

MINUTES
Montana Forest Restoration Committee
Steering Committee Meeting
DNRC Conference Room
Jan 19, 2010 * 2-5pm

Members: Dale Harris, Gordy Sanders, Julia Altemus, Adam Rissien, Bill Grasser, Scott Brennan, Mary Mitsos (proxy), Orville Daniels (proxy), Chuck Roady (phone), Brian Kahn (phone).

Staff: Marnie Criley & Melissa Hayes

Guests: Marsha Hogan & John Manz

●● **Approval of SC Meeting Minutes** ●●

Dale made a motion to approve the Nov. Minutes & Julia seconded.

👍 Nov. Minutes approved.

Changes to the Dec. Minutes - delete the first sentence because it is an agenda item for the big meeting. With that change, Dale made a motion to approve the December minutes, seconded by Julia.

👍 Dec. Minutes approved.

●● **Financial Reports** ●●

Dale moved to approve both the Nov. & Dec. Financial Reports. Julia seconded.

👍 Nov. Financial Report approved.

👍 Dec. Financial Report approved.

●● **2010 Coordinator Work Plan** ●●

Dale moved to approve the work plan with comments from the proxies. Adam seconded.

💡 Motion withdrawn after discussion.

Mary recommended that the broader policy initiatives be deleted. Mary and Marnie discussed this issue. The concern is whether we want to single out certain groups and list the groups we want to be engaged or to keep the list flexible. Keeping it flexible is a good idea, but we must also consider that Marnie does need to know who we want to be engaged with and who she should outreach to.

And there are people who contact Marnie as well. For example, Graham Roy is putting together a volunteer restoration effort and is looking for a way to engage with the MFRC. Some efforts end up being time-consuming without getting us very far down the road, so we must be conscious of how time is spent.

The plan should also address media, as it is specified in the contract. Paula was brought in to do some media work as well, so Marnie can coordinate with her when there are media

opportunities. But a media plan should also be developed.

As for elected officials on the list, Marnie is not able to lobby, so do we have to take any officials off of the list. Additionally the perception of meetings with officials could also present a problem, so when Marnie communicates with elected officials on behalf of the MFRC, she should first talk with Dale and Gordy so there are no questions.

Julia read the language under Scope of Work in Marnie's contract. The committee decided that a work plan should use the framework in the contract to make a detailed plan which would then be approved by the committee.

Sensitive issues should be removed and can be added in a case-by-case basis and the word "policy" which could be problematic, can be changed to "initiatives." The funding action plan can incorporate working with the subcommittee.

Blog - the more important piece is to keep the website updated and then maybe we can contribute to an existing blog rather than create our own. The website can be used for updates rather than a blog.

MARNIE: revise the work plan and send back out on Friday.

Motion withdrawn.

●● Expansion Criteria ●●

In previous discussions, the idea was to develop criteria that would drive where we go and why as well as looking to expand closer to the borders where we have committees rather than jumping around to forests or districts.

Comments on the expansion questions posed in the Dec. 30 email -

Do we only go places that are ready and willing to do the work or do we encourage people to embrace the vision of restoration from Vilsak? That may be an assessment made after meeting with the appropriate supervisor on the forest to assess their need and reaction because support of the supervisor and staff has been critical.

The question of expansion is not a decision-tree model but there are questions that keep us moving. Leslie Weldon and Jane Cottrell brought us the expansion question in terms of the Beaverhead. Other areas to consider are the Swan, Anaconda-Pintler, Phillipsburg, etc.

MARNIE: - send out an email to keep this discussion going.

●● Monitoring Protocols ●●

No new news. Jim Burchfield is coming to the next Lincoln meeting (Feb. 4) to give a monitoring presentation.

●● Periodic MFRC Update PDFs ●●

Annual Report. The issue is that once it is drafted, it is already history. So, as the different groups continue to move and grow, it is not always reflected. The solution may be a quarterly update on the website which could give the full scope of each group's activities and progress. When the annual report is published, it could reflect the dates that it is reporting for and suggest going to the website for additional information. Additionally, the financial reports can be archived on the website with a link, so if someone is interested in seeing the break-down of the graphs in the annual report, they can access them from the website.

If facilitators or co-chairs are aware of events or changes, they would give the information to Marnie who could then have it updated on the website. Marnie can share the content with Gordy and Dale prior to posting so there is some oversight for the content. Marnie and Erin are in charge of keeping the website current.

●● MFRC Progress Review/Horizon ●●

Might be a good idea to get the original 8 people together to look at the accomplishments, review and make recommendations to the SC. Brian can facilitate that meeting. There has been no timeline for the meeting, though a few emails were exchanged in Dec.

To move forward, it might be helpful to provide a set of questions prior to the meeting about lessons learned, observations, etc. and responses could be gathered prior to the meeting as well.

