

B-D Working Group
Meeting Notes
January 5, 2012
Butte-Silverbow Archives

Present: Maureen Connor, Russ Riebe, Tony Colter, Barb Cestero, Parke Scott, Sam Samson, Dave Myers, Jim Flynn, Chuck Mark, Paul Olson, Chris Marchion, Dick Owenby, Charlie O’Leary, Dave Schulz, Karen DiBari (facilitator), Emily Biesecker (note-taker).

Not present: Rick Sandru, Laurie Schmidt

Report from the Operations Committee (Tony Colter, Jim Flynn and Dave Schultz):

Tony Colter walked the group through the draft of the Operations Manual compiled by the committee. The draft document was updated during the conversation with changes agreed upon by the full group (see attached).

Recognition that this group, its operations manual, and its broader efforts will evolve over time; the operations manual (or charter) will be a living document. Recognition that other groups – such as those with example manuals referred to in the B-D draft document – formed during more contentious conditions than the B-D group, and that their efforts and operations guidelines will necessarily differ from the B-D group.

Decisions:

- Unanimous support of B-D Working Group as the name of the group. Avoids the potentially controversial terms “partnership” or “collaborative” and the seemingly official term “advisory council.” Mission statement will be associated with the name, to illustrate the citizen-based structure of the group.
- Do not include term limits on membership for the group. Members should provide notice if they intend to leave the group.
- Agreement on new language for adding members to the group and for meeting attendance and member removal process.
- Agreement on new language regarding committees, with addition that committees shall observe the group code of conduct.
- Decision on frequency and regularity of meeting dates: The group will meet the fourth Thursday of every month from 1-5pm in Butte.
- Decision that meetings shall be open to the public.
- Group agrees to Chair and Vice-Chair leadership structure
- Decision to keep the High/Medium/Low/No Consensus table in the document, after removing all references to appeals
- Chair and Vice-Chair will have responsibility to communicate with the press; group will approve press releases and talking points
- There will be a website to post information about the group, and several options for hosting the website will be explored
- Code of conduct will be attached as an addendum to the Operations Manual.
- Decision that term “project” is broad enough to allow the group scope to engage in any forest issues the group deems relevant, and that it does not limit the group to engaging in only restoration or vegetation management projects.

Report from the Funding Committee (Charlie O’Leary and Chris Marchion):

Funding opportunities:

- Existing Contract: Approximately \$4,000 remains in the contract with the National Forest Foundation to provide continued facilitation of the B-D Working Group Meetings

- Regional Office: Chris Marchion left message with Leslie Weldon and with the acting Regional Forester. Dave Myers spoke with Deputy Regional Forester and received a generally positive response
- Foundations: Chris Marchion called the Executive Director of the Cinnabar Foundation. Cinnabar proposal due March 31. He will contact the Liz Claiborne Art Ortenberg Foundation to inquire about their funding interests and grant cycle. Karen DiBari suggests the Montana Community Foundation be explored. Maureen Connor and Dave Shultz will also explore if their RACs might have leftover funds.
- Grant application development: Funding committee will draft a budget, and will present the draft at the next group meeting. Ideas for items to be considered in the budget: facilitator, perhaps a note-taker, website, transportation to field sites. Belief that it will be valuable to solidify the structure of the group before the grant application is due (Chair and Vice-Chair). Karen DiBari is willing to help in the drafting of the grant proposal. She explained to group that the NFF would be available to continue its facilitation role, but that the B-D Working Group has no obligation to the NFF outside of the current contact and that they should discuss how they would like to proceed with facilitation.
- Fiscal sponsorship for grant money received by the B-D Working Group: Non-profit organizations associated with various group members might act as sponsor for the group, such as Trout Unlimited, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, National Forest Foundation, or Headwaters Regional Development Commission.

