

## Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

DNRC Conference Room

August 18, 2009

2-5pm

**SC Members:** Gordy Sanders, Julia Altemus, Dale Harris, , Adam Rissien, Bob Harrington, Scott Brennan (phone).

**Staff:** Melissa Hayes, Marnie Criley

**Guests:** Debbie Austin, Steve Kratville

### ■ Approval of Minutes ■

Dale motioned, Bob 2<sup>nd</sup>

↳ July minutes passed & approved.

### ■ Financial Report ■

↳

### ■ MFRC Funding Request to Regional Forester ■

A draft copy of the 2009 Annual Report and funding action plan were presented to the acting regional forester last week where we asked for \$75,000. The meeting went well and Jane was committed and talked about where we were headed and growth. If we can get the agreement signed and modified by next week, we can use the fiscal year 2009 dollars for our \$75,000. Steve will work with Marci to get the Modification signed and Sue can sign it if Bob is not here. Since this is a cost-share, it is also up to the committee to come up with the match. As of now, we are probably above the match, but we are required to continue. June 30, 2011 is when the agreement ends, which will give us the opportunity to revisit some of the assumptions we have had – such as continuing with the cost share or looking at other options, maintaining the DNRC as the fiscal agent or moving to someone like NFF, as well as staff coordinator positions.

There are multiple opportunities for growth. With the Flathead, Dale & Gordy need to visit with Cathy, and Steve Brady in the Swan is retiring, so that dynamic will change as well. Jane was also interested in the Beaverhead. Dave Myers is the new supervisor. There are a few ranger districts that are ripe and if the committee engages these areas, it would be up to us to get the forest staff involved. As of now, there are no commitments to go or not go anywhere, but Jane's preference was that we go SW.

### ■ Forest Restoration Committee Updates ■

#### ■ Lolo FRC

Our last meeting was last week and the group was able to look at the first decision notice to result from the MFRC principles – Auggie. We talked about media surrounding Auggie – and will probably wait a few weeks for the appeal period to end and then have a PR/media event to mark our 1<sup>st</sup> successful project and how we have linked with the UM School of Forestry. Since Auggie isn't scheduled until the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2010, we might want to do something now with the media. The only thing left to do is the road package, and is at the top of the list, maybe we should wait to do media until then.

We also had a positive debrief on the South Fork Project during a facilitated meeting where the group talked about the WWG and Forest Service lessons learned, and there was a similar talk during the LRC meeting. The first part of the meeting we discussed how the LRC worked internally and the next part how the LRC worked with the FS. Hopefully these lessons will help us to move forward. Brian drafted notes from the first meeting and we have notes from the second, so **Marnie will put together some bullet points from the 2 discussions.**

Larry Westcott and Scott Brennan are co-chairs and Bev & Scott are the chairs of the working groups. The LRC also voted in 2 more members, Jim Burchfield and Pam Gardiner.

### ▪▪ Bitterroot FRC

There is no August meeting. The group reviewed the biomass policy statement and Kirk Thompson will work with Wayne to revise the statement. There are not many member of the committee who will support the statement at this point and some were wondering if the group should be spending their time on this. The statement from Wayne was more historical, so hopefully the revised version will have more focus.

Darby will include the 9 sections in conjunction with the surrounding landscape. The group decided to take a small assessment project while the larger assessment is taking place. The BRC got \$11,000 from RAC and were asked if it could be used on the 9 sections and a larger area to infrared scan and take pictures of the road system. This will give a bigger picture to direct where routes should be walked and prioritizes where the engineers should go. There is one section that is known to have a road density that needs to be worked on.

There might be some trust issues having the FS tell the group where to go and not having a 3<sup>rd</sup> party model for comparison. The Wilderness Society model could apply, but there might not be the capacity to bring it to the Bitterroot.

### ▪▪ Lincoln FRC

A field trip is planned and everything continues to move forward. There is no meeting this month, but there will be in Sept. and a small subset of the group will be on the field trip.

### ▪▪ Correspondence ▪▪

FLRA Nomination update – Dale still needs to talk with Mary and will do that tomorrow. We are going to nominate 2 MFRC members with separate letters/nominations, but possibly a joint cover letter. Mary has to craft her own letter for why she should be a candidate. It is great to have 2 nominations and represents the diversity of the group.

This is a FACA committee.

### ▪▪ Mixed Severity Sub-Committee Update ▪▪

Scott, Len, Pam, Gordy & FS people were there or on the phone. The Helena, Bitterroot and Lolo gave presentations – Gordy has a disc of the presentations and it can be copied. The Lolo gave an overview of land fires with scientific examples and peer-reviewed articles. This is what the Lolo uses. Neither the Bitterroot nor the Helena use land fires because they feel there is better on the ground information. Helena talked about the Stone Dry Project, the Bitterroot discussed the Middle East Fork and the Lolo talked about the Cedar Thom Project.

