

**BEAVERHEAD-DEERLODGE WORKING GROUP**  
**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2019**  
**MEETING RECORD**

1:00 to 5:00 p.m. at Butte Archives (17 W. Quartz)

<https://www.nationalforests.org/collaboration-resources/beaverhead-deerlodge-working-group>

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Attendance:**

**Members:** Tony Colter, co-chair and timber representative; Maureen Connor, citizen-at-large representative; Chris Edgington, fishing representative; Tom Harrington, motorized recreation representative; Nick Jose, timber representative; John Kountz, ranching representative; Karen Laitala, quiet recreation and invasive species representative; Chris Marchion, hunting representative; Commissioner Tom Rice, Beaverhead County; Mark Thompson, mining representative; Darcie Warden, co-chair and conservation organization representative; Commissioner Leonard Wortman, Jefferson County

**Technical advisors:** Jeanne Dawson, Leona Rodreick, and Molly Ryan, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest; Steve Kimball, Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation; Commissioner Dan Sager, Powell County; Cindy Perdue-Dolan, Senator Daines' Office; Erik Nylund and Zach Ringsak, Senator Tester's Office

**Guests and observers:** Patti Kanduch, Granite County Forest Management Advisory Committee; Doug Dodge, Jefferson County Disaster and Emergency Services; Ray Prill, Tri County Fire Safe Working Group

**Decisions:**

- October meeting record approved.
- Bryan Lorengo to join the Advocacy Subcommittee

**Action items:**

- The Communications, Advocacy, and Partnership Subcommittees meet separately to develop an action plan before the December 4 BDWG meeting.
- Ben Irey will put "Discuss BDWG and DNRC's involvement in the objections process and objections to prepare for Pintler Face FONSI" on the December agenda.
- Commissioner Rice to contact Matt Jaeger about presenting on the Selway fish project for the December meeting.
- Molly Ryan to report back on the timeline for Selway-Sagana at December meeting.
- Jeanne Dawson to let Anton know that the BDWG and Sun Mountain Lumber are here to support his efforts with the restoration strategy, if he wants it, including hiring Ecosystem Research Group.
- Ben to put "Discuss system for commenting on projects" on the December agenda.

- Ben to send Cadre summary report out again.
- Ben to send out the Headwaters CFLRP restoration strategy again.
- Members to read the Headwaters CFLRP restoration strategy to make sure they are at least aligned with the principles. If there is something missing in the strategy, members should get that information to Anton.
- Sean Steinbach to report on Rancho Deluxe at the December meeting.
- Ben Irey to get Kerry Wahl on the December agenda to talk about grizzly bear conflicts in the Gravellys.

**Bin items from this and previous meetings:**

- Scoping for Selway-Sagana scheduled to begin in mid-February.
- Field trip to Selway-Sagana in the spring.
- Jeanne Dawson is looking to members to get out in the field taking 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.
- Anton Brennick to present on the forest-wide restoration strategy at the January 8 meeting.
- 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.
- Look at Red Rocks boundary to look for other projects that could be fed into a partnership database.
- 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.

## MEETING RECORD

### **Welcome and introductions and approve agenda, October meeting record, and meeting ground rules\***

[Meeting attendees introduced themselves. Members approved the meeting agenda and the October meeting record. Ground rules for this meeting were developed and approved by all.]

### **BDNF member updates**

- Jefferson County Subcommittee: Jefferson County may be hiring a forester and will work with Jeanne Dawson on next steps.
- Forestry Subcommittee: There was a recent “show me” trip to Red Rocks 1 and 2 sale units. Both units should be sold by January. There will be a meeting next week with Pintler District Ranger Cameron Razor to talk about rebuilding the road to Storm Lake. This project is in the “concept phase” and will be in need of funding.
- There is a piece of property up Mill Creek that includes Mount Haugan to Short Peak to Mill Creek Canyon. It is in private hands, but is in the process of being transferred to the BDNF. A complicating factor is that the land is outside the BDNF administrative boundary. The Land and Water Conservation Fund says that no more than 3,000 acres can be acquired outside of an administrative boundary, therefore this will be a phased purchase. All congressional candidates support the purchase. There is an opportunity to have the CDT go through there.
  - Q: Is there any concern within the BDNF about adding lands to their plate? Is it manageable?
  - A: The property could be a benefit to other Forest Service lands in terms of wildlife connectivity and bull trout habitat.
- The Granite County Forest Management Advisory Committee (GCFMAC) was formed by the County Commissioners because of the amount of Forest Service acres in the county and because of the effects of recent fires in the area. The GCFMAC is concerned that there is not enough logging going on in the county. The county’s economy is hurting because the timber industry isn’t there anymore. Patti Kanduch’s job is to educate people about the importance and success of logging. Patti advises the County Commissioners.
- A new Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) committee is being seated to make decisions on the next round of Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) projects. There is a diversity of seats on the committee and anyone in this room could fill one of those seats.
- The state has \$30 to \$60 thousand dollars available each year to help collaborative and county commissioners engage with the FS on projects. Also, if counties have objections, particularly positive objections to FS projects, if that project is eventually litigated, DNRC works with those counties to intervene or file an amicus brief.

