

Custer-Gallatin National Forest Working Group (CGWG)

MINUTES - May 13, 2015 meeting

Attending:

John Prinkki
Joe Skinner
Marty Malone
Jeff Schmidt
John Bailey
Bill Wallace
Joe Josephson
Brent Sinnema
Jerry Furtney
Michael Christianson
Mike Penfold
Earl Atwood

Mary Erickson (USFS)
Alex Sienkiewica (USFS)
Lauren Oswald (USFS)

Don Bachman
Nancy Schulz (GWA)
Michelle Uberuaga (PCEC)
Craig Campbell (DNRC)
David Molebash (NRCS)
Liz Dellwo, (Daines)
Jennifer Madgic (Tester)
Sara Thane (Tester)

Time	Topic	Lead	Outcomes
1:00	Opening and introductions	John Prinkki / Earl Atwood	Welcome, introductions, minutes previous meeting; agenda
1:10	Public comment	John Prinkki / Earl Atwood	Allow for Public comment/questions
1:20	Membership applications	Earl Atwood	Applications (if any) considered, voted upon
1:30	North Hebgen Project; CGWG subcommittee report	Joe Skinner, Jim Hart, Joe Josephson, Scott Brennan, Marty Malone	North Hebgen Project review process/consensus
2:10	North Hebgen Project; Full membership discussion; Establish subcommittee; Consider hiring a facilitator	John Prinkki / Earl Atwood	Development of CGWG direction/position/comments;
3:00	Break		
3:20	DNRC Forest Management Practices and Montana Environmental Protection Act (MEPA) Overview	Craig Campbell, Montana DNRC, Bozeman Unit	Relevant forest management practices and regulation from the State perspective
4:00	National Forest Foundation Funding Opportunity and NEPA Peer Learning Session – See NFF Funding Opportunity	John Prinkki / Earl Atwood	Discuss grant opportunity and types of on-the-ground projects eligible for matching funds; possibility of CGWG developing grant for similar efforts in Custer Gallatin - reminder of May 14 NEPA Learning Session
4:00	2015/2016 Budget 2015 Agenda Topics	John Prinkki / Earl Atwood	Set priorities/workshops Goals
4:20	June 10, 2015 meeting plan	John Prinkki / Earl Atwood	Location, Agenda items, assignments for June meeting
5:00	Adjourn	John Prinkki	

AGENDA

The May 13, 2015 meeting of the Custer Gallatin Working Group convened at 1:00 in the Park County Joint City/County Complex in Livingston, Montana.

Minutes from the April 8, 2015 meeting were approved without amendment. Motion/Bailey Second/Schmidt

Mary Erickson, Custer Gallatin National Forest Supervisor, shared news with the group that Traute Parrie, Red Lodge District Ranger will be retiring at the end of the summer. She also stated that Jason Brey is the new District Ranger for the Hebgen District, starting on June 14th. Lauren Oswald will move to the Forest Supervisor's Office as Recreation and Wilderness Program Manager.

Representative Alan Redfield, HD59, circulated to the Group a copy of HB510 which had passed toward the end of the 64th Legislature. It is effective on July 1, 2015 and was enacted to aid local governments in Montana in reducing wildfire risk and improving forest health. The new law vests resources with DNRC and Local Government Forest Advisor and gives them responsibilities for coordinating and assisting local governments. \$240,000 was appropriated for implementation of the law. Rep. Redfield said there would be hearings June 3-4 in Helena (State Capitol, Rm 317) to work on administrative rule review with DNRC, and encouraged Commissioners and other local officials to provide input on their needs to make sure the rules reflect local priorities.

Alex Sienkewicz announce that RY Timber has offered a tour of their Livingston Mill on May 22nd at 9:30 am for anyone interested. The tour will last between 1 ½ to 2 ½ hours. RSVP to Alex Sienkewicz is requested.

Representative Kerry White, HD70, also informed the group about SB256 brought by Hamlet. It was signed into law on April 13th, authorizing the Attorney General to intervene in litigation on federal timber projects.

