

## Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

DNRC Conference Room

July 21, 2009

2-5pm

**SC Members:** Gordy Sanders, Julia Altemus, Adam Rissien, Mary Mitsos, Bob Harrington, Rick Franke (Proxy), Orville Daniels (proxy), Dale Harris (proxy)

**Staff:** Marnie Criley, Paula Short, Marci Giblin, Julia Altemus & Melissa Hayes

**Guests:** Brian Kahn (on the phone), Steve Kratville

### ■ Approval of Minutes ■

No changed notes. Adam moved for approval, Rick seconded (by proxy).

♻ June minutes passed & approved.

### ■ Financial Report ■

Marci found an error that she is corrected. The current month expenses did not include facilitation expenses, so that has now been corrected.

**Melissa** – Check with MAEDC about an invoice – we have not gotten one since March.

**Marci** – send an update expense report to Dale, Gordy and Julia.

Julia motioned to approve minutes, Orville seconded (by proxy).

♻ June Financial Report passed & approved.

### ■ SC Correspondence ■

#### FLRA Nomination Request

As part of the Forest Landscape Restoration Act, there is an appointed national committee whose members are approved by the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior. Jay Jensen is assembling the committee. The committee will recommend which forest restoration projects go forward, so it would be good to have someone from the MFRC on that committee to advance our level of participation nationally. The SC nominated Julia because she is already involved with multiple states and it seems like a logical extension. Bob visited with the Governors office and they were also on board.

If there are multiple nominations, Mary would also like to be nominated.

There are 3 State Forester positions available on the committee, so instead of Bob being nominated, Julia would be nominated in his place. Bob is writing a separate letter of support in addition to the one from the SC.

There is a group that will be writing a proposal for a project – that would expand from the Lincoln to the Helena and through the Swan – about 500,000 acres. They may also be looking for MFRC support – would that create a conflict if someone from the MFRC were sitting on the committee.

Having a presence elevates our profile and may help get projects through. Another consideration is if it would hurt our chances of representatives if the MFRC were recommending multiple people. But, since there are different categories for representation beyond just a state forester – there are places for environmental groups, scientists, etc., it should be ok.

There has not been a formal call for nominations yet, so we don't know the exact process – but we having this letter will put us ahead for when nominations come.

**Julia** will find out more details about the process and then we can add Mary to the letter or write another letter.

**Julia** – will also check if this is an official FACA committee.

### ■ Forest Restoration Committee Updates ■

#### ▪ Lolo FRC

At the last meeting, the LRC approved sending the names of new member nominations to the Executive Committee. Jim Burchfield and Pam Gardiner were nominated and wrote letters of interest. The Executive Committee will meet in early Aug. and vote, which will then go to the LRC for approval. Hopefully Pam will also co-chair the Lolo. She was interested. She would also be able to provide some meeting management/facilitation, as Brian is looking to phase out. Rob Roberts from Trout Unlimited was also approved to go on to the Exec. Comm., but no one has been in touch with him yet to write a letter of interest. The LRC does not need Brian's facilitation on a regular basis – especially if Pam becomes a co-chair. Maybe we could utilize Brian on an on-call basis – as needed if an issue pops up.

The EWG is waiting for a Fish & Wildlife consultation on Auggie and then it will be good to move forward.

The WWG had a bit of trouble getting S. Fork of Fish comments in. It was difficult to read the 200 pg. EA and get comments/approval in 30 days. Trailhead improvements were the stumbling block. There was not an LRC meeting in July, so it was also difficult to get comments from everyone over e-mail. Debbie Austin spoke with Scott Brennan about the possibility of doing a "lessons learned" and a look-back at the process during the next LRC meeting. She also suggested that the WWG meet with Gary's district staff to talk about the process. Debbie suggested to Gordy that the WWG have a facilitated meeting with the 9-mile staff, where Brian facilitates. Brian would be willing to do it – if Debbie sees the need. **Marnie** will work to get as many people from the ID team and WWG at a meeting – making sure that key people can be there. The WWG is still moving forward with Woods Gulch.

