

**Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group
Meeting Record**

3:00 – 5:00 PM, Wednesday, August 5, 2020
Online Meeting – Zoom

ATTENDANCE

Members: Commissioner Dan Allhands, Madison County; Tony Colter, timber representative; Maureen Connor, citizen-at-large; Chris Edgington, fishing representative; Tom Harrington, motorized recreation representative; Nick Jose, timber representative; Karen Laitala, quiet recreation and weeds representative; Chris Marchion, hunting representative; Commissioner Tom Rice, Beaverhead County; Rick Sandru, agriculture representative; Darcie Warden, conservation representative; and Commissioner Leonard Wortman, Jefferson County.

Technical advisors: Cheri Ford, Cyd Janssen, Molly Ryan, and Michael Goicoechea, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest; Kelsey David and Heather Weldon, Forest Service Northern Region; and Steve Kimball and Wyatt Frampton, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.

Facilitators: Ben Irely and Shauni Seccombe, National Forest Foundation

Guests: Travis Anklam, National Forest Foundation; Elena Gagliano, Granite County Forest Management Advisory Committee; Bryan Lorengo, Montana Logging Association; Tim Love, Montana Forest Collaboration Network; Tana Nulph (Big Hole Watershed Committee); and Commissioner Dan Sager (Powell County).

MEETING OUTCOMES

Decisions

- The July Meeting record was approved.
- The Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group (BDWG) agrees to write a letter of support for the BDNF's Joint Chiefs Proposal.
- The BDWG agrees to create a Recreation Subcommittee.

Action Items

- The BDWG Steering Committee will examine the possibility of field trips and/or in-person meetings (with safety precautions due to COVID-19).
- Molly Ryan welcomes the idea of field trips (with safety precautions due to COVID-19) for people to see the treatment areas in the Selway-Sagana project area.
- Ben will send a copy of the Big Hole Landscape Vision document to the Steering Committee and to Tom Rice for discussion. Will follow up during September meeting to confirm if this is the final version so it can be published on BDWG website.

- Ben will invite Leaf Magnuson to the September meeting to discuss his use of the Big Hole Landscape Vision document.
- Tim Love from the MFCN, Tony on behalf of the BDWG, and Chris on behalf of Trout Unlimited, offer to write letters of support for the BDNF's Joint Chiefs proposal.
- The Gravellys Landscape Collaboration also offers their support on behalf of the BDNF's Joint Chiefs proposal and would welcome the opportunity to collaborate on a Communications Plan about forest health.
- Cheri asks for first-year project ideas to be funded by the Great American Outdoors Act.
- Bryan Lorengo will reach out to BDWG about the MT Forest Products week (August 18 – 24) and will be offering a tour.

Bin Items

- The group supports the creation of Geographic Subcommittees (i.e. Whitetail Subcommittee and a South Tobacco Roots Subcommittee).
- There is interest in writing a letter in support of the science driving the Out-Year Planning process, and the corresponding Whitetail and South Tobacco Roots Planning Areas.
- Ben Irely will help initiate and organize a meeting for the Partnership Subcommittee
- Ben Irely and Jeanne Dawson will meet to discuss FACA.
- The BDWG to provide Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest with feedback on out-year projects.

MEETING RECORD

1. Welcome, introductions, approve meeting record

[Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group (BDWG) members review and approve July's meeting record.]

2. Project updates from the Wisdom and Wise River Ranger District

- **Pintler Face** – The BDNF is still waiting for lynx consultation in order for this project to move forward. Survey crews are out and prep work is being done in advance of consultation.
- **Selway Sagana** – BDNF is preparing scoping documents. Once finished, BDNF will announce a combined scoping and comment period. BDNF welcomes the idea of doing small field trips (maybe by providing access to Avenza or OnX Maps) for people to see the treatment areas.
- **East Pioneer Project** – This project is part of a joint BDNF and BLM venture. The project is on time to respond to comments and have a decision signed by early next year.
- **Discussion about outdoor meetings:**

- BDWG could potentially use the Commissioners' boardroom in Boulder.
- Or the Group could use the pavilion in the Red Rocks area.
- There is a possibility to do a fieldtrip to see the Ruby Project as well as the Selway-Sagana project.
- The Steering Committee will work out the details.
- **Big Hole Landscape Vision document**
 - Date on existing document: June 15, 2015, is this truly the final document?
 - Leaf Magnuson is referencing this document in the scoping package for Selway Sagana. He would like the BDWG to put this document on the BDWG website so he can put a link to it in the scoping document.
 - Ben will send a copy of the Big Hole Landscape Vision document to the Steering Committee and Tom Rice for discussion. Will follow up during September meeting to confirm that it is the final version, and to publish on BDWG website.
 - Leaf Magnuson should try to attend the BDWG's September meeting.

3. BDNF Updates

- Deputy Forest Supervisor Jeff Tomac is on detail and so Mike Goicoechea is filling in.
- **Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership Proposal** – Proposal deadline is earlier this year, September 10th. The BDNF is looking to collaborate NRCS to see how this proposal could be joined with the Ruby Valley restoration work. BDNF is currently looking at aspen projects to pull together enough acreage to make this a viable proposal.
 - If received, funding from Joint Chiefs is guaranteed for the first year, with the potential of extending into a second and third year.
 - The proposal should have enough project work that is NEPA ready so that first year funding can be put directly to work.
 - Tim Love from the MFCN, Tony on behalf of the BDWG, and Chris on behalf of Trout Unlimited, offer to write letters of support for the BDNF's Joint Chiefs proposal.
 - The Gravellys Landscape Collaborative would probably also offer their support on behalf of this proposal and would welcome the opportunity to collaborate on a Communications Plan about forest health.
- **Tendoy Oil and Gas** – BDNF is aiming to get this out for objection period in late August or September.
- **Wisdom Wise River Repeater** – BDNF is in the process of finalizing their consultation with the tribes. This has been delayed because tribal governments aren't meeting as consistently due to COVID-19.
- **Public Affairs Officer** – Cyd Janssen is filling this position on detail. BDNF is looking to fill the permanent position in the next month or two.
- BDNF has received funding for a helibase. Bids are due soon and work might kick off in the fall.
- The **Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA)** – The President has signed it and now the Forest Service is trying to put together a list of priority projects in

90 days. (Forest Supervisor Cheri Ford has a complete list of focus areas for the money, a few include: improving visitor experience, improving access, improving infrastructure, etc.).

- BDNF is looking to develop a list of projects that would be easier to implement within the first year of funding.
- This is a 5-year program with the potential to be reauthorized in the future.
- What projects could support our long-term goals?
- This fully funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- Region 1 Forest Service will receive approx. \$1 million
 - 30 – 35% earmarked for infrastructure and maintenance
 - 65 – 70% for recreation and improving the visitor experience
- Project proposals have to get final approval from the Washington Office.
- BDWG member suggests looking at the infrastructure in Pintlers and specifically at Spotted Dog.
- How is “maintenance” defined?
- How much have other agencies received?
- Are there opportunities for cross boundary collaboration?
 - **Recreation Subcommittee** – motioned to create, seconded, approved.
 - **Who** = Maureen Connor, Chris Edgington, [Tom Harrington added later] and Chris Marchion
 - This committee will try to meet before September meeting

4. Montana’s Forest Action Plan Updates (see PDF of presentation)

- Wyatt Frampton and Steve Kimball, DNRC
- What is a Forest Action Plan (FAP)?
 - The process of developing the FAP has been a data-driven process
 - It is impossible to describe the amount of discussion that has gone into this map; there are a lot of interests involved.
- **Process:** Once Montana Forest Action Advisory Council (MFAAC) identified priority areas, they then:
 - Developed goal statements for different categories of issues
 - And developed Objectives and Strategies to address conditions
- **Priority Areas** help to alert the public about conditions on the landscape and raise awareness about management tools to address conditions.
 - These maps help inform management; they are one tool (and shouldn’t be the only one); these maps are like a high-level filter.
- **BDWG member comments:**
 - The road density filter is not the only measure of timber economics.
 - Forest health layer did not identify dead lodgepole as a forest health issue.
 - Funding for projects is usually a limiting factor; broad engagement could help leverage funding.
 - For future project proposals it would be advantageous to align projects with “state priority areas” to be more competitive.
 - Consider commenting on State Forest Action Plan once it is out for public view.

5. BDWG Member Updates

- **Karen** – aerial spraying is being done in areas east and west of Deerlodge. Ground spraying occurring in post-timber sale areas.
- **Darcie** – Greater Yellowstone Coalition put on a range riders safety workshop and is currently supporting two additional range riders for non-lethal wildlife conflict reduction.
- **Tony** – Sun Mountain Lumber broke ground on new planer facility in Deerlodge. They would be happy to offer a tour to the Group in the future. They are looking to have facility completed by early next year. This will allow for two complete shifts.
- MT Public Radio report about FWP land acquisition:
<https://www.mtpr.org/post/montana-land-board-approves-fwp-land-addition-near-anaconda>
- **Bryan** - MT Forest Products week is August 18 – 24. Will offer a woods tour; will reach out to BDWG.

Meeting adjourned at 4:55pm