

MINUTES
MFRC STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
DNRC Conference Room, Missoula, MT.
May 28, 2008 ☉ 8:30 – 10:30

PRESENT:

SC Members: Gordy Sanders, Bob Harrington, Mary Mitsos, Julia Altemus, Dave Bull, Dale Harris (by phone)

Guests: Brian Kahn (by phone), Marci Giblin, Melissa Hayes.

::Staffing Update::

Melissa Hayes was introduced as the new MFRC intern. Her e-mail is melissahayes@mt.gov and her office phone is (406) 542-4256 and cell phone is (406) 241-8050.

Forest Policy position will be an associate State Forester position to supervise the forest policy intern as well as to work on federal forest policy and other legislation, fire issues, keeping the state involved in federal forest management, among other tasks. This position is getting ready to be posted, and the goal is to have it filled as soon as possible, but hopefully by mid-July.

::Approval of Minutes::

Minutes from the 4/9/2008 MFRC SC meeting were approved and will be distributed to the FRC's and the MFRC full committee.

::Financial Report::

The April financial report was approved.

Discussion turned to where the money has been spent and where/how it will be spent in the future. **Gordy** said he would talk to Bob E. at the Lubrecht meeting and **Dale** was going to be with Tom Tidwell all day Thurs., so he would talk to Tom.

The annual report will be a significant component when asking for more money, so it should be completed by Aug. 15 – because that was around the time last year that finances were discussed with Tom.

The annual report should include testimonials from key people – to demonstrate the successes of the MFRC as well as reports from Ginny and Brian.

The costs of the annual report and the audience that it will be directed to and sent to were discussed. There is still a question whether it should be geared toward a large/broad audience or just the Forest Service, and what the costs associated with

production of the annual report will be – depending on the style, audience and the number of copies printed.

Spending ideas for the remaining \$70,000 were briefly discussed as questions arose as to the boundaries of that money – what are the boundaries and what areas are out of bounds? Does that money also leave room for project work, such as monitoring? Input from **Steve K.** is needed to understand the boundaries allowed for use of the money.

Brief discussion of the Bitterroot contract time limit was brought up as well as confirmation that Ginny Tribe does want to renew her contract. **Mary** will discuss with Ginny.

::FRC Updates::

-Lolo FRC-

There has been some discussion/concern over the Forest Service's consistency in launching collaborative efforts, as well as the method of presenting the restoration principles.

The Forest Service either has to be trained better on the principles, or a member of the MFRC should be at the first meeting, when the principles are discussed.

It is hard because they don't have the history of developing the principles and do not understand the process the group went through in their development, so it difficult for them to understand why a certain principle is there or why something has been left out. This in turn, makes it difficult to translate the principles effectively to the collaborative groups involved. At the same time, the Forest Service has a different definition of 'restoration' than the committee.

To avoid confusion from the start, should a member of the steering committee be present to discuss the principles?

Julia and **Marnie** are attending the meeting tonight and will have a better understanding of how this project will fit in with the principles and to present some of the background on development of the principles and how they may fit within the components of the project.

There was also discussion whether or not the group should begin talking about salvage vs. restoration – and the extension of the principles. Some feel that we should wait for a success -until the principles have been successfully implemented on a project before we look to expand them. Others think that we should begin to ask the question, just to gauge how 'ready' the group is to get into these issues. Even if no one thinks we are ready, we are at least getting the thought out there for people to begin to think about, while also respecting their opinions that we are not ready. This will be discussed at the MFRC Meeting.

The Patttee/Blue field trip was worthwhile because it showed a good example of a wildlife/urban interface and it was good to hear from Craig, a logger.

The Lolo project is moving along. People are frank in meetings and are speaking their mind, which is helpful. There were 15-20 people at the field trip.

There was a service foresters meeting last week which Bob attended and asked Eric Norris, to explain the principles to the group. By the time Eric was finished, he seemed enthusiastic about the principles and the process. It is important to get people involved and excited who are in different facets of this project and who have different experiences. It may be worthwhile to think of creative ways to have more presentations, field trips, etc. as a way to engage people and get them outside of their own culture zones and understanding.

-Bitterroot FRC-

Julia is not on the BFRC anymore.

Dave Bull reported for the Bitterroot.

Craig Thomas will now represent the MLA on the BFRC. There was no negative transition from Julia to Craig, though it now lacks a bit of diversity – in that the group is all men and there is no longer a tie to the large group that created the principles, but the group dynamic is not an issue.

There are about 8-9 members that come regularly. There is a field trip being planned for early June and most of the summer will be field trips. There will not be a sit-down meeting planned until August.

There are currently 3 projects on the Bitterroot, the West Side fuels project, Willow Gird and Darby lumber lands.

The West Side Fuels project does not have much fire history and has untreated stands, so something needs done in this area. The challenge is that the terrain is steep, and it's in a roadless area so access is not easy. There is concern among members that this project will go forward, but then in the end there will be people who do not agree to go into the roadless areas, which will inhibit the progress and planning.

The Willow Gird project had been identified as a need for a while. There has been past timber harvests, road construction and both wildfire and prescribed burns in this area.

Darby Lumber lands have yet to be assessed. If one of the other projects works, this would be a great opportunity to get a lot of work done utilizing stewardship receipts.

Minutes from the Lolo and Bitterroot meetings were discussed and it was decided that it would be beneficial for the minutes from each meeting to be shared with the whole

group to provide better information and keep the whole group informed. **Melissa** will visit with Bob Ekey's staff about putting the minutes onto the website so that they can be viewed easily.

::Funding Update::

Bob, Marnie, Chelsea, Mary and Brian developed a rough budget for long term planning:

- Food - \$5,000

- Travel Reimbursement - \$30,000

- Monitoring - \$20,000 (about \$10,000/project – may have to be increased).

- Coordinator position - \$50,000 for ½ time.

- Practitioner, experts, panels, etc. to inform the committees - \$10,000

- Project Implementation - \$500,000+

::Letter to FRC Members::

Has not yet gone out, but Melissa will work on it. One letter will go to the Bitterroot, one to the Lolo and one Full Committee from the Governor.

::Letter to the Congressional Delegation::

Bob E. made some changes. It will be an informational part of the full meeting tomorrow at Lubrecht.

::Other::

Dan Thompson has been asking to be replaced. Serious conversation about this needs to happen, and will most likely be brought up at the full meeting tomorrow. The Committee has to work on selecting his replacement – it must be someone who agrees with or can live with the principles.

June 17 – the MFRC will be honored at the Regional Forester Awards. This will take place at the Holiday Inn – Parkside at 7p. A more formal invitation will follow.