

B-D Working Group

Operations Manual

Originally approved April 26, 2012
Latest updates approved June 5, 2018

This operations manual is a living document and will be changed as necessary.

1. Purpose, Tasks and Functions

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the B-D Working Group is to develop agreement around priority areas and approaches for project work on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (BDNF) and to help facilitate completion of those projects at the local level. Overall objectives include:

- Developing common understanding among diverse stakeholders and serving as a bridge to broader constituencies
- Reaching agreements that will lead to more efficient and effective restoration project work being achieved at the watershed level
- Increasing understanding of Forest Service processes and approaches
- Offering and supporting innovations
- Identifying management efficiencies and priority projects
- Foster broader public support and ownership of proposed Forest Service actions

Tasks and Functions of the Working Group

- Work with the Forest Service to identify/prioritize landscape projects
- Provide advice on resource questions, such as fish key watersheds, for example
- Serve as a bridge to broader constituencies and interests
- Provide advice to the Forest on important people and interests to engage at the project level
- Act as a general “sounding board” for the Forest Service
- Prioritize funding opportunities to be pursued
- Provide insight at the project level regarding issues of priority in assessments
- Assist in determining financial trade-offs
- Help to “think outside the box”
- Act as “ambassadors” for projects/decisions the group supports
- Meet with the Forest Service about current issues

2. Organizational Structure, Leadership and Membership

The B-D Working Group will function as a forest-wide committee, and will govern itself and its members.

Relationship with Local Project Efforts

The group’s relationship with local project efforts is to help identify local interests that may want to be engaged at the local level and ask for input on forest-wide issues.

Membership

The group size is 12 to 20 people, representing key interests, geographic balance, balance of key interests, and knowledge of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Members may represent specific organizations or participate as individuals. Members must be able to work collaboratively with all of the key interests. Identified key interests include:

- Timber
- County Commissioners – North
- County Commissioners – South
- Agriculture/Ranching
- Quiet recreation
- Motorized recreation (summer/winter)
- Conservation/NGO
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Commercial outfitters (permittee)
- Mining
- At large

Members can be added to the group as the need arises by nomination and approval of the group.

Members shall comply with the code of conduct. In order to avoid potential conflicts and controversy, members are expected to communicate with their constituencies and to keep the Working Group informed of organizations or individuals who may be affected by the decisions of the working group.

Members shall attend all meetings of the Working Group and assigned committees. If unable to attend, members shall notify the Co-Chairs in advance of the meeting. There are no alternates. Recognizing that there are inevitable conflicts in scheduling that may prevent full attendance, the member will seek to be informed of actions taken at meetings at which the member is absent. Decisions made in a members' absence are binding. Members will be replaced if too many meetings are missed as determined by the Working Group.

Committees may be appointed as necessary to work on specific issues or tasks and report back to the full Working Group. Committees shall function according to the B-D Working Group code of conduct and operations manual.

Meetings

The B-D Working Group will meet every month unless otherwise agreed.

Members shall come prepared to all meetings. The member will read materials submitted in advance of meetings and complete assignments accepted.

Members shall participate actively in meetings. Only through constructive dialogue among diverse stakeholders can the B-D Working Group achieve its purpose.

Meetings shall be open to the public who are encouraged to voice their views and opinions within the framework of the Working Group meeting structure. The Co-Chairs will schedule public comment in each agenda as appropriate. Public comment will be taken following the presentations and discussion of each topic by the Members. In addition, time will be allowed at the end of the meeting for the public to bring new issues or comments to the Working Group. Potential participants are also encouraged to

notify the Co-Chairs of the Working Group in advance of the meeting if additional time or a presentation to the Working Group is necessary. The meeting schedule will be posted on the B-D Working Group website.

Committees

Committee meetings are open to the public and comments will be taken in the same format as the Working Group meetings. The Working Group may select non-members to participate in committees based on their knowledge or experience on specific issues.

Leadership

The full group will nominate and approve two Co-Chairs. Co-Chair responsibilities include:

- Setting meeting agendas
- Managing internal communications
- Representing the B-D Working Group to the media
- Representing the B-D Working Group at outside meetings
- Managing funds
- Working with a fiscal sponsor if necessary

3. Decision-making Process

The membership shall strive for consensus on all decisions. Consensus means the willingness to go along with the decision either in active support of it or in not opposing it.

