

Montana Forest Restoration Committee

Bi-Annual Meeting

October 10, 2007

Wilma-Parkside

4-8 PM

Present: Brian Kahn, Gordy Sanders, Mark Vander Meer, Marnie Criley, Paul Rumelhart, Jeff Juel, Dave Bull, John Gatchell, Debbie Austin, Pam Gardiner, Dale Harris, Ellen Engstedt-Simpson, Julia Altemus, Karen DiBari, Bob Harrington, Orville Daniels, Dan Thompson, Mary Mitsos, William Geer, Steve Kratville, Lowell Whitney, Chelsea Pennick, Tim Love, Julia Riber, Rick Franke, Kathy McAllister

1. Steering Committee Update:

A. Challenge Cost-Share (CCS) Agreement:

- In late August, the DNRC, acting as fiscal sponsor for the MFRC, signed a cost-share agreement with the USFS for \$90,000. DNRC has also committed .25 FTE in-kind staff time, which works out to be .20 FTE of Lowell Whitney's time plus .05 FTE general administrative time. The grant runs from September 1, 2007 through September 31, 2008. These federal funds cannot be used for fundraising, lobbying or food/drinks.
- The CCS Agreement is available upon request from Lowell Whitney.
- A Financial Plan was provided to the group. There are four components to the CCS: The \$90,000 has been committed by the U.S. Forest Service to be used to reimburse the MFRC for expenses. The U.S. Forest Service Region 1 office has also committed \$4,950 in staff time towards the administration of the grant-this essentially covers Steve Kratville's time. The in-kind contributions of the DNRC amount to \$17,500. Lastly, the budget includes a commitment of 2,850 volunteer hours or \$122,200 by the MFRC.
- Everyone needs to track their volunteer contributions to the MFRC and submit them to Lowell at the end of each month. Lowell will send out a monthly reminder. Travel expenses should be included in each person's accounting of their in-kind contributions, as they will not be reimbursed.

B. Financial Guidelines

- The steering committee presented their financial guidelines for approval by the MFRC.
- The guidelines were approved by consensus.

C. Budget

- A budget was also provided that further breaks down the expenses shown in the CCS financial plan.
- Contracted Services include staff support and facilitation services. Staff support is estimated at a .50 FTE position which is being filled through a contract with Chelsea at .20 FTE currently, and allows for the increase in hours or additional staff to cover the remaining .30 FTE. Facilitation services cover facilitation of the Restoration Committees.
- Operating Expenses covers meeting space fees for the Full Committee and steering committee and a \$5,000 budget for each restoration committee.

- In total, there is \$14,300 in reserve funds.
- The operating budget was approved by consensus.

D. Financial Reports

- Lowell provided the first month financial report and will be providing them on a monthly basis.
- The MFRC requested that they receive these monthly reports as well.

E. Media Event/Press Conference:

- Was held September 27th. Bob Ekey, Gordy, Debbie and Tom Tidwell were all present. Marnie facilitated the event. The story was picked up by the Missoulian, front page, KPAX and MT NPR.
- John Gatchell reported that there was coverage in Helena and Great Falls as well.
- TWS has created and is maintaining a website: www.montanarestoration.org.
- Lowell and Chelsea are checking email from that site.
- Marnie spoke about the MFRC/WG at the recent Pay Dirt conference put on by Western Progress, and handed out 40+ booklets to folks from all over the Rocky Mountain region.
- Dale and Mary have been invited to speak with the Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative about the MFRWG process.

F. Booklet and funding language changes:

- The Forest Service has requested that the language be modified/removed in the third paragraph under Funding that refers to the MFRC recommending that the steering committee pursue legislation. The Forest Service cannot advocate for legislation, and they feel the language implies that they are.
- One option is to remove the entire paragraph altogether.
- Brian felt that there were statements in the paragraph that were important, and did not recommend removing it entirely.
- Kathy McAllister felt that removal of the “we recommend” phrase would be sufficient.
- Steve Kratville agreed but felt that impression is as important as what is actually written, and to remove any impression that the Forest Service was advocating for legislation, and so should not state that the steering committee will pursue legislation either, as it is not spelled out who sits on the steering committee.
- Gordy suggested that the Process & Implementation Committee resolve the language and submit their suggestion to the full committee via email for approval.
- Julia A. will make sure to discuss this issue with Len before any final decision is made.
- **Anyone with further comments on the language should submit comments to Bob and Julia A. by Monday, October 15th. The committee will then work on a proposal for the full committee.**

G. Field Trip Update:

- The field trip to test the principles on the ground is scheduled for Monday, October 15th. Anyone interested in attending should meet at Muralts at the “Y” at 9 AM. The field trip will be to the Frenchtown Face site. Scheduled return time is 2 PM.

2. Lolo Restoration Committee Update:

- Date is set for November 1st.
- Invitation list has been finalized and invitation letters will be sent shortly.
- First meeting will assess who else should be involved.
- Marnie has offered to be the Chair.
- Forest Service has two good possible project options that are both in very early, pre-NEPA stages.
- Brian will facilitate these meetings.

3. Bitterroot Restoration Committee Update:

- Mary expressed her concern that there were not many MFRC members willing to participate on the BRC and that this might affect its chances for success.
- Mary, Gordy and Dale are meeting 10/11 to work on list and plan for a kick-off in November.

4. Forest Service Perspective (Kathy McAllister)

- Kathy reflected that the only other meeting she attended was the very first full meeting in January 2007.
- She expressed how positive she feels about the process and the principles. She said that it helps to build a common understanding of what restoration is, especially since the USFS has not been able to agree internally.
- She commended everyone for their hard work, sacrifice, and for leaving their positions behind and bringing their interests forward.
- She feels optimistic that the Forest Service will take the principles and make something happen, as restoration is the new business of the Forest Service.
- She stated that the MFRC has the commitment of the Regional Forester to move forward.

5. Next Meeting:

- January 30, 2008 at Lubrecht Experimental Forest.