#### ▪ Bitterroot FRC

The group learned about the Butterfly Creek area at the last meeting. The project did not interfere with the zone of agreement. The roads in the project area are not contiguous, which for now is not being seen as an issue.

The Darby recreation and project area might be expanded to include all 9 sections on the landscape analysis. There are no management areas assigned to the adjacent lands. The group is still learning about Darby and looking at other project opportunities.

May need some speakers to come and talk about forest ecology because there has been discussion of burned areas and how they are treated or restored. The group would also be interested in having a presentation on restoration prioritization models, maybe Cindy Swanson or Tom Deluca could come in. How Management Areas are managed may also be an interesting topic for the big meeting in Oct., just so we all know.

#### ▪ Biomass Policy Statement

Wayne Hedman is drafting some language which may be voted on at the next meeting. And people in the community are interested in supporting biomass on some level. How would that statement work? The BRC should take a stab at drafting something, but the full committee will want to weigh in and it will have to be carefully crafted. If the BRC does draft something, that would be the BRC policy and not the MFRC policy. It would be a good idea to bounce the language off of the SC who would then bring it to the MFRC, to make sure it is consistent with the principles. Biomass is a new issue and we don't have a subcommittee for it yet, like we do for mixed severity.

#### ▪ Lincoln FRC

At the last meeting, Tom and Amber came to an agreement that was ratified by the group – to work in the 3 colors, leaving blue, mixed severity for assessment. Scott wrote a memo which caused discussion at the last meeting, that he would consider restoration in all color zones, depending on past management activity, which was a more strict interpretation and led to some

concerns that this was back-tracking. So, KD was going to try to set up a conference call when Scott gets back to clear up what may be more of a communication glitch. The group is still in a position to move forward and the response was just as much emotional as it was factual – because members thought they were moving forward, then there were all of these questions. So, the conference call should clear up questions and concerns so the group can move forward.

#### ■ ■ Mixed Conifer/Mixed Severity Sub-Committee Update ■ ■

The committee met and had a good discussion. The next step is for each FRC co-chairs to recommend a specific area that would offer a mixed conifer/mixed fire issue. The next meeting is Aug. 13 where there will be a presentation from the FS from the Bitterroot, Lolo and Helena – to share information on condition, class and habitat type. This is just an information-sharing/discussion session. The group will not be recommending a project, but just gathering information to see if a principle or something can be developed around this issue. There was some confusion that this committee would be picking a project – so **Marnie** will have a discussion with the BR District Ranger that this is just informational. Each presentation will be about 20 minutes with discussion. Chris Partyka is going to try to coordinate with Amber and Ruth so that they are looking at similar types of information. The meeting will be Aug. 13, 1-4p in the SWLO at the DNRC.

#### ■ ■ NEPA Timeline Sub-Committee Update ■ ■

**Marnie** is working to schedule a meeting. FS NEPA staff are concerned that we were going to set parameters that their regular program of work will have to function under. There are also concerns by the line officers that committee decisions impacts daily work. The committee will draft a timeline and use Woods Gulch as a pilot. The next meeting will be Aug. 21.

Karen DiBari at NFF participated on a call where a group was hired to assess internal FS impressions about NEPA. The Washington office and Regional Office thinks that NEPA needs to be more collaborative, while others think it is fine. **Mary** will get more details from Karen.

It may be helpful to set up a meeting with NEPA folks and line officers – or invite them to meetings?

Steve also spent 2 days at a collaboration meeting discussing the facilitation of electronic collaboration and public participation. There is a potential clash between local collaborative efforts and then allowing national electronic participation.

#### ■ ■ Communications Sub-Committee ■ ■

Butterfly CR Press Release. Adam is looking for support/suggestions for the PR that he can take back to the BRC. They don't have a communications subcommittee to look at it. Adam sent it out to the group for comments and they will vote on it at the Mon. meeting, but he wanted to get changes and suggestions before then so that it doesn't get approved by the BRC then changed.

There has been talk about establishing a communications subcommittee, so when a specific FRC has a press release, the committee could work with them to draft it and take that back to the FRC for a vote. Members – Jake, Rick, Dale, Len, Adam, \_\_\_\_, who else?