Presentation by the Forest Service (Russ Riebe):

- Overview: There are 18 NEPA projects prioritized within the FY12 Program of Work for the B-D National Forest. Boulder Basin is the next big EIS the forest is embarking upon. Russ Riebe distributed a Rapid Assessment report for the Big Hole landscape, produced by a Forest Service Enterprise Team in 2009. The report details 132 units of potential treatment areas. The Big Hole landscape is defined as that area north and west of the Big Hole River, for a total of 530,000 acres. Of this landscape, one particular area – the upper portion of Fishtrap-Mt. Haggin – has been prioritized as the primary opportunity for vegetation management. The area has a fish key watershed for native trout, as well as relatively high timber values and relatively low mortality. To date, the Mountain Pine Beetle has not been as prevalent in this area as in others on the forest. Russ explained that over the 62,000 acre Fishtrap-Mt. Haggin project, an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 acres would be treated. The area also has relatively high road densities.
- Proposed treatment areas: Charlie O’Leary requested to see a map with the boundaries of the proposed treatment units. Russ responded that the timber staff is delineating those areas now. Discussion of roadside and other salvage potential.
- Roads, Recreation, and Access: Question from Chris Marchion about the anticipated miles of new roads to be built to service the project. Russ Riebe responded that the Rapid Assessment estimated that 26.9 miles of new temporary roads would be needed for projects across the whole Big Hole landscape. Chris Marchion explained that there is interest within the recreation community to provide a connecting trail system coming down from the Continental Divide Trail. Tony Colter explained that the hunting community has identified a lot of road redundancy in the area, and that there is a need for a safe and dependable, non-redundant road system. Sam inquired about uniform signage and allocations for motorized and non-motorized use.
- Russ hopes the group will read through the Rapid Assessment report for the landscapes, and for the group to bring back questions about how the Forest Service should plan and prioritize future actions.
- Dave Myers explained that the Boulder landscape project is the first on the docket for the forest this year, and the Big Hole project will be second. Dave Myers hopes the group can consult with the forest about the trade-offs of going into heavily beetle-infested areas versus going into areas that have not yet been heavily impacted by the beetle.

- Dave Myers asks the group to help identify stakeholders who would be interested in the project but who are not currently at the table. Dave requests that the group help the forest think about the range of broader concerns (scenic value, fire, motorized access, etc) ahead of the scoping process.
- Russ Riebe proposed a field tour for the group in early summer.

Immediate Tasks:

- Explore possibilities for website: Maureen Connor will check the price of a simple stand-alone page; Dave Shultz will speak with his IT staff; Karen DiBari offered web space on the National Forest Foundation page; decision that a website on the Forest Service page would not be appropriate.
- Operations Committee will draft answers to the list of “Questions for Collaboratives” provided by Karen DiBari, and will bring the answers up for discussion at the February meeting.
- Funding committee will draft a budget to be used in grant applications to support the B-D Working Group. Chris Marchion will contact Cinnabar Foundation and Liz Claiborne Art Ortenberg Foundation. He will follow-up with the Regional Office regarding possible financial support for the B-D Working Group.
- The Forest Service will create a weblink to make maps and other materials related to the Big Hole landscape Fishtrap-Mt. Haggin project available to the group.
- Charlie O’Leary, Paul Olson, Chris Marchion, and Tony Colter will form the core group that will read the Rapid Assessment for the Big Hole landscape and will meet with Russ to clarify any questions.

Future tasks:

- The group is interested in a field tour of the Fishtrap-Mt. Haggin project this summer. The group will plan a pre-meeting ahead of the field tour, perhaps utilizing google earth 6 to become oriented to the landscape.
- Belief that the group will eventually require more formal guidelines around adding new members and interacting with the media (communications plan), but that the current manual is appropriate for the time-being.
- Desire to develop an annual plan, and measure success of the group against that plan.

Preliminary agenda for the next meeting of the B-D Working Group:

- Scheduled for February 23 from 1-5pm at the Butte-Silverbow Archives:
- Big Hole Landscape subcommittee update
- Presentation from Forest Service on Pioneer Travel Management
- Update from the Funding Committee on grant possibilities and review of draft budget
- Discussion of Organizational Committee “questions for collaboratives”
- Select Chair and Vice-Chair leadership for the group
- Discuss options for the website