Overall, it was a good discussion. Looking at the history of a particular area, the data is variable and there are questions when dealing with this. Usually the FS goes back about 100 years. There was discussion of Potential Range of Natural Variability, but with climate change, it is important to look forward as well as backward. It might not be so much about what it looked like as what we want it to look like in the future.

It might be helpful to have this discussion as part of the big meeting as well and there is potential for this to become principle 14. The hope is that this sub-committee will be able to bring a recommendation to the full committee at the fall meeting.

Marnie is doodling times for the Sept. Sub-Committee meeting.

### ▪▪ NEPA Timeline Sub-Committee Update ▪▪

Has not met yet, but are meeting on Friday from 1-3pm. Len, Jake and Julia are on this sub-committee and Chris Partyka is in an advisory capacity. The committee is drafting a NEPA process to use on a pilot project. When doing this, it was asked that the subcommittee look at both sides of the issue – working with the LRC on projects takes more time – so the process would be faster if the agency did not have to work with the committees – so how can we look at it from both sides and make the processes work together.

### ▪▪ Communications Sub-Committee ▪▪

Scott talked to Jared about talking to Paula about the website. Lessons learned – the media is not interested in meetings – they want to see something on the ground. So, when thinking of Auggie, have something on the ground.

#### ▪▪ Fundraising Sub-Committee Update ▪▪

4 areas of focus:

Projects, Monitoring, Expansion, & Food.

Projects – **Adam** will find out what the needs might be for Darby.

Monitoring – it's going to be a while before we have post-monitoring project needs and pre-project monitoring is being covered by UM. But possibly monitoring will require \$5,000/year for 3 years. Also, S. Fork will contract with Adam Switalski at Wildlands CPR to assist with some wildlife/road monitoring.

Expansion – with the new modification, there is probably enough to handle expanding.

Food – probably need about \$1,000/year. Does food draw more people?

MT Legacy Lands will be owned by the FS in April. There are about 60,000 acres on the Lolo and the FS will be putting together a work plan for the next few years. There is a lot to do without a lot of money. **Debbie** will look at the Lolo and let us know the need.

There are no other projects on the horizon that need funding except Darby. MFRC is looking at one section of Darby and partnering with the FS to do more monitoring. There is no commercial timber coming off that project to fund it, but it is going to need money to make it happen. There are also some educational components and opportunities to work with schools on this project.

Also look at getting line items in the Forest Service budget for monitoring and restoration and possibly partner with groups working on similar goals. This is a priority.

A Missoula Co. RAC is being set-up and since this is the first one, getting in early would be good. Right now there are 3 people in the SC working on fundraising – might need to reach out to more people for help. There is also potential resources to support school and community-based monitoring and stewardship.

Should we plan a trip to DC? Would it be easier not to use funds from the cost share? Add as an agenda item for the future SC meeting.

#### ▪▪ Criley Contract Amendment ▪▪

At the Attorney's desk and will be ready to sign soon. It takes effect Sept. 1.

#### ▪▪ MFRC Membership ▪▪

Now that Dave Bull is in the Regional Office – how will he remain involved with the MFRC? Jane thought it was appropriate to keep him engaged.

When the new supervisor comes on the Bitterroot, would they act in the same capacity as Kevin Riordan on the Helena – advisory to the SC, but not an MFRC member? As it becomes bigger, we will have more supervisors involved – do they need to be full members? Would that be too weighted?

It is better to have them involved than not – the interaction it provides is worthwhile and not every supervisor can attend every meeting. It is great to keep Dave involved as well as Bruce Fox's position. **Debbie & Gordy** will both visit with Bruce.

As we add people, we want to make sure we have balance. We lost Marnie and Jeff Juel from the environmental representation. We might want to look at the current roster and balance and that can be an agenda item for the Nov. meeting.

**Dale and Steve** both have samples of transition letters and can work together on drafting a letter. Steve will give a draft of a transition letter to Julia. The FS developed the letter when a line officer leaves and a

new person comes on. It is a statement from the agency stating that they want the collaborative relationship to continue.

Julie should be invited as the acting BR supervisor to keep continuity.

▪▪ **Coordinator Efforts Update** ▪▪

Marnie will have a draft plan by the end of the week and will send it to Dale & Gordy. Marnie has also been chatting with some folks who have not been attending meetings to see where they are at and what prevents them from coming or engaging and what might get them back. Might also be good to engage more students/younger people.

▪▪ **Other** ▪▪

**Annual Report** – will be printed after final approval. We will probably need/use more copies than we did last year. Marnie will use a lot.

**Full MFRC meeting** – Tues., Nov. 17 @ Lubrecht is the most likely date. Jane will not be in town, so what about Grenada? Steve will let them know this is the date being considered.

**Beetle** – Concerns for Missoula and beetles. From a state perspective, Helena is having problems and Missoula is a concern. [www.beetles.mt.gov](http://www.beetles.mt.gov)

▪▪ **Next Meeting** ▪▪

**Sept. 15 ▪▪ 2-5pm ▪▪ DNRC Conference Room**