

Custer-Gallatin Working Group (CGWG) Meeting Minutes; March 9, 2022

Chairman John Prinkki convened the meeting at 1:30 pm. Members and guests in attendance (in person and virtually via Zoom):

John Prinkki	Corey Lewellen
Bill Bullock	Tim Love
Jeff Schmidt	Ken Coffin
Hilary Eisen	Sara Ghafari, AFRC
Colin Cooney	Earl Atwood
Steve Campbell	Mary Erickson
Kerry White	
Ryan Cruz	
Darcie Warden	
Barb Cestero	

Members and guests were introduced. Consent agenda was moved for approval, motion. Caldwell/Eisen. Approved

Ryan Cruz, Montana Conservation Associate with Greater Yellowstone Coalition is replacing Darcie Warden as their representative. Ryan will submit an application for formal acceptance at the next meeting.

John Prinkki advised the Group that Jim Hart has resigned from the Madison Co. Commission, and asked members to give consideration to naming another Commissioner to serve as Vice Chairman. This topic will be on for formal agenda for the June, 2022 quarterly meeting.

Custer Gallatin National Forest Updates Mary Erickson introduce her staff in attendance (Corey Lewellan, Ken Coffin). She updated the Group on the status to the final decision on the Forest Plan Revision. They have created a Forest Plan Summary, 16 pages (available on the Forest web site), to supplement the formal plan and decision, providing a convenient snapshot on the key features of the plan decision. Decision signed on January 28th. The process requires a 30 day suspension of the decision to allow for reconciliation of projects in various states of completion with the new plan before it takes full effect. A lawsuit has been filed with certain objections over new plan. It was discussed whether the CGWC may intervene in support of the plan, but concluded the situation was to premature to determine such an action.

Montana Forest Action Plan - Jeff Schmidt reported there has not been a meeting for a while but one is scheduled for later in March. Of the 14 project being planned, three (3) have been launched. There is still a considerable amount of funds available if additional project can be brought to a 'ready' stage. More info will be available after the meeting later this month.

Red Lodge Mountain Fuels Reduction project – John reported that he has been in contact with Ken Coffin, Red Lodge District Ranger concerning the projects to determine level of involvement that CGWG would entertain on the project, the result being a recommendation by John Prinkki to form a project subcommittee of CGWG to assist with community engagement and discussion with various area organizations which may be impacted by the work. The proposed committee would likely be active for six months or so. Ken Coffin added the FS is committed to proceeding with the project, although it is quite challenging due to terrain and low timber value. A decision is slated for the Fall of 2022, and would benefit from CGWG’s involvement to aid the community discussion.

Committee reports for South Otter Creek, Cooke City and East Gallatin: John indicated there may be a field trip in late Spring or early summer; environmental assessment likely to go out in May. Cooke City project will go out for scoping in the May timeframe with decision expected around May of 2023. A field trip is being discussed for this season, as well as other opportunities for community engagement. Kerry White and Corey Lewellan reported the East Gallatin team was proceeding with mapping and GIS work in April and May, with field trips expected for the summer. North Bridger is also under way, and Corey reports the work in the Bridger Range is largely done, with treatments in the Bangtails will be finished up when weather permit. Bozeman Municipal Watershed work is also proceeding, with about 2/3 of the work already completed. RY will be back in June to continue with treatments.

Bridger Mountain infrastructure development plan: No report

Next Meeting – June 8, 2022