

**Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group
Meeting Record**

Butte Archives, 17 W. Quartz St., Butte, MT
Wednesday, June 6, 2018, 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Members: Tony Colter, Timber representative; Nick Gevock, wildlife representative; Nick Jose, timber representative; John Kountz, agricultural representatives; Karen Laitala, quiet recreation/weeds representative; Rick Sandru, agricultural representative; Mark Thompson, motorized recreation/mining representative; Darcie Warden, conservation representative; Commissioner Leonard Wortman, Jefferson County

Visitors: Commissioner Dan Allhands, Madison County; Kathie Mattor, Colorado State University

Facilitators: Ben Irely, National Forest Foundation

MEETING OUTCOMES

Decisions:

- April and May meeting records approved
- Proposed changes to the Operations Manual and Nominations Process documents approved (membership cap moved from 13 to 20 members, Chair and Vice-Chair changed to Co-Chairs, add to Manual that members must also comprise a balance of key interests and that members must be able to work collaboratively with all of the key interests, add that leadership will represent BDWG at outside meetings)
- Add to the Operations Manual that there are no proxy votes allowed.

Action Items:

- Ben sends an announcement out to the BDWG membership that lists the responsibilities of the Co-Chairs and seeks interests.
- Ben sends Commissioner Allhands the amount Madison County contributed to the BDWG in the past.
- Add “no proxies” to the Operations Manual
- Alex Dunn will send out scanned studies of Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (BDNF) WSAs from past years to the group.
- Presentations requested/to be scheduled:
 - Chelsea Pennick McIver or Jerry Drury, both presenters at MACo Forest Summit who talked about the 25% payments.
 - Presentation on trust funds, authorities, county payments, and opportunities for creative strategies arising from there.
 - Mark Finney on fire history.
- Agenda items for future meeting:
 - Discussion of omnibus spending implications for BDNF, led by congressional staff

- Five-year and long-term planning: BDWG members to perform prioritization exercise using past work as jumping off point, hear a presentation by BDNF, then identify alignment or misalignment.
- Presentation by USFS on implementation of the Selway Project.

Bin Items:

- Members should be on the lookout for opportunities to comment on and support projects when they're open for objections (upcoming: Pintler Face, Greenhorn, Red Rocks).
- Alex Dunn will present on Environmental Analysis and Decision Making (EADM).
- A Boulder Lowlands field trip is tentatively planned for July.
- Consider whether to distinguish between members and non-members in meetings (suggestion: color-coded name tents).
- Carry-over agenda items for upcoming meetings: Community Wildfire Protection Plans on the BDNF; state of timber industry economics by Sun Mountain Lumber; an update on the livestock industry and the BDNF; KV funds, salvage, GNA, and Stewardship – the right mix moving forward on the BDNF; What is the USFS' long-term plan for building BDNF capacity?
- Circulate Headwaters Economics' report on their community wildfire planning meeting in Helena, once published.
- Some members would like to draft a letter to the Montana congressional delegation regarding changes and additions to the farm bill.

MEETING RECORD

Welcome, introductions, and review action items (Tony/Ben)

- [Meeting attendees introduced themselves and the facilitator reviewed the action items from the May meeting.]

Approve agenda and April and May meeting records (Tony/Ben)

[June agenda and April and May meeting records approved]

Announcements and upcoming events (Tony)

- Wildlife Habitat Improvement program recently approved a three of nine submitted projects. Karen, Rick, and Chris are involved in this program. The program reimburses 75% of the grantees expenses for improving hunting access and wildlife habitat. There is \$540k in funding for this work.
- New Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (BDNF) employees will be introduced at the next meeting.
- There will be objection periods for several BDNF projects in the near future, of note is East Deerlodge.
- The request to use chainsaws to clear downfall in a portion of the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness that was burned by the Meyers fire was denied.

Review new member nominations process (Ben)

- Discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of increasing the cap on membership from 13 to 20. BDWG does not want the membership to be so large as to be unruly. Having opportunity for more members may allow BDWG to increase its presence and impact. 20 members will allow BDWG room to balance out the interests, if need be.
- Discussion: Does the language in the Manual about a north and south commissioner limit the number of commissioners allowed on the Group? No, the purpose is to have geographic balance among commissioners. There is no reason to limit commissioners, unless it creates an imbalance, just as with any other key interest.
- Discussion: Does BDWG need to say that a quorum is required to hold a vote in the manual? The larger the group the harder it will be to reach a quorum. If someone is not able to make a meeting it is their responsibility to contact the facilitator or Co-Chairs to let them know they will be absent and to request a vote be postponed, if need be.
- Discussion: Proxy voting. No support of proxy voting. Key argument against was that members may need to change their vote after hearing discussion and convincing argument.
- Inserting language in the protocols about the need for a balance of interests is important. So is inserting language that members must be able to work collaboratively and be solutions-based.

Discussion of potential nominees for new Co-Chair (Ben)

- The Manual outlines the responsibilities of the Co-Chairs, though we should add something about Co-Chairs representing BDWG at outside meetings.
- Darcie Warden nominated as Co-Chair. She will think about it, though she is concerned about her capacity to serve. In the meantime, Ben will send out a message that outlines the responsibilities of Co-Chair and seeks interest from the members.

BREAK

Round robin: big picture check-in, “How well do you think the BDWG is operating and what could we do differently to improve?” (Tony)

- Some of the lands of the BDWG are in serious need of management and restoration, especially riparian areas. We need to be doing better in terms of the pace and scale of restoration on the Forest.
- One of the strengths of this group is that we keep a consistent message in front of the Forest Service, which helps them stay accountable.
- This group has some valuable discussions. Maybe BDWG could use some better protocols re: the press, including an outreach plan. If you do good work you need to let people know about it. This group has good momentum going for it.
- Outside people ask all the time, “What has your collaborative accomplished?” The capacity of the agency to do more is frustrating. This group has good relationships with the Forest Service but that does not seem to translate into more work on the ground. We need to continue to be a political push for this Forest. We need a plan for getting better funding levels on the Forest.

- When BDWG has presentations the Group needs to discuss how the information presented can inform the Group's decision making. Peter Nelson has proposed coming to the BDWG to talk about how the Group could be involved in the agency's Environmental Analysis and Decision Making reform effort. There is a disconnect between what the Forest Service hears from this group and how they function on the land. There are pockets of communication between the Group and the agency that are not going as well as desired.
- What keeps members at the table here is that we share a passion for the BDNF and we know that each of us will stand up for the other when the rubber meets the road.
- The BDNF has reason to be encouraged by the efforts of this group. The agency's Interdisciplinary Teams need to be meeting with permittees during project planning. We need to be persistent with the Forest because there may not be enough incentive internally for the BDNF to be more productive. Rangelands on the Forest need to be improved.
- The agency is stymied by so many interests. Our role on the BDNF has gotten clearer over the years.
- Being a part of this group teaches you a lot about the agency's processes and about what we all have in common.
- The agency has lost some credibility. This group may be able to help with that.
- This group should present to each county on the Forest to explain what the group does and for the Commissioners to explain how they work with the Forest. There would be a benefit to keeping each other in the loop.

Round robin: meeting critiques (Ben)

[None]

Review decisions and action items (Ben)

[See meeting outcomes, above]

Public comment (Tony)

[No public comment given.]