

Lolo Restoration Committee Meeting
Aug. 12, 2008 * 5:30 – 8 pm
MAEDC, Missoula, MT.

Introductions

Tim Love gave a quick update that 3 letters have been received from the comment period for the Auggie Project. The team has been out in the field laying units, and Aug. 26 will be the next meeting for the project. Dates for the Center Ridge Field Trip will be set within the next few days.

Wood Products Initiative

Chad DeLong of the Missoula Area Economic Development Corp. (MAEDC) gave a presentation on the wood products initiative. For the report, they talked to most of the major mills in the area and asked them about their short-term problems and issues. The next year is going to be critical for the industry – and although you can't talk about the mill problems without discussing supply, that is a complicated issue. So, the goal is to ensure the infrastructure is solid, and then the larger issues, like supply, can be addressed.

They are talking to the State on Friday to see what is do-able and what isn't. But, they are also interested in bringing a larger group to the table.

There is not a set timeline, but the goal is to have everything happen as soon as possible to ensure the mills keep running.

They are also addressing the underlying economic impacts that are not usually considered – such as what would happen to electricity rates if a major mill leaves an area? Or, what about the school system if a large group of children leave?

This report has not been released to the press – but there was discussion of how it should be framed when it does get released. There should be a caveat that this topic is controversial and invites participation and discussion, and that any extraneous or non-vital numbers should be left out of the report.

Also, from a conservation perspective, it would be helpful to have an economic number, or estimate – or better define what some of the meanings are and what industry thinks it needs – For example, what is the amount of supply needed to survive, and what does "survive" mean? Is survival to the industry just getting by or would it mean having a cushion of profits?

Announcements

- **Sept. meeting date**
 - o Change from our normal meeting week to Sept. 16 from 5:30 – 8 pm at the MAEDC.
- **2 potential new members**

It is up to this group if we want to add members. Rob Roberts with Trout Unlimited would bring a fisheries component to the group, and TU has been doing some restoration work as well.

Since we don't have a process for adding someone, it was suggested that when we have an opening, we should announce it to the group, and if anyone has an idea of a person to fill that spot, they can make a statement about why that person would be good, as well as bring in a bio/interest statement from the nominated person, and the group can decide.

Logistics of the new meeting space

The MAEDC is a secured facility, so the door will be locking at 5p from now on – and for security reasons, it cannot be propped open. Someone will be at the door to let you in from a little before 5:30 to a little after. If you know you are going to be late, please call Melissa ahead of time and let her know. If you just end up getting there after 5:30, and no one is at the door, call Melissa and she will let you in. Her cell phone number is: **406.241.8050**. So, the moral of the story is, try to get to the MAEDC right around 5:30p. 😊

Facilitated discussion

Review of National Forest Foundation Grant

Tonight's pizza is thanks to the NFF grant.

The money can also be used for travel reimbursement, possibly field trips, and a big piece of the grant will be for monitoring. We may coordinate with the Forest Service to fill in some of the gaps on their monitoring projects.

Report from Westside

On the field trip to S. Fork of Fish, we talked about vegetative treatments. We also discussed road issues, weeds, and culvert issues. The Forest Service took notes on that trip.

It was nice having the Forest Service take notes – should it be a practice during field trips for the FS to take and share notes? Would it be ok to have those notes on the web for everyone to access?

- we could possibly have a protected site or a hidden page on the website so that people can see it without the world being able to access it. And, then we can possibly add our own notes/comments to the FS notes?

We have not given up in the Cedar Thom project – and are just going to keep seeing where it goes.

Report from Eastside

Thanks to everyone for getting the Auggie letter and evaluation out. Time says it was helpful. The more people that can make it out in the field, the better.

Report from OHV

Potential project location:

End of Miller Creek – Road 4245.

Across 4244, to 4248 and 2135.

There are various classifications for these roads, but there are potential loops. The possible concern is with elk security, which may be why some of these roads have closures. The biologist is new, but is concerned about wintering elk grounds.

The trade-off is partial or full road closures on Rd. 4305 in the Rock Creek Watershed and Rd. 4375. This would increase roadless areas. Even though these are dead-ends roads, they may also be hunting camps at the end of the road, so that is something that has to be looked in to.

The goal is to find an area, figure out if there is a suitable project location, then work out the details.

Discussion about Appendix B: Forest Types & Fire regimes & how they relate to S. Fork Fish & Auggie.

There is an Appendix in the restoration booklet about fire regimes, and we have not talked a lot about that, but it has come up throughout the various projects.

The point of the group was to be vague at first, and get more detailed as we kept going.

Fire is a dominant process, so it is important to be accurate and have consensus. There was a lot more to Appendix B, before it was finalized for the booklet, so maybe it would be helpful to go back and see what else we were thinking about.

Is there a general grouping scheme we can develop that the FS can use, so they don't have to start at the bottom for each project, or is it necessary to take a site-specific approach to each project?

It may be helpful to come up with some guidelines and definitions and could serve as an important bridge to guide the work that we do with what the FS does.

To proceed, we will use the New Mexico Principles on the S. Fork of Fish project and see how well they work.

Discussion about Lolo RC's communications and outreach process & how we want MFRC to communicate with us. Relates to Op-Ed piece.

The larger issue is the communication and relationship between the committees and how they relate to each other. The relationship between the full MFRC and the RC's is not clear.

The main MFRC is founded on the principles, where the RC's are founded on projects. Each group has a right to speak for itself and not for other groups, so in the case of the op-ed, maybe it should have been signed solely as Steering Committee members, rather than the Lolo RC, since it was only approved by the Steering Committee.

It may be useful to have by-laws and/or a charter. The Eastside Group has a charter defining who can speak for whom.

Having something in writing can ground new people, record what has gone wrong & right in the past, and give guidance to the group.

Should there be an executive committee to run things past?

Also, every committee should have someone from the full MFRC as a member, and the Bitterroot does not.