler management area)
- 18,000 treatment acres.
- Aquatics discussion will happen when data from road condition field surveys comes in.
- FS looking at units right now
- Interested partners: Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, CFC (?)

Discussion:

- Proposed action addresses a range of conservation and management needs
- Process seems collaboratively inclined, and people on the BDWG appreciate that
- The FS and the timber industry aren't in complete agreement about timber valuation.
- Groups submitting comments: Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Sun Mountain Lumber, State of Montana

Actions:

- A Pintler Committee will meet to set up a meeting with Anton Brennick and discuss the project. Committee members are:
 - Tony Colter
 - Nick Gevock
 - Sean Steinebach
 - Peter Nelson
 - Tom Rice (has a county person who can help with roads)
 - Darcy Warden
- Committee will work to:
 - Understand limitations/implications of the project
 - Begin discussing prescriptions
 - Dig into the travel management issues (routes and roads)

8. Collaborative Integrated Forest Assessment Project

- During the NFF's Collaborative Restoration Workshop last April in Denver, Alex Dunn learned about a Region 6 process involving the Pacific NW Research Station, (PNWRC) Oregon State University, The Nature Conservancy and other partners. They took existing data and ran it through analysis to identify priority areas for restoration over a large landscape in the Blue Mountains. The technology helped advance the discussion.
- The high level analysis supported smaller projects.
- The analysis can help tell the story of why here, why now; understanding cumulative effects; discussing tradeoffs.

Action:

- Schedule this for a future agenda to learn about how different groups have accomplished forest-wide assessment using data tools (NEWFC, Okanogan-Wenatchee NF, PNWRC)

9. Boulder River Landscape

- Boulder Lowlands: As stated above, the timber was sold in August. Winter logging restrictions will affect the timing of implementation. Still aiming for an implementation field trip this fall. Mo Bookwalter asked if the BDWG has considered issuing a press release to acknowledge the sale of Boulder Lowlands. The group discussed this and asked the Steering Committee to discuss next steps.
- Red Rock: Field trip is planned for Thursday, 9/21. More information on logistics will be available on Tuesday. Development of the EA will be a 2 year process. Between now and February is the “pre-NEPA” collaboration opportunity. The BDNF will have a kick off with the ID Team in early October, and transfer data.
- Landscape Strategy: The Boulder River Committee met for two hours before the BDWG meeting and made progress on the landscape strategy.

Actions:

- The Steering Committee will discuss publicity around the Boulder Lowlands at its next meeting.
- Schedule a teleconference meeting of the Boulder River Committee to continue work on the landscape strategy.

10. Selway Meadows Landscape

- The irrigation work is happening. Flows are low.
- Committee members include Nick Jose, Brian Ohs, Tom Rice, Darcie Warden, Mark Thompson, Nick Gevock, and Nathan Korb, plus some representatives of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.
- Haley Wiggins is working on developing a set of maps and background information similar to the information she put together for the Boulder River landscape, to help support the discussion around the landscape strategy.

Actions:

- The NFF will send around a doodle poll to set up a Selway Meadows committee meeting in Dillon sometime in October.
- Request to have Haley also prepare maps for the Clark Fork-Flints landscape.

11. Carcass Removal (quick update)

- Montana Wildlife Federation applied for a grant to remove wild game carcasses and compost them as a way to reduce human-bear conflicts.
- A compost facility is being built in Wisdom and Madison County. There’s already one in Clearwater Junction that has been very successful and has reduced grizzly bear conflicts with humans by 93%.

Action:

- Add carcass removal and composting to the October meeting agenda.

12. Accessing Project Information Online

- Alex Dunn shared information about where to find the most up-to-date project information on the BDNF website. The SOPA, or Schedule of Proposed Actions, lists the status and links to further information on BDNF projects. Either google “Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest SOPA” or go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/sopa/forest-level.php?110102>
- At the top of the page is a hyperlink: [Click to view the current SOPA Report](#) This is the report that is up to the minute with current information. You can find reports from prior quarters below.
- Project lists: People who would like to be on the contact list for a particular project just need to call the project contact (listed on the SOPA for each project) to be added. If you comment on scoping, you will be kept on the list to receive a mailed copy of the decision.
- Forestwide list: The BDNF has a forest-wide list that is snail – mail. If you’d like to be added to this list, please send your mailing address to Alex Dunn and he’ll help add you.
- The BDNF currently uses postal service mail for these announcements but is moving to an email based system.

13. Upcoming Meeting Schedule

The BDWG agreed on the following:

- October 20
- November 10
- December 15
- January 19

Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 1 – 5 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

14. Other Announcements/Closing

- Dave Schulz closed the meeting.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

- Request to compare the BDWG aspen letter with the aspen restoration CE decision memo at the October meeting.
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 - Tony Colter
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- Schedule this for a future agenda to learn about how different groups have accomplished forest-wide assessment using data tools (NEWFC, Okanogan-Wenatchee NF, PNWRC)
- The Steering Committee will discuss publicity around the Boulder Lowlands at its next meeting.

- Schedule a teleconference meeting of the Boulder River Committee to continue work on the landscape strategy.
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