

MEETING MINUTES
MONTANA FOREST RESTORATION COMMITTEE
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

January 20, 2009

11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Finn & Porter (Doubletree) – 100 Madison St, Missoula

SC Members: Mary Mitsos, Julia Altemus, Rick Franke, Dale Harris, & Gordy Sanders

Staff: Melissa Hayes

Contracted Services: Chelsea Pennick

Guests: Steve Kratville

::Approval of 12/22/08 MFRC SC minutes::

*Orville gave his proxy to Dale, on speaker phone prior to the vote.

Comments on the minutes:

Brian is not a member and should not be listed as one. All non-members should be listed as guests.

With that change, Dale made a motion to approve the minutes and Rick/Julia seconded.
Voted and approved.

::Approval of Dec. Financial Report::

New financial report reflects the recent meeting between Steve and Marci. Before the report only showed in-kind contributions as a single number. But, based on suggestions of trying to more accurately capture and recognize the leadership and services being provided by the local committees, the report is now divided between paid and unpaid hours. The rationale is an effort to accurately capture all of the resources being brought to this effort. For example, there are facilitation contracts with Ginny and Brian, but there are other facilitation efforts going on by the chairs of committees and working groups that should be shown as cash contributions when someone is being paid and providing those services, but it also goes beyond facilitation to all members of the committees.

It can be difficult to decipher what is paid and unpaid for some people, especially those on salary, who are not necessarily being paid to be at the meeting, but it could be counted as a paid contribution.

Since there is no "formula" for these numbers, there is flexibility in where they get counted because we are trying to show more than just participation, but also the breakdown of in-kind leadership and facilitation.

Comment: last meeting an additional \$5,000 was added to the publication line item, so the total should be \$9,000. Marci may still be in the process of putting together a funding supplement, so the money will be reflected in that.

Dale made a motion to approve the financial report, Mary seconded. Approved.

::Forest Restoration Committee Updates::

📍 Lolo FRC

Since Brian could not be here, he sent a report to the group which was as follows:

The group discussed use of its "grading system" for projects -- narrative and numerical rating by each principle. Good discussion. Forest Service staff participated openly, fully. Everyone is learning -- we need candor, and at the same time language that doesn't make USFS folks react defensively.

Group gave unanimous thumbs up to first review of Center Ridge project.

In-depth discussion on draft LRC Charter. A revised version will go out for member comment. I offered suggestions for consideration.

There was a discussion about the SC press release, and the inevitable tension between time and inclusiveness. It was thought that that the SC could send out a draft for comments/thoughts with a 24 hour turnaround/limit, with the SC retaining "authorship" authority.

The west-side working group has decided that FS staff is welcome at all their meetings--major step forward.

Marnie laid out the issue of part time coordinator for RCs, and potential of LRC to meet quarterly. I suggested that, since the 2.5 hour monthly agenda
a) is of a different nature than working group meetings and b) seems always to take full time, that if the group wants to meet less frequently, try semi-monthly as a first step.

Group felt we needed to do better job on ongoing recruitment for the LRC, especially among younger folks and west side folks. Several folks accepted responsibility to pursue that.

Good discussion of "how are we doing"? FS staff feel good (those who have worked with LRC), those who have not are asking a lot of questions, reflecting interest.

Need to do better job of outreach w/in the USFS about the principles/process. Marnie will pursue with Julia Riber and others -- perhaps a one-day training session.

Also, Bob E. and Gordy met with the Forest Service Regional Board of Directors where they gave an update on the MFRC. It was helpful because they had not met many of the people there and many of them had not heard about the MFRC. They were given copies of the Annual Report and Principles and Tom Tidwell made some good comments.

It helped for them to understand all of the time that people are contributing to this effort, and that despite all of the hardships, especially for the timber industry, everyone is still at the table. The community investment also hit home with a lot of people there and they appreciated the time being invested.

📍 Bitterroot FRC

Julia talked to Dave Bull. If the BR were to form an ad hoc committee rather than a full committee, it may be a good time to re-visit our model and restructure what goes on down there. It's important that they have a facilitator, but may be hard to have someone under contract and just functioning on-call.