Membership –

Application: Mark A. Petroni, West Yellowstone, Montana - Mr. Petroni could not be present at this meeting to personally present his application, however several members had prior to the meeting discussed his interest and advocated for approving the membership request. **Motion to approve Mr. Petroni's membership and assign his seat to the Quiet Recreation category was approved unanimously.**

Motion/Josephson Second/Bailey

Correction: Mike Penfold has been place on the roster under the Motorized Recreation category. He pointed out that the appropriate designation would be either Quiet Recreation or as an NGO (Our Montana). **A motion to change the designation of Mr. Penfold's membership to the NGO category was approved.**

Motion/Bailey Second/Schmidt

Joe Skinner reported on the work of the North Hebgen Project Subcommittee. Since the April 8, 2015 meeting they have met twice. They have identified several areas of contention that the committee feels CGWG can engage in to broker consensus. These include:

1. Temporary Roads
2. Risk vs Benefit – Big Picture
3. Weed Proliferation
4. Wildlife Safety

The Committee asked the CGWG members to assist in the evaluation of how best the CGWG can have effect on the project given its current stage in planning. The committees thoughts to this point were to pursue the following actions:

1. Develop an education program about North Hebgen project to improve knowledge among various partners
2. Create panel discussion with speakers on several topics that would assist with the contentious issues
3. Possibly coordinate events/panels with Forest Service field trips near West Yellowstone.

The members discussed several options and agreed that discussion panels with subject matter experts would be an excellent tool to broker knowledge about the project. The subcommittee was asked to incorporate such a panel in the next CGWG meeting on June 10th, if possible. Topics would be chosen to leverage the particular experiences of panel members, and may include Fire Dangers and Prevention, Wildlife Concerns, Vegetative Treatments, Forest Service Contracting (timber sales) and Stewardship Funding.

Budget for the panel events was discussed. A motion to approve costs up to \$2,000 for speakers, advertising, and meeting space was approved. Motion/Schmidt Second/Josephson

Marty Malone suggested that the discussion on temporary roads was an important one, deserving an open debate on the issue to flush out details of the issue.

Chairman Prinkki asked the Forest Service staff present to elaborate on the timeline for commenting on the N.Hebgen project. The next formal comment period will be in late 2015 (November/December). That would be the target for

CGWG having prepared comments to submit relating to the project. Prinkki suggested that November 1st should be our target for concluding our research, discussions, etc. and having comments formulated on each of the priority areas.

Craig Campbell, DNRC, Bozeman Office, presented a discussion about the Trust Lands mission of the DNRC. He stated the central objective to their management of forest assets on public lands is to achieve and maintain a diverse and stable forest. Timber management is a primary source of revenue and a tool for bio-diversity.

The revenue that goes into the Trust is used primarily as a funding source for schools, K-12 and the Universities. Administrative rules have been developed over time which define and guide the actions of DNRC in managing the lands.

The driver on projects is either current income generation, or forest health to insure future income generation.

Mr. Campbell was asked about recreation on public lands. He explained that while DNRC does allow recreation on State Lands, they do not manage for that unless it is tied somehow to the future viability of the forest.

Access to Trust Lands is a big issue for the State. Sometimes it has been hard to acquire due to the preferences of private landowners with large holdings. DNRC collects a \$3 per ton fee on timber for the Forest Improvement (FI) fund, which is specifically tied to improving future harvests or resolving access issues.

The DNRC uses a Sustained Yield Calculation, update every 10 years, to set requirements for annual timber harvests. Currently the target is 56 million board feet per year. The analysis is done under contract. This is all done in compliance with the Habitat Conservation Plan to protect habitats for Grizzly, Lynx and endangered Trout species.

Earl Atwood presented information about grant opportunities with the National Forest Foundation under their MAP program, and reminded the Group about the audio conference NFF held recently concerning the convergence of NEPA requirements and the actions of Collaboratives. A recording of the audio conference will be made available to members.

Suggested Topics for Future CGWG agendas:

Forest Economics

Impacts of Litigation report from MSU

Range Management and Grazing Allotments

Litigation – what motivates lawsuits and why is Region 1 the most litigated?

Forest Plan Revision presentation in the Fall (Pete Nelson, Bozeman and/or Virginia Kelly as possible presenters)

PERC Report

Strategic Plan to establish short/medium range goals for CGWG

Joe Josephson suggested that we follow a panel discussion with a presentation by an appropriate Forest Service specialist to help us assimilate panel discussion points in the context of North Hebgren and the current project plan.

Next Meeting: Bozeman, June 10, 2015. Community Meeting Room of the County Courthouse

Adjournment – 4:10 pm