

Custer-Gallatin Working Group (CGWG)
Meeting MINUTES Tuesday, December 12, 2023
Sun Mountain Mill, Livingston, MT

The Working Group held its December meeting in Livingston at the recently re-opened lumber mill, which had been recently acquired Sun Mountain Lumber from RY Timber, and had just completed the rebuild of its planer unit. In attendance:

John Prinkki, Chair	Sally Schrank, GYC
Kathryn Ehlund, Wilderness Society	Jeff Schimdt, Red Lodge Mountain
Bill Wallace, Sweetgrass Co. Commission	Dennis Davaz, Sun Mountain Lumber
Karen , DNRC	Zac Fisher, USFS Bozeman
Mike Story, Park County Commission	Riley Stevenson – DNRC Dillon
Adam Blythe – DNRC	Peter Aengst – Wilderness Society
Wendi Urie, USFS Hebgen	Mary Erickson, USFS -CGNF Supervisor
Jennie OConnor Card, USFS HQ Staff	Hilary Eisen, Winter Wildlands Alliance
Barb Cestero, Wilderness Society	Earl Atwood, Beartooth RC&D

The Group gathered at the planer unit break room, held a brief *no-quorum* discussion (recapped below), then toured the main operations of the mill. As no business was conducted, routine approval of September, 2023 meeting minutes and funds report were deferred to the next regular meeting in March, 2024.

Introductions by all in attendance John Prinkki with a brief update on the CGWG budget and his intention to apply for additional grant support for 2024. He reminded the Commissioners in the Group that it will be time to confirm leadership with election of the Chair position at the March meeting.

Mary Erickson confirmed that her retirement from the Forest Service after 40 years of service would take effect on December 29th. She thanked everyone for the partnership extended by CGWG, stating that she felt it has been a very beneficial collaboration and she hopes the Group will continue to engage on and support its projects. As for transition – Kathy Minor (currently Deputy Supv.) will be acting Supervisor, Cory Lewellan (currently Bozeman DR) will be acting Deputy Supv., and Zac Fisher will step in for Cory as acting Bozeman DR. Process for permanent appointments should be in place by May, 2024.

Zac Fisher, Bozeman Office updated the Group on the Bridger Infrastructure effort, and its plans to continue working in priorities in the new year. Various topics including status of litigation on current projects, economic considerations related to timber sales, mill operations, staffing challenges for the Forest Service, and upcoming decisions were also touched on during the discussion.

The tour portion took the group through each facility in the mill, lasting about 90 minutes.

Next Meeting – March 13, 2024 Red Lodge