BRIAN will send out the questions to **JULIA, DALE & GORDY** and then pick up from there.

●● Lolo FRC ●●

The Westside Working Group (WWG) is holding a public meeting on Feb. 3 at the library for the Marshall Woods Project. There has been good outreach to the Rattlesnake residents and the project is moving along. The public meeting is being sponsored by the Forest Service, but being co-led by the LRC. Marnie and Jake Kreilick are speaking as well as FS folks and specialists who can answer specific questions from the public.

Auggie - has been bumped down but should be implemented this fall. Same with S. Fork of Fish - the decision was made but now waiting on the biological opinion.

Eastside Working Group (EWG) - some of the members have been engaged in the FLRA proposal. No projects are being advanced until the SW Crown of the Continent proposal is out and then the EWG can consider projects within that scope. These 2 efforts will be compatible and the proposal has a good draft - just waiting for the call letter.

MARNIE - set up a meeting with Chad Benson from the 9-Mile so that he can be introduced to the LRC, Scott and Mark and gauge his interest and if he has any projects that meets restoration principles.

●● **Bitterroot FRC** ●●

There is a meeting tonight. Issues with the Butterfly Project are still being resolved and after 2 years, they still have not gotten anywhere but needs to reach a decision.

Ranger Ritter also has the 3 Saddles Project which could be less controversial.

Nothing has changed since the zone of agreement was approved and there has not been an effort to move or edit any of the language, so the status quo still exists, though the Agency now has the language and will come back with an analysis. But discussion is not aimed at revising the zone. The hot topic is whether to turn it back to the Agency, which does not sit well with some members. Access is the only hang-up.

Ginny is retiring in Feb. and Marsha is taking over as facilitator. Marsha will be introduced at the meeting tonight. Craig Thomas will be there as well.

●● **Helena FRC Lincoln WG** ●●

Jerry Cain was added as a new member.

Good meeting - discussed the benchmarks for the 2010 workplan. Monitoring protocol is being developed. Scott is in charge of working with Jim Burchfield to move forward with new projects and assess the low hanging fruit. There is also opportunity to interface with the MFRC and Mixed Severity WG to pursue dialogue and assess the development of a mixed severity project.

The group is also looking at different fish and wildlife issues related to the travel plan. The LWG had concerns about fish and wildlife and wanted information specific to projects. But, Amber said that those issues are mainly dealt with through the travel planning process. A good travel plan would address restoration needs, but that does not happen often. The group should not weigh in on travel planning. There is no reason not to look at all of the restoration opportunities within each project.

BRIAN - will coordinate with Amber to clarify this issue so that everyone is on the same page.

Stonewall Project - in total it is around 8600 acres with 2000 of that endorsed by the group and the other 6600 generated by the Lincoln staff. But, the headline in the Helena paper grouped the entire project together and stated that it was a collaborative effort between the LWG and the Helena National Forest.

The group wrote a letter and press release discussion the separate components of the project. Though distinctions should be made to the media, you can't control what and how they write about it. Also, the LWG outlined 2 projects so it was a surprise that the FS was going to combine projects and then add a third component. Maybe the group can make recommendations on how the FS should deal with packaged projects in the future. If something in the press raises concerns with the group, they should discuss it with the appropriate FS staff to clear it up for the future. The real discussion should be between the LWG and Amber.

BRIAN - will talk to Paul & KD to get their take on the situation and suggest that they keep Michael Garrity and Paula Jane in the loop.

The immediate reaction is not to answer the email chain letter with an op-ed. If they write an op-ed then the appropriate response would be for KD and Jim to set the record straight.

●● **Future Restoration Projects in the Absence of SSCC** ●●

Implementation of restoration without Smurfit is huge. Large slash piles can come out of any given project, but not many places can take it and sending it out of state is also, often, not viable. Smurfit needed 31,000 truckloads a year. So, how will this loss translate to projects on the ground?

It is important for this committee to be informed about the issues and there may have to be a change in the acceptance standards. It is also important that the committee is aware of all the creative and innovative things that people are struggling with to deal with the materials.

The future for pellets is significant, but that would require the machinery and development of a market. It would have to involve multiple opportunities - pellet machines at family mills to support local communities rather than one mega-plant. Rail would be critical for transport. But, the question is - will there be anything left by the time that market could be up and running?

Right now it is a state of triage - what we can do now to save the infrastructure we have.

MFRC can play a role in hosting a meeting for people to weigh in on the issue and keep people working. It is also an opportunity to influence the future and a natural resource that still needs management.

The Principles discuss the maintenance of a fully-integrated timber industry to allow for restoration and that can be the catalyst for the MFRC to act.

JULIA will be organizing this effort and send out an agenda, dates, and contact the FS, University and DNRC to be partners. John Manz, Adam, Marnie and maybe Angela (FS) can also contribute.

Mid-March to the beginning of May would be the timeline for this discussion.