The downside of an ad hoc committee is that no one will have a pulse on the organization, and they would never be able to start a from-scratch project or develop relationships.

It is not good to lose what we have down there because the facilitator is retiring. Maybe they could agree to have co-chairs of the ad hoc committee to keep it together.

Future discussion: the BR does not have chairs, so they are not represented on the SC.

Julia – attending the meeting Monday night and will talk to them at the next meeting about co-chairs and SC representation. If we keep them in the loop, they may stay involved.

📍 Lincoln FRC

The Lincoln is going along well – they are adding members and ID-ing areas to focus on. Amber has funds that she can use to do the work.

John Gatchell is looking into the environmental representation of the group and was going to ID some people and they have also talked to others.

Overall, they are a motivated group and there is positive feedback from members.

Tom wants to see the projects that these groups are working on, float to the top of the list.

Action: FS thank you's. Communicate to Jane that there should be certificates or even a letter from the FS to participants in the Lolo, BR, and Helena to thank them for contributing time and effort.

::MFRC Economic Stimulus Letter::

The letter went out and got a lot of press. The issue here was not with the letter itself, but how it went out. It was bad timing, in that it was around the holidays, not many people were around and it needed a very quick turnaround time.

It is important for next time that we have a media plan and let people know that it is going to occur as well as including talking points, or the goal of the document, etc.

With a media plan we could also use a ripple effect of having people call others that they know, and use the power of who we are and the connections we have to get word out.

We need points or guidelines for when this comes up – dealing with the press and communicating with members. The full MFRC decided that Bob and Gordy could be

spokespeople to the media, but maybe the new coordinator position could serve to keep everyone connected.

Should there be a sub-group of the full group that wants to work on a vision for Montana's forested landscape? It could be a vision statement and the principles working together. Right now there are a lot of different efforts going on, so rather than making a new effort, maybe we can tap into what is already happening.

Action: have a discussion before the Full MFRC meeting, and if we are ready to talk about it, we can put the idea in front of the full group and Julia can talk about the various efforts already in place.

::Legacy Project Letter to State Legislature::

When Caroline Byrd was talking with the group, she was looking for a letter of support. Bob E. was going to take a stab at a draft letter in support of the concept of the Legacy Project, but not for the bill. HB 14 has a hearing on Monday. The media reality is that TWS is good at doing outreach, but we could manage who the contacts are.

::Strategy Committee Update::

Dale and Mary talked and still need to meet to finish the job description.

We need to develop a short list of people to invite and advertise the position. So, who are other names and where can we get names from? Forestry? Community Forestry?

There will be a job description by the end of the month with a draft out to the SC then a description out to the public. Maybe put a brief blurb in the Missioulian?

We also need a selection committee to interview candidates.

::MFRC Charter – Suggested Amendment::

The Charter was sent out to the Full Committee and we got comments back from Chuck Roady. Under conflict of interest he suggested we include parties that are involved in litigation in projects or directly related to projects we are involved in.

The person would have to inform the SC that they were involved in litigation.

How would the conversations change as a result of this? How would it be handled and how would the FS be able to interact openly with someone involved in a lawsuit.

We agree on projects through consensus, so if there is a problem, it is the responsibility of the party with the problem to come to the group and say they are thinking of litigating, so that maybe an agreement can be reached or negotiated. But, there is also the issue that an individual may agree with a project, but the organization they are with could still sue.

We need to be proactive and preemptive.

Gordy: will send out some language and see what people think.

::MFRC New Committee Member(s)::

Jake Kreilick has been invited as an individual on the full MFRC and has been attending the Lolo meetings.

::Other::

Everyone has different views of what monitoring means – Chelsea can put something together to better define.

::Next SC meeting::

Back to the DNRC next time – or could use the NFF, if the DNRC is not available. We could alternate back and forth between DNRC and Finn & Porter.

Doodle a day in Feb.