## **Congressional Policy Updates**

*Erik Nylund with Senator Tester's Office*

- The Blackfoot-Clearwater Stewardship Act is still moving and is picking up support. A markup has been requested.
- The Senate passed Department of Interior appropriations.
- Payments In Lieu of Taxes has been fully funded at \$5 million.
- Senator Daines and Tester are both pushing for the full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million and both are in support of permanent funding.
- The fire funding fix has freed up \$2.2 billion for program work.
- The Forest Service came to both Senator Tester and Daines for additional fixes to the Cottonwood decision because of an intent to sue on a project on the Kootenai National Forest. The Forest Service is worried about the extent of new information that needs to be included in decisions.

*Cindy Perdue-Dolan, Senator Daines' Office*

- Senator Daines is working with Senator Feinstein on a forestry bill.
- There was a hearing last week on Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation, which Senator Daines has signed onto and has added more access for filming on FS lands.
- Regarding the Pilgrim decision, American Forest Resource Council had a conference call recently where they said they would be touring around to the various National Forests to start working out how the decision might affect them.

## **Update on the work of other collaboratives in the state (Steve Kimball)**

- The state has \$30 to \$60 thousand dollars available each year to help collaborative and county commissioners engage with the FS on projects. Also, if counties have objections, particularly positive objections to FS projects, if that project is eventually litigated, DNRC works with those counties to intervene or file an amicus brief.
- The annual Montana Forest Collaboration Network meeting will take place in Missoula this week.
- The Bitterroot National Forest has two collaboratives, the Ravalli County Collaborative, which is working with the Forest on a Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) application, and the Bitterroot Restoration Committee. The CFLRP application they are submitting includes 150,000 acres from Darby to Florence along the west side of Highway 93. There is a lot of development in there and a lot of concern about fire. Their application includes conditions-based management, which doesn't identify specific unit locations but breaks areas up by habitat type and then prescribes the amount and kind of treatment per habitat type.
- The Bitterroot Restoration Committee just updated their charter and is seeking new members.
- The Big Elk Divide Restoration Committee submitted a CFLRP application with the Helena – Lewis and Clark National Forest. It builds off of the Capital 360 Project, which has Joint Chiefs Restoration Initiative funding.

- The Lolo Restoration Committee is focused these days on Wildfire Adapted Missoula, which works with private landowners on treatments within the wildland urban interface.
- The Southwest Crown of the Continent Collaborative applied to extend their CFLRP funding but did not get the extension. They plan to continue on without CFLRP.
- The Custer – Gallatin Working Group is working hard on a forest plan revision and some projects. Their North Bridgers Project is in litigation and they are working to develop an amicus brief. They stand side by side with the Forest Service in project development.
- The Kootenai Forest Stakeholders are having the National Collaboration Cadre come out to do a re-group.
- Overall, some groups are very disciplined regarding the timelines involved in project development. It may be worth thinking about what this group needs to do to develop that kind of sync with the agency.

### **Updates from the Wisdom and Wise River District Ranger (Molly Ryan)**

- There was an Interdisciplinary Team meeting for the Selway Sagana Project last week. The most current map of the project was shared there. Most units are 250 acres. The project includes both suitable for timber production and allowable for timber production acres and includes conditions-based management, where treatments have a prescription by habitat type instead of by unit. The ID Team is still working out the conditions-based management details.
  - Q: Is this project close to sage grouse habitat?
- A: There are some historic leks in the area but they have not been active in a while.
  - Q: Will there be invasive weed treatments in the area?
- A: Certainly. Weed treatments are already part of the indicators and measures for success.
  - Q: Will there be road decommissioning?
- A: Not a great deal of it, but there will be some road reconstruction and some mapping cleanup of roads.
  - Q: Wouldn't it be good to harden up some of the dispersed camping in the project area?
- A: It is already hardened, but there could be more site identification put up.
  - Q: Can you estimate how much timber will be coming off of the project?
- A: Not off-hand, but it is a pretty decent amount.
- Scoping will start on the project in mid-February. The BDWG should plan a spring field trip to the project area. Implementation is slated for 2222 or 2223.
  - Q: Is it a BDNF team doing the NEPA?
- A: Yes.
- On the Bitterroot National Forest and the Flathead National Forest there has been a lot of public push-back on conditions-based management. The BDWG could be an advocate for conditions-based management on this particular project.
  - There needs to be extended working seasons for loggers. The seasonal restrictions are hard on contractors. They waste too much time on mobilization.
  - Q: What is the minimum board feet to get skyline equipment over here for this project?
- A Volume per acre is the metric to watch for. At least a million board feet is needed.

- Q: Would the District be able to chart out a reasonable timeline for Selway Sagana that we could all stick to?
- A: Yes, I'll present on this at the February meeting.
- Q: What is happening with Pintler Face?
- A: We are currently reviewing the draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).
- Q: How do these projects fit into the restoration strategy?
- A: I don't know yet.

