

**Montana Forest Restoration Committee**  
**Steering Committee Meeting**  
May 19, 2009

**Members Present:** Bill Grasser, Gordy, Adam, Orville, Bob H., Marnie, Julia

**Guests:** Steve Kratville, Debbie Austin, Dave Bull, Len Broberg

**Staff:** Julia, Chelsea

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**1. Approve S/C Minutes 4/21/09**

- Approved

**2. Approve April Financial Report**

- Approved
- Marci has developed a simplified version for the full MFRC meeting.
- Steve obligated the funds for the supplemental \$\$ yesterday. They should show up in June.

**3. Bitterroot RC Update**

- Met last night and came to an agreement on access issue.
- Old road template that may be usable. Once that is field verified, they will go forward with that and turn the existing road to a stock only trail.
- Wayne Hedman reported that it is likely that the BRC request to the RAC will be approved.
- Once the Butterfly project design is completed, the group will move to working on the Darby Lumber Lands.
- Ginny has agreed to continue through February.
- Agreement among group that Ginny's arduous process was worth the time and effort.

**4. Lincoln WG Update**

- Met last week.
- Some level of concern and differing interpretation of restoration principles, primarily between Amber Kamps and Tom DeLuca re: fire cycle, etc..
- Committee went out on the ground and find agreement on applying principles on the ground. Very constructive field trip.
- Agreement on three sites. FS getting together more data/information for June meeting.
- Specific project areas and sideboards to be developed at next meeting.
- Some concern trying to understand TWS' role—field trip was helpful for this.
- Next meeting: 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month

**5. Lolo RC Update**

- LRC has not met since last SC meeting.
- Tim Love and Scott Brennan are putting together presentation for meeting tomorrow and Auggie.

- Tim reports that all comments on Auggie were positive.
- The EA for S. Fork Fish should be out very soon.
- Monitoring tool kit is almost completed.
- Jim Burchfield and students will be implementing some monitoring in August on the Auggie project.
- For S. Fork Fish project, LRC will be added monitoring components in addition to what the FS will be doing, such as Wildlands CPRs wildlife monitoring protocol and others.
- Marnie and Matt are going to meeting with the Sanders-Mineral County group to discuss the success of the LRC.
- WLWG is looking at having a field trip to visit Woods Gulch.
- Brian and Marnie still need to discuss replacing Marnie as chair of the LRC.
- TWS ran their prioritization tool on the Cedar Thom project area and there was a good amount of overlap with the FS model.
- Center Ridge has been moved down priority and is being expanded to include Rennick-Stark fuels reduction project.
- Next meeting is June 9<sup>th</sup>.

#### **6. New RCs**

- Need to develop policy for adding new RCs, especially in areas where there is an existing collaborative group and how they might join this effort.
- Dave wondered if the Butte/Dillon might also be worth reaching out to. They currently have an acting Forest Sup., so there was agreement that it would make sense to wait until a permanent Forest Sup. Is in place.

#### **7. MFRC Meeting Agenda Review**

- Communications Strategy moved to after lunch from 1:30-1:45. Integrating Recreation was removed.
- Monitoring Report moved to 11:15-11:30 am.
- Communications discussion: reference the by-laws and the agreement that the SC can speak on behalf of the MFRC.

#### **8. FACA**

- Julia Riber provided a reminder overview of FACA
- 3 key tests for whether a group is complying with FACA
  - Is the group a committee? (formal structure, clear purpose, reaching agreement on
  - Is purpose of group to give advice to agency?
  - Is the committee established or utilized by an agency?
  - If answer “yes” to all three, then committee is subject to FACA.
  - Julia pointed out that the third question is the one to be careful of, since the FS is providing funding, attending meetings, etc. Especially in terms of agenda setting and determining membership.
  - SC should be clear in referring to FS folks as “Guests” so that it is imminently clear to public. Because it is about perception as much as it is about fact.
- Important to remind RCs that these groups do not have special status in terms of their recommendations to the FS.

- Bring up early in MFRC meeting.

### **9. Regional Soils Policy**

- Julia Riber offered the MFRC to get engaged in working on revising the regional soils policy and developing something that would be more regionally specific.
- How to mitigate or avoid soil impacts through project work.
- Step down from National Policy to provide guidance.
- Bob Harrington felt that it would approach “mission creep” and perhaps should not be a formal undertaking of the group, but encourage members of the group to get involved individually.

### **10. Draft Restoration Implementation Gate System**

- Len and Julia developed a draft gate system specific to Restoration projects.
- There is concern among many members that the regular timeline of 3-5 years is too long to keep people engaged.
- Julia primarily re-worked Gates 1 & 2 to provide a systematic way for FS Line officers to understand the process and how it might be sped up.
- Ideally, one of the places where time will be saved is in a reduction in the number of alternatives that need to be developed.
- Largest time sinks for FS: field season limitations and analysis.
- The other major time-savings is (ideally) the lack of appeals.
- Next step: meet with Chris Partika to go over the system from a FS perspective, before presenting to MFRC. He can add the sequential components, areas for time savings, etc.

### **11. Ginny Tribe Contract Renewal**

- Ginny has agreed to extend her contract through February.
- Need to look at and increase cap in contract.
- Julia A. will revise and bring to June meeting for a vote.

### **12. Coordinator Orientation**

- Marnie is waiting to get her independent contractors workers comp. exemption certificate in the mail so that she can sign the contract with DNRC.
- The Steering Committee discussed and provided clarity on what they would like Marnie to do:
  - Travelling around to give presentations and discuss effort-outreach.
  - Look at expansion opportunities
  - Continue to work on monitoring template
  - Attend RC meetings
  - Bob H. suggested that Marnie put together something to put in front of the SC, from her perspective.
  - What help she think she will need in terms of support, from Melissa or otherwise.
- The Committee also discussed Chelsea’s phase-out and how to cover her duties. Chelsea set a phase out of date of June 30<sup>th</sup> for the Committee to shoot for.
- This will be added to next meetings agenda.