

**RAVALLI COUNTY
COLLABORATIVE COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
May 11, 2026**

The Collaborative meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Acting Chairperson John Maciel.

A quorum for the Collaborative Committee requires at least eight members be present per the By Laws Amended from 10 to 8 January 13, 2020.

I. Roll Call

Members present: Skip Chisholm, Margaret Gorski (ZOOM), Larry Jakub, Kris Lee, George Maclean, John Maciel, Steve Schmidt, Dyrk Krueger, Wayne Rusk and Paige Boyer (10).

Also, present:

Erin Clark, Facilitator
Austin Pliley, County Forester
Teo Rautu, DNRC Forest Action Plan coordinator (ZOOM)
Steve Kimball, MFCN (ZOOM)
Thayer Jacques, DNRC
Stephen Kowal
Josh Smith, RCD (ZOOM)

Absent:

Jeff Burrows
Dan McConnell

II. Acceptance of Agenda and new items:

Margaret: Grant funding opportunity for facilitation and amicus brief for BR Front project, due by May 25, 2026.

John moved to support the DNRC grant submittal as requested. Seconded by Steve. All voted “aye” (10-0).

III. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: April 11, 2026

John moved to approve the April 11, 2026 RCC minutes as presented. Seconded by Skip. Public comment on motion: none. Discussion: none. All voted “aye” (10-0)

IV. UPDATES:

- Written updates from MT DNRC, MFCN.
- Ravalli County Update - absent

A) Public comment requirements

NEW BUSINESS:

V. Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) Presentation - Thayer Jacques, DNRC.

The GNA program was started per the 2014 Farm Bill, in order to help increase forest management on federal lands and use state processes and NEPA standards.

Big ticket items within agreement:

- Annual production of timber
- Input to forest service

MFCN – June 10th online GNA workshop.

VI. New RCC member recruitment

John explained the time line and one application was received; he asked RCC members to help with recruitment. If applicant gets interviewed and appointed by the BCC, the RCC will still have one position vacant.

ON GOING BUSINESS:

VII. Bitterroot Forest Planning

A) Brainstorming issues

Power point – Erin/Margaret via Lolo Forest Planning meeting (April 2026)

David Roblowski – BR Plan Leader, “in pre-assessment period”. UM has been contracted to perform the public process for the BR.

Steve: Suggest referring to one of the BR Front RCC letters which states how to collect public comment via broken up zones or subsections.

Skip: Slide #1 recommended wilderness – Selway Wilderness. The 17 dams in the wilderness and future problems they will have (menial to catastrophic). ADD Wilderness management plan TO public interest list.

Paige: There should be an on-line presence for the public.

Skip: Work Shop – open house concept.

Issue areas for consideration:

Paige: All recreation, fire management and timber production.

Larry: Start the process correctly: mechanics of planning process; what is process we will follow to approach forest planning. Come up with a vision and flush out the issues. Then prepare position statements on the issues. Work on strategy to get us started.

Steve: Agree with Larry. Vision statement is #1.

Skip: Old growth

George: Citizens Guide – the list is a good place to start. * Review of existing wilderness areas and the opportunity and need for additional wilderness designations • Determination of whether

the inventory is reasonably thorough and inclusive • Consideration of when areas with roads are included in the inventory • Determination of whether certain impacts on the land are “substantially noticeable” • Limitations on uses and management of an area recommended for wilderness designation to protect its wilderness characteristics • Consideration of public concerns about allowing, restricting, or prohibiting uses like motorized recreation in areas that may be recommended for wilderness • Consideration of other types of designations (besides wilderness) • Management of recreational opportunities • Consideration of fire suppression strategies and tactics in wilderness.

Dyrk: Active forest management; commercial timber value and sustainable recreation of all types; and water.

Kris: Water quality and quantity.

John: First RCC vision statement and include the public with their vision and include adaptability.

Steve: On line presence and website with user friendly learning tools. Habitat corridors.

Wayne: Access points for recreation, fire-fighting and habitat need to be improved and increased.

Margaret: Habitat connectivity, Wildland/recreation urban interface, water production, access, recreation plan, restoration (old growth)

Continue to June 2026 RCC meeting.

VIII. Public comment procedures - When public at RCC has comments on RCC projects.

Kris: If RCC has a website, that would allow for public comment.

Paige: RCC or via the County. Receive public comments in writing and have them distributed before the RCC meetings, based upon the RCC meeting agendas.

Steve: Is there a value to allow for public engagement/comment? What do we need to do to bring the public along? A website would be great – referred to Fire in the Root website. Google would host and help build a website (sites.google.com) for free and we could create a Gmail email address for free as well. This would allow the public to access us and we could share things with the public.

John: Add public comments at the beginning of the agenda.

Skip: Offer public comment at the beginning and at the end of the agendas.

Margaret: OK with moving public comment to beginning but we need rules; do not have a beginning and end.

BREAK: 7:51 PM to 8:05 PM

Choices:

Verbal comment at both beginning and end: mostly thumbs down.

Written comments at beginning and verbal at the end: mostly thumbs down.

Verbal at the beginning: mixed bag.

Verbal comments at the end: thumbs down.

Continue to June 2026 RCC agenda to consider other options:

- The why
- Chairperson's discretion

ONGOING BUSINESS:

IX. Coal Creek Project

A) Summer field trip

Margaret: Spoke with David Fox. He urged us to have field trip sooner than later. Suggested towards the end of June. This could be a chance for the RCC to have an interactive meeting with Forest Service ID team. Erin to put out a doodle poll. Continue to June 2026 RCC meeting.

X. RCC website – see above; Continue to June 2026 RCC meeting

A) County support

B) Facebook page

XI. Agenda topics for June meeting

May 2026 RCC draft minutes

Mike Burnside, Sheep Creek project educate RCC on process (retired FS minerals expert)

David Fox – FS Update of the Forest Plan process

Bitterroot Forest Planning – continued from May 11, 2026

Public comment – other options to consider – continued from May 11, 2026

Website – continued from May 11, 2026

XII. Public Comment:

Stephen Kowal: Public comment and website – determine what your goals are. If agendas are posted, public comment should be at the beginning of the agenda. If agendas are not posted, no public comment.

Austin Pliley: Purpose of RCC public comment is unclear.

Next RCC meeting is Monday, June 8, 2026

XIII. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM