

Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group Meeting Record

1:00 – 5:00 PM, Wednesday, March 4, 2020
Butte Archives

ATTENDANCE

Members: Commissioner Dan Allhands, Madison County; Tony Colter, timber representative; Maureen Connor, citizen-at-large; Nick Gevock, wildlife representative; Nick Jose, timber representative; Karen Laitala, quiet recreation and weeds representative; Bryan Lorengo, timber representative; Commissioner Tom Rice, Beaverhead County; Rick Sandru, agriculture representative; Mark Thompson, mining representative; and Darcie Warden, conservation representative.

Technical advisors: Cindy Perdue-Dolan, Office of Senator Steve Daines; and Will Shoutis and Cheri Ford, USDA Forest Service.

Guests: Gregory Kennett, Ecosystem Research Group; Bryan Lorengo, Montana Logging Association; Ben LaPorte, Big Hole Watershed Committee; Dave Stone, Anaconda Sportsman's Club

Facilitators: Maisie Powell, National Forest Foundation

MEETING OUTCOMES

Decisions

The February meeting record was approved with one amendment.

Action Items

- Ben Irely and the BDWG co-chairs will reach out to the Efficient Public Collaboration group to invite them to the April meeting to present about their initiative.
- Darcie Warden will draft a letter similar to the Ruby Valley Strategic Alliance letter.
- Ben Irely will send the Ruby Valley Strategic Alliance letter out to the group.
- Next meeting will look at fire risk with presentations from Mark Finney and Forest Service employees. Ben Irely will keep agenda items to a minimum to allow time for presentations and discussions.
- Ben Irely will add an agenda item for April to discuss social media outreach platforms and to discuss BDWG communication objectives.
- Ben Irely will help coordinate a small group meeting with Anton Brennick looking at a longer timeline for the Integrated Restoration Strategy.
- Maureen Connor and Ben Irely will coordinate bringing a thank you note for the Anaconda Job Corps to the next meeting.
- BDNF report back on the General Management Review at the next meeting.

Bin Items

- Bryan Lorengo will bring a finished media outreach proposal to the BDWG.

- When the BDNF has a draft of their 6-10 year plan together (estimated for May), present to the BDWG for feedback.
- Have a presentation from Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation about the Miller Lake Valley Acquisition.
- Next fall, members and stakeholders should think about applying for Pittman-Robertson funding for invasive species management. It is a complex grant application, so start early!
- BDWG to take a field trip to Selway-Sagana in the spring.
- Jeanne Dawson is looking to members to get out in the field and take the National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) survey when it is being conducted and to give her feedback from the participant's perspective.
- Have a BDNF range person present on the subject of timber encroachment.
- Apply to the Joint Chief's Landscape Restoration Partnership in the fall of 2020.
- At the Montana Forest Collaboration Network and Montana Watershed Council joint meeting, Oct 14 and 16 of 2020, Mark Finney will present fire modeling in relation to the municipal watersheds and WUI.
- Have a presentation on Chronic Wasting Disease at an upcoming meeting.
- BDWG and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (BDNF) to look at user created recreation features (e.g. user created campsites) and consider incorporating some features into the system.
- Maureen Connor suggests finding someone who can speak to group re: spruce budworm.
- Schedule a presentation by Cathy Whitlock from MSU to talk about predicted impacts of climate change on the BDNF.
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MEETING RECORD

1. Welcome, introductions, and approve agenda for today's meeting

[Group members review the agenda and Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group (BDWG) members review and approve February's meeting record with one correction.]

2. Congressional Updates

- Senator Steve Daines is working to fine-tune new forest management legislation with Senator Feinstein.
- Senator Daines and Senator Gardner have secured the President's commitment to fully and permanently fund the Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).
- Daines will be introducing a major conservation bill. There are no details yet to share.
- There was a decision in Powell County to put \$200,000 towards cleanup around Roundhouse.

2. Update from the Grizzly Bear Advisory Council

- The Council will meet five times in different areas of the state. The group is tasked with turning out a report regarding objectives for grizzly management as the population

recovers. The focus of the conversation is how to manage grizzlies moving out into communities with growing populations.

- The goal is conflict prevention and getting ahead of the issues. This is important work for moving toward delisting the grizzly bear.
- Some of the things the Council is working on include carcass removal, fencing projects, range riding, and transplant protocols.
- There is a new Bear Management Specialist in this area.
- The group will meet in two weeks to discuss the role of hunting in grizzly bear management.
- Meetings are open for public comment. There will be a meeting in Dillon in late July.
- There will have to be new ways to fund grizzly-bear-related projects. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act is promising (this is a Federal appropriation going to State wildlife agencies). There needs to be a program separate from the Livestock Loss Board fund.

3. Update from Montana Forest Action Advisory Council

- The Montana Forest Action Advisory Council is reviewing forest health, industry, climate change, and other issues.
- The group is comprised of a variety of stakeholders working to determine priority areas statewide for forest health projects.
- Insect and disease, fuel loading, and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas are the three primary layers used to determine priority areas. 80% of these occur on federal land. Municipal watersheds will be part of the next phase.
- States and Federal agencies are using the same data. This is helping with shared stewardship and cross boundary work.
- The report with the priority areas should be out in September
- The next meeting is in April in Butte and is open to the public.
- In the future, there needs to be a conversation about how to access landlocked public lands that need treatment.