- Tentative agreements may be made at meetings pending the opportunity for members to consult with their necessary constituencies. This will be done on a timely basis.
- There will be no proxy votes and no alternates.
- The commitment to work for consensus means that members will:
 - Participate in the give and take of the process in a way that seeks to understand the interests of all
 - Actively generate proposals thought to be workable for all, and
 - Work together to reach consensus.
- If the group is in general agreement on an issue with the exception of one or two members, the dissenting members are responsible for proposing alternatives they believe might achieve group consensus.

It is assumed that the B-D Working Group will make every effort to achieve full consensus, and that a project may be voted on, tabled, and revisited any number of times before the attempt to reach consensus is superseded by a popular vote.

The objective of this protocol is to provide a clear definition of the implications of various levels of support for a given project.

Board Vote	Support Level	Member commitment
Consensus without Reservation	High	All members will express support for the project* and work to resolve any issues raised

(All members vote for approval without recorded reservations)		later by non-Working Group entities if the opportunity arises.
Consensus w/ Reservation (All members vote for approval but some have their reservations recorded in meeting minutes)	Medium	Members who had reservations recorded may express those reservations* if the opportunity arises; however, all members agree that any statements expressing reservations about the decision will <u>not</u> be directed at the collaborative process itself.
No Consensus, but majority vote approval (Some members have such strong reservations that they vote against approval; reasons are recorded in minutes)	Low	Members who voted against approval reserve the right to express their reasons for voting against approval* and may actively pursue opportunities to do so; however, all members agree that any statements expressing reservations about the decision will <u>not</u> be directed at the collaborative process itself.
Majority vote disapproval	None	The B-D Working Group will inform BDNF that the Working Group does not support the project and recommend the BDNF drop the proposal. All members reserve the right to express their reasons for voting recommendation to drop the proposal* and may actively pursue opportunities to do so; however, all members agree that any statements expressing reservations about the decision will <u>not</u> be directed at the collaborative process itself.

* in media or elsewhere

4. External Communications

Information about the collaborative will be made available to external stakeholders via the website, and other venues as appropriate. Press releases and talking points will be approved by the full B-D Working Group. The Co-Chairs or a member of the Working Group may be designated to talk to the media on specific issues.

Code of Conduct Beaverhead-Deerlodge Collaborative

A member of the collaborative will:

- *Help create a respectful and productive working climate.* We will speak our minds freely, but be brief and to the point so others may also speak. We will not rant or get on a soapbox. We will respect and comply with the behavior directions given by the facilitator. We will use a good faith effort to resolve differences through a peaceful process.
- *Endeavor to attend all meetings of the Collaborative and assigned committees.* Recognizing that there are inevitable conflicts in scheduling that may prevent full attendance, the member will seek to be informed of actions taken at meetings at which the member is absent.
- *Come prepared to all meetings.* The member will read materials submitted in advance of meetings and complete assignments accepted. We all value the importance of time well-spent in meetings.
- *Participate actively in meetings.* Only through constructive dialogue among diverse stakeholders can we achieve our purpose.
- *Participate in and commit to complete committee work.* It's where the rubber meets the road.
- *Challenge ideas, not people.*
- *Give the same priority to solving the problems of others as your own.*
- *Speak with candor.* We need to be forthright with each other, avoiding the creation of false expectations, even as we strive to find points of agreement.
- *Treat others with respect, and listen carefully.* We each bring different perspectives and histories to the Collaborative. No member and no viewpoint is less deserving than another to be heard.
- *Value one another's experiences.* We will actively seek out differences of opinion. Disagreement can improve the group's opportunity to create better decisions.
- *Support the decisions of the Collaborative.* Each member will report faithfully to third parties about the activities of the Collaborative and support the decisions of the Collaborative among colleagues and the public, even (especially) when it involves risk-taking beyond the comfort zone of one's core constituency.
- *Hold oneself and other members accountable to adherence to the purpose, convening values and goals of the Collaborative.*