

**MINUTES**  
**MFRC STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**  
DNRC Conference Room, Missoula MT  
April 9, 2008

**PRESENT:**

SC members: Gordy Sanders, Bob Harrington, Chelsea Pennick, Mary Mitsos, Bob Ekey, Julia Altemus, Marnie Criley, Dale Harris (by phone)

Guests: Scott Brennan, Marci Giblin, Steve Kratville

➤ **Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the 3/12/08 MFRC SC meeting were approved and will be distributed to the FRC's and the full MFRC committee.

➤ **Financial Report**

March financial report was approved.

➤ **FRC updates**

**Lolo FRC**

- Marnie Criley says the LRC has been having productive discussions with a high percentage of members present at meetings.
- The west side working group of the LRC is considering a project called Cedar Tom, located on the Superior Ranger District. The LRC has been asked by District Ranger Sharon Sweeney to join with the Mineral/Sanders County Stakeholders' Coalition and local community members in forming a collaborative advisory group to look specifically at this proposed project. The LRC is unsure at this point if the diverse goals and priorities of some of the members will allow a successful collaboration attempt.
- The west side group is also looking at the South Fork Fish Creek project and has submitted design elements to the FS. The FS has received several alternatives to the project that are under consideration. Again, the interested parties, including local landowners, county officials, and the LRC have some distinctly different goals and desires that may prove difficult to reconcile.

- Steve Kratville mentioned that these difficulties are a “real-world” test of the MFRC’s principles regarding collaboration. The SC hopes the Forest RC’s will be able to be instrumental in helping solve some of the tough issues the FS is facing in coming to decisions on these projects, recognizing the FS must listen to multiple interests and deal with individuals and groups with varying agendas.
- Bob Harrington suggested that the SC might need to revisit its definition of success, and also recognize that there may be varying degrees of success. Gordy agreed and felt that this was important so that some members of the Forest RC’s did not perceive failure and go away discouraged, never to return to the table and the collaborative mindset the group has worked so hard to bring about. **Bob Harrington and Dale Harris** will work on crafting some language that further defines these degrees of success.
- The SC was mostly in agreement that one of the long term keys to success will be learning how to engage groups with seemingly contradictory interests and bring them to the table for negotiations. Another key to success is to create a process wherein the FS is made aware of certain groups’ opposition at the appropriate time in the planning process so as to possibly reconsider its course of action, make the best decisions it can, and avoid any unnecessary litigation.
- Scott Brennan provided the update on the east side working group of the LRC. They are looking at a possible project in the Seeley Lake Ranger District, in the area of the Auggie Ski Trails. They have received some preliminary information from District Ranger Tim Love and have asked him to provide a write-up on the proposed project, rating it based on the MFRC principles. They plan to go out in the field in May with Tim to have a look at the area. They hope to be able to apply some of the lessons learned by the west side working group, which is a little further along in the process.
- Tim Love has told the east side group that there may be a record of decision on the Auggie project by 2010. The SC feels this project will not be overly controversial and may prove to be a very good example of the restoration principles successfully put into place. In light of this, the group discussed ways to promote its approval as soon as possible, agreeing that **Gordy Sanders and Bob Ekey** would appeal to the Regional Office, the Forest Supervisor and the District Ranger as a group to enlist their combined support in promoting the earliest possible completion of this project.

➤ **FRC updates - continued**

**Bitterroot FRC**

- Julia Altemus reports the BRC has divided into three sub-groups to look at three separate projects, and all of them appear promising. Field trips are planned soon to gather further information on the Darby Lumber Lands, the Willow Creek – Burnt Fork area on the east side, and the “Dead Guy” project on the west side. She says the general feeling is very positive, and that some members who had previously felt discouraged and doubtful of the group’s ability to come to agreement are now feeling much more optimistic about their progress and chances of success.
- Julia noted that MLA has contracted with Craig Thomas, who will be taking her place in representing them at the BRC meetings. She will continue her involvement with the LRC, MFRC and the SC.

➤ **Funding Update**

Mary Mitsos reported the funding sub-group did not meet during the last month. **Mary** will talk to **Orville Daniels** about meeting again soon to complete their draft fundraising plan.

Mary also spoke about the funding proposal she put together to request \$7,500 from the Cinnabar Foundation. (See attachment) If approved, the SC plans to use these funds to cover staff time for fundraising and outreach as well as food costs for the FRC meetings (typically held during the dinner hour). She should be notified of the Foundation’s decision in early May.

➤ **MFRC Staffing Update**

For MFRC’s staffing needs, Bob Harrington plans to hire an intern. He reports that he is currently in communication with a student working towards her Master’s degree in Restoration at the UM. **Bob** will forward her resume to the SC for consideration; **Bob and Gordy** will plan to meet with her soon for an interview. The successful candidate in this position will meet the staffing needs of the MFRC and SC per the terms of the Cost Share agreement, and also address other forest policy needs for the DNRC as needed.

Regarding DNRC’s Forest Policy position, Bob Harrington reported that his current plans are to hire an Associate State Forester whose duties will focus primarily on forest policy issues, along with a PR / Information component. The updated target date for filling this position is 6/30/08.

➤ **Combined Funding and Staffing Sub-groups' Update**

The combined group did not meet this past month.

➤ **Booklet Distribution**

**Bob Ekey** will obtain the distribution list for the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the MFRC booklet from Ed Nesselroad, and will forward it on the SC members for any additions they may have. Upon completion of the list, DNRC will handle the mailings.

➤ **Letter to FRC members**

Per discussion at the February meeting, Bob Harrington has drafted a letter to be sent to the FRC members. **Bob** will have Governor Schweitzer sign it and **Julia** will facilitate getting Congressman Rheburg's and Senator Tester's and Senator Baucus' signatures. Once it is finalized, **Bob** will forward the letter to the SC members for their review.

➤ **Letter to Governor and Congressional delegation**

Bob Ekey proposed sending a letter to Schweitzer, Tester, and Baucus requesting their support for the lumber mills of Montana, in light of the integrated socioeconomic and infrastructure needs as outlined in restoration principle # 10. The SC agreed that the letter would be from the SC members, and should outline specific actions the group would like to see happen. **Gordy Sanders, Bob Ekey, Bob Harrington, and Julia Altemus** will meet this month to put some ideas together.

➤ **Agenda Items for next MFRC Full Committee meeting – May 29, 2008 at Lubrecht**

The group had the following ideas for topics for the next full committee meeting:

- FRC Updates
- Staffing Update
- Funding Update
- Collaborative Process presentation / exercises
- NEPA Process presentation
- Definitions / Degrees of Success
- Annual Report

**NEXT MEETING: May 28, 2008, 8:30 – 10:30, AT DNRC MISSOULA**