

Custer-Gallatin National Forest Working Group (CGWG)

Meeting MINUTES

Wednesday, June 14, 2017

Mt. Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 2300 Lake Elmo Dr. Billings, Mt. 59105

Time	Topic	Lead	Outcomes
1:00 PM	Opening and introductions; Agenda discussion, Meeting materials:	Prinkki / Atwood	Welcome, introductions, agenda reviewed
1:05	Consent Agenda: Minutes, Financial report/disbursements	Prinkki / Atwood	Vote on consent agenda items
1:10	Membership seats/applications	Prinkki / Atwood	Review and vote on membership applications; Bruce Reierson, Mt. Trail Riders Asso.: Notice of lack of attendance
1:15	North Bridger(Bridge Bangtail) Farm Bill Smith-Shield Project post decision strategy;	Prinkki Corey Lewellen, Bozeman District Ranger	Bridger Bangtail project kickoff; Consider filing an Amicus Brief or as an Intervenor; Funding sources - Bid letting time frame discussion
1:30	Pryor Mountains	Penfold and other Stakeholders	Establish a Subcommittee/Stakeholders Group
3:00	Wilderness Recommendations	Virginia Kelly / Barb Cestero	Large landscape approach and other considerations for recommended wilderness
3:30	Custer Gallatin National Forest; Forest Plan Revision	Virginia Kelly and Mariah Lueschen	FPR status report
3:45	Custer Gallatin Forest Service Plan Revision Outreach	Prinkki / All	Further Work on CGWG Community Outreach events
4:00	CGWG Forest Plan Revision Subcommittee	Prinkki	Should the FPR Subcommittee hold separate meetings
4:30	July meeting plan	Prinkki	Agenda, location, homework
4:45	Close, if not sooner		

Attending:

John Prinkki

Jim Hart

Jeff Schmidt

Randy Weimer

Kerry White

Bill Wallace

Darcie Warden

Hilary Eisen

Ian Jones

Barb Cestero

Darold Zimmer

Mike Penfold

Bruce Reierson

Margo Magnant (by phone)

Earl Atwood

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Barb Beck, MT FWP

John Simmons, Beartooth Back Country Horsemen

John Jenkins, Beartooth Back Country Horsemen

Susan Newell, Pryors Coalition

Dick Walton, Pryors Coalition

Jim Sparks, BLM

Jerrie Bertolo, BLM

Mark Taylor, Pryors Coalition

Sally Cathey, Montana Wilderness Association

Dale Anderson, Our Montana

Corey Lewellen, USFS

Charlie Smillie, Montana Wilderness Association

Ken Coffin, USFS

Donnor Morrow, USFS intern

Kaitlin Wagner, USFS intern

Virginia Kelley, USFS

Matt Arno, DNRC

Matt Wolcott, DNRC

Clayton McCracken, Native Plan Society

John Bradley, Montana Wildlife Federation

Bernie Quechtenbach, Montana Wilderness Association

Meeting called to order by Chairman Prinkki at 1:00 pm. Special thanks are extended to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks for provision of meeting space at their Lake Elmo facility. Members and guests were called upon to introduce themselves and their affiliation.

Consent agenda was reviewed, with one correction noted by Kerry White. Darrold Zimmer moved approval as corrected, seconded by Bill Wallace. CARRIED

Membership: Bruce Reiersen, representing Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association explained to the group that his extensive travel has made it difficult to attend many of the CGWG meeting, and suggested that he be allowed to find an alternate representative from his organization to occupy the CGWG seat. John Prinkki agreed and requested they submit an application for the alternate member when that person was determined by the Association.

John Beaudry, Stillwater Mining Company has retired. Randy Weimer, SMC Environmental Manager has been identified by the company to succeed Mr. Beaudry on the CGWG. Bill Wallace moved approval to seat Randy Weimer, seconded by Kerry White. CARRIED

Wild and Scenic recommendations: Chairman Prinkki asked if there was any follow up to the Wild and Scenic discussion from past meetings. Jeff Schmidt suggested that early on the sense of the Group was that Wild and Scenic considerations have become much more involved than initially anticipated, and it would be advisable before we begin in earnest to develop any official position or comment that we wait until the Forest Service has completed its initial draft of Wild and Scenic recommendations are available for review before scheduling any detailed Group discussions on the topic. The Group indicated general agreement to his recommendation.

Pryors discussion: At member Mike Penfold's invitation a number of guests with special interests or concerns about access and management within the Pryor Mountains landscape were introduced and given the opportunity to offer their perspective. Organizations represented included the Montana Wilderness Association, Native Plant Society, the Pryors Coalition, Beartooth Back Country Horsemen, Our Montana, and the Montana Wildlife Federation. Position letters were offered by some, along with oral comments and slide presentations. Mike Penfold asked the Group to consider whether CGWG might be in a position to assist in developing consensus regarding some issues that have been points of contention. Chairman Prinkki reviewed the current projects and priorities that CGWG was currently engaged in, and suggested that Mike Penfold chair an ad-hoc subcommittee, with support from John Prinkki and Bruce Reiersen to meet off-line with the interested parties to come up with key concerns and potential priorities which could be communicated to the Forest Service and brought back to the Group for more formal consideration. Kerry White offered additional information regarding access to funds for assistance with weed management which were made available during the last legislative session that could be applied for now by one or more of these groups.

Wilderness recommendations: Barb Cestero, Wilderness Society, delivered a powerpoint presentation to provide additional information on the wilderness inventory and evaluation process in the context of the Forest Plan Revision, supported by additional comments and question/answer session led by Virginia Kelly. Kerry White requested that mineral resources be included in the inventory information collected by the Forest Service. He suggested that the Butte School of Mines might be available to do a presentation regarding mineral mapping. John Prinkki will look at time opportunity on future agendas before deciding.

North Bridger and Smith Shields Project: Corey Lewellan, USFS provided an update on the North Bridger (formerly referred to as the Bridger-Bangtails Farm Bill project). This project was initiated in 2015, but put on hold while resources were devoted to the North Hebgen project. It is now underway again, and the USFS is interested in whether/how the CGWG would like to collaborate on this project. Initial timeframe is by late July the silviculture information will be gathered, and some August field trips are expected. Beginning in September they hope to move into analysis which would be conducted over the winter months. By Spring, 2018 a project plan should be on the table for review. The majority of area affected is in Gallatin County, with a small slice in Park County. John Prinkki asked

members, particularly those from the project area to consider their interest and availability for committee work in support of the project. Barb Cestero also suggested another group to bring into the collaboration is the Bridger Canyon Property Owners Association.

A new District Ranger will begin in Bozeman on July 10th. His name is David Brinkmann.

Smith- Shields Project: John Prinkki asked the FS to elaborate on the status of this project, in particular the reason for delaying the release of contract(s) until 2018. Corey Lewellan indicated it was simply a matter of limited capacity within the CG staff to administer multiple projects concurrently.

Resilient Forest Act of 2014: John Prinkki asked for comment regarding the RFA/2014 which he had circulated for review prior to the meeting. Hilary Eisen advocated for the CGWG to endorse a budget increase for the Forest Service so that their lack of capacity isn't standing in the way of progress on regional projects. Eisen, Cestero and Penfold also commented that they see potential problems based on their review of the Act. The topic will be open for discussion at future meetings.

Forest Plan Revision: Virginia Kelly gave a quick update on the status of the FPR. John Prinkki alerted members on the FPR subcommittee that it may be time to resume sub-committee meetings in the early fall months.

Next meeting to be held in Bozeman on July 12th, location to be announced, with focus on review of FS Wilderness inventory and Wild and Scenic designations.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.