4. Report from "What?! Cutting and Burning Trees is Good for the Environment? A Community Conversation" in Ennis, on 2/27/20

- The Gravelly Landscape Collaborative (GLC) is interested in working on a public communication and outreach campaign.
- The group hosted a meeting in Ennis with the Nature Conservancy, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Snowcrest Ranch, and others. This meeting focused on why fire on the landscape important and why is it important to cut back trees encroaching on the landscape.
- The meeting only had three community members in attendance. The rest were connected to the project. There is a need to figure out how to get the word out and increase attendance.
- Public meetings do not have turn out unless there is a specific issue on the table.
- There was a suggestion to produce 1-to-3 minute film clips that focus on specific collaborative issues – how collaboratives work with agencies, conifer encroachment,

fire, etc. People are getting their info from short media bites. Willy Peck and Bryan Lorengo are putting together a proposal for this project and will bring it to the BDWG once it is finalized.

- The BDWG will continue the discussion about the best social media platforms for outreach as well as the goals and objectives of their communication. This will be an agenda item for April.

5. Discussion on the Efficient Public Collaboration's SW Montana Chapter

- The Ruby Valley Strategic Alliance (RVSA) sent a letter to the Forest Service evaluating the Efficient Public Collaboration (EPC) proposal regarding allowing motorized travel in three Recommended Wilderness Areas (RWA) on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (BDNF). These include Stony Mountain, Torrey Mountain, and additions to the Anaconda Pintler Wilderness. The RVSA recommends the BDNF use its resources for other projects on the BDNF rather than starting a Forest Plan amendment to deal with RWAs.
- BDWG was asked if they would also like to send a letter to the forest.
- The Forest Service has been discussing what a Forest Plan amendment would look like should they move forward with the recommendations from EPC.
- The Montana Wilderness Association decided not to participate because they did not feel this project is something the Forest Service should spend time or money on.
- The BDWG Co-Chairs and facilitator will reach out to the EPC and invite them to present at the April BDWG meeting on their proposal. The facilitator will also send the RVSA letter out to the BDWG. Darcie will draft a similar letter for the BDWG to discuss at the April meeting.

6. Updates from BDNF

- **Timeline of Projects** – Rancho Deluxe is expected to be signed in April and is a Categorical Exclusion (CE) and Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) project. There are two Environmental Analyses (EA) planned to go out for objection this summer, Greenhorn and Pintler Face. Strawberry Cascade, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) having to do with grazing and bighorn sheep, will have the comment period in late summer or early fall. Scoping for the Selway Saganaw EA will begin this spring. East Pioneers EA encompasses the Trapper NEPA the BLM is doing and adds acreage. Little Whitetail in the South Tobacco Roots is being looked at as a potential POD project. The POD includes the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Custer Gallatin National Forest, and Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest.
- **General Management Review** – The General Management Review is next week. ~~There is a Partner Roundtable on Wednesday, March 11 from 10-12am.~~ The report based on this review will give the BDNF some things to work on. The BDNF will report back at the BDWG's next meeting and will likely have some things the BDWG will be able to help with.
- **Integrated Restoration Strategy** – The VMAP exercise is similar to the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration proposal development process and is going well. The South Tobacco Roots and Upper Little Whitetail projects came out of the VMAP exercise. There will be a smaller group meeting with Anton Brennick looking at a longer

timeline for projects. Meeting attendees interested in being included in this smaller group meeting with Anton include Nick Jose, Darcie Warden, Tony Colter, Maureen Connor, and Bryan Lorengo.

- **Fire messaging** – The BDNF had someone from the Rocky Mountain Research Station visit to map out units to capture fire on the landscape. The Forest wants to roll this out to communities and subdivisions and could use the Working Group’s help with this.
- **BDNF hiring** – A recreation position is being hired in Dillon and there are more hires in the portal. The new fuels positions have been filled. Chip Fisher was hired from Regional Office. There is an offer out for a Fire Management Officer out of Wisdom. There are two range positions that should be filled in the next couple weeks as well as a few engineering positions in the portal. Others positions being hired include a staff officer, a timber sale improvement position, and a silviculture position.
- **Resource Advisory Committees (RAC)** – The SW MT RAC met in Dillon just over a week ago. They reviewed a lot of projects and had \$300,000 to put towards projects. Some were Forest Service projects, some were partner projects. A lot of the money went to weeds and trails projects. There are several trails projects with citizen groups near Dillon. The TriCounty RAC meeting is at the end of the month with \$327,000 to go towards projects. There are several proposals for heavy maintenance on trails in each county including Baggs Creek, Boulder Lakes, and the Continental Divide Trail near Anaconda.

7. Upper Clark Fork Backcountry Horsemen update

[The BDWG had an informative presentation from backcountry horsemen that use the BDNF. Members expressed the importance of hearing from community groups who use the BDNF.]

8. Round robin: meeting closeout

[In round robin fashion, each member and visitor was given a moment to reflect on how this meeting has gone and to suggest changes for future meetings.]

- Announcement that the joint annual conference between the Montana Forest Collaboration Network (MFCN) and the MT Watershed Coordinating Council will be this fall.
- There was a suggestion to bring a thank you note to the next meeting to send to the Anaconda Job Corps. Ben Irey and Maureen Connor will coordinate.

Meeting adjourned at 4:51