

Minutes
MONTANA FOREST RESTORATION COMMITTEE
FULL GROUP MEETING

Lubrecht Experimental Forest
May 29, 2008
10:00am – 4:00pm

Update on the Forest Restoration Committees
-Lolo RC-

There is excellent attendance at the meetings. The group has been split into 2 working groups, the Eastside Working Group and the Westside Working Group. And as issues come up, there are addressed at the monthly meetings.

**Westside Working Group* – the S. Fork of Fish project is the furthest along. The Forest Service has been very responsive and provided 4 alternatives. The OHV route has been dropped from the project, but the group is looking at working with them on other projects.

Data collection this summer. There is a field trip June 28 to look at projects in the 9-mile where the projects might resemble those on Fish Creek.

The group is still considering the Cedar Thom project, and community groups are also involved. There was a meeting last night, but are still unsure that the restoration principles can apply to this project. The next meeting will be a field trip to better see how this project will work.

**Eastside Working Group* – focusing on projects in the Seeley Ranger District. Based on experiences so far, the principles have been a success. The group is starting small, on the Auggie project. There is a field trip on June 17th from 9a-3p at the Seeley Ranger Station.

There is concern that any real work on Auggie won't happen for 2 years. It is 13/14 on the priority list for the Lolo. So, there is potential for members to get discouraged.

But, the Full group needs to help keep the momentum going on these projects (echoed for all the restoration committees).

Is it not efficient for the Forest Service to stop projects that have been started in order to start new ones – so they try to finish those current projects before beginning new ones, hence Auggie being lower on the list.

So, there is a risk because of the time involved in implementing projects that the group could lose interest.

Given the unique situation of this group, would it ever be possible to move a project up?

Or, could this group ever contribute financial resources to allow for other project to be finished or ours to be started earlier?

But this may create some lag in time, in order to get someone else up to speed on the projects and the reports would still have to be reviewed by the Forest Service.

There are a few projects in the Lolo that are close to being done, which will keep bumping Auggie and other projects up on the list. If people remain engaged, they will continue to come to the meetings and be involved.

Also, the issue is not one solely of the FS time frame. This committee does a lot of work on projects before being able to say 'this is exactly what we want to see happen' – so where are we on projects as they are going along?

Also, everyone has a different definition of "success" in terms of the projects. So what does success look like?

-Bitterroot RC-

This group is smaller, about 8 or 9 but they are committed. There are 3 projects being considered: West Side Fuels, Willow Gurd, & Darby Lumber Lands. The dynamics of the group are good and it is a diverse group.

The rest of the meetings planned for this summer are field trips.

It might be helpful for Bob & Gordy to visit with the regional leadership teams and Lolo leadership teams to present the principles. May also be a good idea to present the principles to the ID Teams.

Update on Helena Restoration Committee

There have been a few conversations with the Lincoln Ranger District, but this is an opportunity for success.

Presentation on NEPA

The Gates process and how the NEPA process can be streamlined.

Funding Action Plan Update

There have been some brainstorming sessions amongst Marnie, Bob H., Chelsea, Mary and Brian – to sit down and come up with some numbers. But, there has been no discussion of where this funding will come from.

Ideas of funding areas and amounts needed per year.

Food: applied for the Cinnabar grant and did not get it, but propose \$5,000

Travel Reimbursement: \$30,000

Monitoring: \$15,000/project – for during and after the project.

Some type of organizing position: \$50,000 for ½ time.

Fundraising, outreach, ambassador, etc.

Scientific/practitioner panels: \$10,000

Project implementation – helping to get projects on the ground - \$500,000

The next step is to figure out where this money would come from, and where it should go.

Marnie is going to work on getting the NFF Cap grant through Wildlands CPR.

Defining and Strategizing for Success

What does success look like?

When do you know that it is worth all of the hard work that you are putting into an effort? We all have those ah-ha moments that let us know what we have been doing is paying off. So, how can we keep people engaged committed, and wanting to meet goals when those ah-ha moments are potentially years down the road. What are the levels of success and how do you function when people define “success” in different ways?

Levels:

Basic – is a meeting like this.

Level 2 – project is in the pipeline

Level 3 – RC’s are providing input – both formally and informally. Constructive criticism is being given.

Level 4 – consensus on a final project

Level 5 – replication – developing other projects or moving into other parts of the state.

Level 6 – secondary efforts/partnerships

Examples: len working with the OPHV trail groups

MFRC sending a letter to the administration

Weighing in on a wilderness bill or other legislation

And are we going to stay with what we have until there is a success, or are we going to broaden the scope of our reach?

Level 7 – Nirvana

Comments for success –

Have Pre-NEPA discussions, so that as one project is moving through, there are others ready to begin the process.

Listening to others and reading people – so that someone does not have to wait and wait and then outright object to something. For example, there was an objection to something and it still keeps showing up on the proposal without being solved.

Make sure to communicate effectively – and keep communication open.

And each time there is a meeting, a little bit more trust and understanding is developed, which is a great success.

Expanding the zone of agreement to areas that were avoided at first – like lodgepole, beetle kille, salvage, etc.

Letter to Congressional Delegation

Letter from the SC to the Governor – giving encouragement to help out industries – powerful that a diverse group is siding on an issue.

Discussion of when the steering committee has to check with the big committee to do something. Maybe there should be by—laws. The Lolo – Eastside WG developed a charter.

Annual Report (to Regional Forester)

Brian & Ginny need to provide reports as part of their contracts.
Testimonial form the group, pictures, levels of success.

How may are we going to print? Who is the target?
Put it online?

Other:

Dan Thompson has asked to be replaces on the full committee – possibly Craig Osterman.

The selection process for new people is important – Dan was picked for a specific reason.

Where does Craig stand on the principles? The steering committee should take up this issue. Can Bob & Gordy talk to Craig.

If you can't live with or support the principles, you can't be on the committee – because that is how we got these principles – they all had a thumbs up or sideways.