The subcommittee will work out the process of writing, getting approval and distributing press releases in a timely manner.

**Paula** will look at the PR and get suggestions to Adam by Fri.

It might also be nice to have NPR do a feature on this BR effort.

#### ■ ■ Fundraising Sub-Committee Update ■ ■

Gordy and Dale will meet with the Acting Regional Forester for right now, but there will be a new regional forester. We are putting together materials to take to the meeting with her. Once there is feedback on the budget from Dale, **Julia** will send it out to others for feedback and **Marnie** will

schedule a meeting for the fundraising subcommittee. Orville is the chair with the entire SC as members.

#### ■ FRC Expansion Update ■

We have talked about the Swan and Dave Bull was going to visit with Kathy Barbouletos from the Flathead. There is interest in the Swan. They have been successful at getting things done and engaging with the public. **Gordy** will talk with Dave and see if he has met with Kathy yet.

Plains/Thompson Falls is a possibility as well. They are interested, but would the committee have the capacity to go there? There is interest in engaging in some way and they have been given various suggestions on how that can be done. **Marnie** will follow up with them. Do we have the capacity to move into both the Swan and Plains? There has also been discussion about expanding the Helena to the 10-mile group. Hopefully we will also be able to come up with something for mixed severity before the Swan RC is developed.

There is potential for the RC's to apply for RAC funding. Only the Bitterroot and Superior would be available right now – but we also don't know where else we are expanding. The committees would have to make a proposal to the Regional Forester.

\*Important that the Fundraising Committee meet sooner than later.

#### ■ MFRC New Member Recruitment ■

Do we need new members? What about Jeff Juel – he does not come to meetings, but has also not officially resigned. The charter states that you have to attend 3 meetings in 6 months. Do we have balance, or are we in need of representation? Marnie is no longer a voting member. What about Scott Brennan? As a co-chair, he is an automatic member of the SC, but not the MFRC?

**Melissa** – send out the MFRC member list. Is anyone missing and how are we on balance? SC Co-Chairs will send invite to Scott for MFRC membership.

#### ■ Budget & DNRC Support ■

From the start DNRC offered .25 time and the support that it is giving exceeds that. With Paula starting to help and Chelsea no longer here, and Marnie the coordinator, it makes sense for Melissa to contract with Marnie to work on things. We need to figure out a strategy because there will be a time, as this effort grows, when the DNRC won't be able to increase their contribution/staff commitment.

Also, Jared at TWS can't work on the website any longer, so Marnie is looking into someone to also work on the website.

Motion to transfer responsibilities for a staff person and web along with \$10,000 in funds to Marnie and amend her contract.

Bob motions.

Julia seconds.

♻ SC approved moving funds and changing Marnie's contract.

#### ■ Coordinator Efforts Update ■

Spreadsheet captures what goes on in a month – as far as duties/responsibilities. The Co-Chairs of SC, Marnie and Julia are meeting monthly (the Friday after the SC meeting) to develop mission statements, an outreach plan, etc.

Melissa's tasks will remain the same, but the position will move as a subset of Marnie's.

It might also be good for the FRC's to see this spreadsheet – because sometimes they operate in a vacuum. It would also be helpful to go to the full MFRC after it gets finalized.

**All** – look at the spreadsheet and see if anything is missing. It will be sent out in an e-mail and finalized at the next SC mtg. **Submit comments by Aug. 10.**

Changes: change subcommittees to line items and not a column and take communications off of a column.

**Marnie** - the coordinator position is still shaking out. **She will be putting together a work plan in the next couple of weeks and will bring it to the next SC meeting.**

▪▪ **Other** ▪▪

Food \$ - NFF is still in deficit by \$103.64. Can anyone pitch in to help defray the cost? **Marnie** will check with Bethany from Wildlands CPR. The money is needed by the end of the fiscal year – Sept. **Mary** will send Julia an attachment.

**Julia** will send out a request to the SC.

**Adam** will also check to see what the issue is.

In the future, we may want to have proactive donations – so we have money up front.

▪▪ **Next Meeting** ▪▪

**Aug. 18. ▪▪ 2-5pm ▪▪ DNRC Conference Room**