### **Introduction to Tri County Fire Safe (Ray Prill and Doug Dodge)**

- Tri County Fire Safe formed two years ago as a 501c3, but the group itself has been going for 30 years. They are part of the Capital 360 group and the Big Elk Divide Coalition.
- Tri County Fire Safe has traditionally worked on private lands but they have a new agreement to do work on FS lands adjacent to private lands.
- They are just finishing up the Community Wildfire Protection Plans for the three counties involved.
- They anticipate receiving a grant from FEMA to work within the City of Helena, which has been declared all WUI.
- There are five board members with representation in the three counties plus two at-large members. They are looking to expand their board.
- Wildland fuels reduction is their bread and butter, but they hire contractors to do the work.
- They are not affiliated with Fire Safe Montana but they do work with them.
- Q: Would you be interested in taking on a fourth county, say Powell County?
- A: Let's talk.

### **BDNF Supervisor's Office Update (Jeanne Dawson)**

- Today is the timber sale review package for Red Rocks.
- The BDNF recently toured the Anaconda Job Corps, which has great trade training facilities. The Job Corps has been working on the Flint Creek Campground. The BDNF would like to partner more with them, especially on recreation development.
- The BDNF is having difficulty filling non-timber jobs.
- The BDNF is looking at how to move recreation on the Forest forward in the next 5-10 years. There are changes in the BDNF's work force and changes in how people recreate on the Forest. The BDNF is hiring a facilitator to help them put a strategy together. There will be an avenue for the BDWG to be involved in this process.
- BDNF will have the National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) survey going on in the Forest this year. Hopefully the BDWG can help provide some quality control by taking the survey and reporting back to the Forest if you have suggestions on how it could be done better.
- Q: the BDNF needs to start addressing the water issues (riparian problems and timber encroachment) on the Forest. Is there a range person that can present to the BDWG on the subject?

- A: The Strawberry to Cascade Allotment Management Plan revision addresses this. The BDNF is still working on alternatives and working with the Office of General Council (OGC). This is a very important thing to get right and it is under a lot of scrutiny.
  - Q: What is the timing on Allotment Management Plan revision?
- A: Uncertain at this point but tentatively scoping it at the end of January.
- The two Resource Advisory Committees (RACs) will meet January 22 and 29<sup>th</sup> to review projects. The tentative due date for projects is January 6. Both committees are full and approved. Maureen O'Connor, Karen Laitala, and Dan Sager are all on the RACs.
- The East Zone POD is meeting with the American Forest Resource Council on Friday.
- During the Anaconda Job Corps tour, Rich Stem provided the closing remarks. The BDNF wants to thank the counties and the BDWG for supporting Rich's work with the Forest. The BDNF is committed to the process of revising their processes.
  - Q: What is the status of the restoration strategy?
- A: Anton will be ready to present on the restoration strategy in January.
  - Q: Is there anything the BDWG can do to help Anton fill out the restoration strategy?
- A: Jeanne Dawson will let Anton know that the BDWG is here to support him and that Sun Mountain Lumber can offer Ecosystem Research Group's help.
- The Tendoy Oil and Gas Company has a joint Environmental Analysis (EA) with the BLM Dillon District coming out.
- The BDNF is going through a NEPA analysis on new permitting for outfitters and guides. Hopefully scoping will start in December for the EA with a decision in the spring. The Forest will be issuing 10 year permits to supplant the two year permits.

**Bringing all members up to speed re: the action plan from the National Collaboration Cadre (Tony Colter)**

- The National Collaboration Cadre process pointed the BDWG toward three areas where the BDWG can help the agency: advocating for the BDNF and increasing their capacity, communications and outreach – especially regarding fire and restoration, and convening and coordinating partnerships on the Forest. Involving the Granite County's committee and Tri-County Fire Safe are good examples. Three subcommittees have been formed around these topic areas.
  - Q: Like the Bitterroot example, can we help with public meetings regarding the restoration strategy?
- A: Yes, that is certainly a possibility.

**Ongoing communication efforts of the BDNF (Leona Rodreick)**

- Leona Rodreick has been on the BDNF for 10 years and there have been a lot of changes in that time.
- [Leona handed out USDA goals, FS priorities, and BDNF's beliefs] It is probably time to update those beliefs.

- [Leona handed out an article from Montana Business Quarterly] This is something to inform how you get your messages out.
  - Q: If you were going to go out to the public with the restoration strategy, what would you do?
- A: First, define the audience. Let's say landowners are the audience. Next, identify ways to communicate with landowners and identify the landowners themselves. What is it that we want them to know? What do we want to hear back from them? You need to be very clear on your "Why?".
- Maybe you can share with the public why you are a part of the BDWG and why you want to support the BDNF.
- The challenges with communicating from the FS –side is that there is always an approval process that comes with time delays. It is also challenging to answer people's questions in less "government speak". There have been changes in the way people want to be able to receive information and the government seems caught between the changes.
- Department of Natural Resources and Conservation has a dedicated communications person for restoration and she has ties to reporters. Her name is Paige Cohen.
  - The BDWG should have talking points so we are delivering a consistent message.

## **Adjourn**