

**5B Restoration Coalition
Meeting Record**

Wednesday, February 22, 2017, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Community Campus, 1050 Fox Acres Road, Hailey
Minnie Moore Room

Present: Chris Leman, Chip Deffe, Jim Keating, Kurt Nelson, Nancy Humphrey, Lynn Campion-Waddell, Susan Giannettino, John Kurtz, Zach Poff, Dani Mazzotta, Aimee Christensen, Rebecca Rusch

Facilitator: Karen DiBari (by Skype)

Meeting objectives

- Review 2017 priorities and identify next steps
- Learn about the Fire Resilient Communities Workshop and determine how to support and engage in it

Everyone introduced themselves around the table.

Overview of 5B Restoration Coalition, accomplishments and aspirations

The group began discussing what it has accomplished as the 5BRC, as well as potential to achieve more:

- Members are pleased at the broad coalition has been established, the mobilization of support for Deer Creek restoration, and the investments of the 5B Restoration Fund (trail work with the Idaho Conservation Corps in Deer Creek, Greenhorn Pavilion, and future plans for interpretive signage in Deer Creek and Alden Gulch trail reconstruction).
- Members would like to:
 - Do a more valley-wide project
 - Share information with the media each month/expand communications effort
 - Raise funds/awareness for trail maintenance

Opportunities: Trails

Chip Deffe described opportunities to market the Wood River Valley as a destination for trails. The Valley has 450 miles of singletrack trails but need a source of funding for maintenance. He and others provided several examples of approaches in other communities (with relevant links):

- Steamboat Springs – 3 years ago they passed a 1% bond initiative that will raise \$5.1 million for trails, but that bond did not include language to support maintenance.

- <http://www.steamboattoday.com/news/2013/nov/05/steamboat-springs-voters-overwhelmingly-support-sp/>
- <http://www.steamboattoday.com/news/2016/aug/31/trail-maintenance-endowment-fund-starting-catch/>
- Salida, CO - http://www.themountainmail.com/free_content/article_a60b8af6-e973-11e6-9407-830bda0c06b4.html

Rebecca Rusch gave a presentation about Rebecca's Private Idaho (<http://www.rebeccaprivateidaho.com/>), an annual event she has organized since 2013, the year of the Beaver Creek Fire.

- Gravel cycling event
- 160 riders in the first year, 800 riders in the 2nd year
- She gives back 30% of proceeds to bike groups
- 62% of riders are first time participants, 30% female, 70% from out of state
- On average, most people come with 2-3 people (1:1 rider to additional visitor ratio)
- She spends \$50,000 in local contracting (signs, food, etc.)
- It is easier for Rebecca to host an event in another place vs in the Wood River Valley because there has not been much community support – but that could change. Other communities like Bend, Steamboat Springs, and Whistler are very interested in supporting events. Whistler, for example, held 12 events in 2016.
- The Wood River Valley pales in comparison to other communities in terms of the number of cycling events.
- Cyclists have purchased Soldier Mtn ski area and plan to make it a destination.
- A community needs a diversity of trails to keep up with bike technology and to keep people interested. Progressive trail development means building in technical challenges.
- The bike trails in the WRV are “dumbed down.”

General discussion:

- Need to expand trails in the South Valley
- Many economic drivers
- Sun Valley Economic Development has tracked economic impacts of events and have a lot of data to share
- Desire that trails be multi-use
- Excitement around developing a broad funding strategy that pulls together all users. The common theme is people who use and love public lands.
- Perhaps establish a friends group? Would need to include all interest groups
- Concept of pay to play

- A small group of locals are trying to put together a framework to access people within the WRV who don't usually contribute to community causes – “Community Chest” approach that would be donor advised and led
- Galena Trails – raises \$ to build and maintain trails
- The Blaine County Recreation District has 550,000 trail visits per year, but just a \$3.5 million budget
- 240,000 room nights per year are rented within the Valley.
- Local option tax?
- National Forest Foundation's Forest Stewardship Fund is one model of engaging businesses

ACTION:

- Susan Giannettino will organize a meeting amongst interested people to discuss options and opportunities for raising funds for trail maintenance: Chip, Jim, Nancy, Karen, Chris, Brett.

Deer Creek Restoration

- Forest Service intends to start the bulk of road construction in the spring (June)
- Also this field season: re-establish trailhead
- Install three bridges
- Riparian restoration
- Small committee has been working on signage language
- Whitebark Pine planting will be next year
- Media – opportunities for some summer public engagement, volunteer efforts

BLM Travel Management (John Kurtz)

- Planning an open house in the summer
- Ideal timeline is that travel planning will be completed 18 months from when it begins in the spring
- Don't have a preferred alternative yet
- Wood River Land Trust is working on a greenways plan – potential to benefit from that process happening at the same time as the travel mgmt.
- South Valley is a key need for trail development/construction

Firewise (Angenie McCleary)

- Blaine County has been awarded a \$700,000 (?) grant for education and mitigation around homes in the mid-Valley and East Fork areas
- Unfortunately there is no funding from Congress to fulfill the grant so it is on hold right now

Dark Skies (Dani Mazzotta)

- There are 12 Dark Sky Reserves in the world; Idaho Conservation League and others are working on a proposal for the WRV and associated public lands to become a reserve, which would be the first in the United States
- Benefits include tourism, astronomy, health of nocturnal species
- The Forest Service (FS) hasn't gone through this process before except at a campground in New Mexico
- FS needs to see community support for this
- 99% of the US population can't see the Milky Way
- The Wood River Valley is one of the best places to see the night sky – the American Astronomical Association is coming for their annual conference, and a comet/asteroid shower
- Timeline – group is putting together a proposal by the end of March; then there will be a 6 month turnaround
- Ketchum has proposed a series of ordinances
- Blaine County is considering a review of their ordinances
- With designation, groups develop a plan to show improvement.
- 5BRC members expressed interest in submitting a letter of support

ACTION: Karen DiBari will draft a letter of support for establishing a Dark Sky Reserve in the Sawtooths/WRV to submit on behalf of the 5BRC (Dani will send example language).

Presentation on the Sun Valley Institute for Resilience and Fire Resilient Communities Workshop – Aimee Christensen and University of Idaho

- The Sun Valley Institute for Resilience (<http://www.sunvalleyinstitute.org/>) does a variety of things, but they like to work with local groups and help bring in outside resources, funding and ideas
- SVIR is working with the University of Idaho, Boise State and others to host a workshop on June 7 and 8 on *Creating a Fire-Resilient Community*. Day 1 will highlight excellent examples from other communities, and Day 2 will focus fully on Blaine County.
- SVIR has a 3 ½ year grant to work in Blaine County, so there are lots of opportunities for synergy with 5BRC
- Discussion of Blaine County panel ideas:
 - What has happened so far?
 - Land use codes
 - Sawtooth Valley Wildfire Coalition would be good to involve
 - How to incorporate wildland urban interface/private land component

- Sharing of information and communication about preparedness and post fire restoration
- Aimee encouraged 5BRC members to participate in the free workshop.

ACTION: Aimee Christensen will send out an invitation to the workshop to the 5BRC contact list.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

- Susan Giannettino will organize a meeting amongst interested people to discuss options and opportunities for raising funds for trail maintenance: Chip, Jim, Nancy, Karen, Chris, Brett.
- Karen DiBari will draft a letter of support for establishing a Dark Sky Reserve in the Sawtooths/WRV to submit on behalf of the 5BRC (Dani will send example language).
- Aimee Christensen will send out an invitation to the workshop to the 5BRC contact list.