

# Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group

## Meeting Minutes/Agenda Jan 3, 2024

**Location & Time:** Butte Archives, 17 W. Quartz, Butte, America @ 1 PM MST.

Attendees: Steve Kimball, Dan Allhands, Brett Slaughter-Daines, Aaron Knudson, Cindy Perdue-Dolan, Dan Sager, Tom Rice, Vaia Errett, Dan Hagerty, Chris Marchion, Joe Kambic, Sean Steinebach, Sally Shrank, Jamie Trivette, Carol Hatfield, Megan Mallowney (USFS), Cat McRea, Leonard Wortman, Cory Kirsch, Tom Grimsrud, James Everett

Voting members: Dan Hagerty, Chris Marchion, Joe Kambic, Vaia Errett, Tom Rice, Dan Sager, Sally Shrank, Dan Allhands, Sean Steinebach, Leonard Wortman, Kerry White (11)

### **AGENDA:**

#### **1:00** Organizational Updates and SOPA Review

Start – 1:04 PM

Apply to MFCN Workshops in April – app due in February

#### **1:35** Previous Meeting Minutes Reading and Approval

Moved to approve – Sagar, Second – Kambic – approved 9 to 0 (revised Cindy Perdue-Dolan's last name)

#### **1:40** Financial Report

- Available balance: \$  
(\$4,047 of LGA (23-004) funding housed in Powell Co. and \$0 of MFCN ('23) funding housed with MWCC)
  - Expenses: Oct – Dec 2023 Facilitation -\$2,250 (LGA)
  - Pending:
  - Income:
- MFCN Grant Request - Due Jan 22, 2024
- LGA Grant Reporting – Due Jan 31, 2024

#### **1:45** Group funding opportunities and uses of funding

Discussion about BLM/USFS RAC funding.

Steve Kimball discussed funding opportunities from MFCN and DNRC. Referred to USFS/BLM funding opportunities.

Question for the group – what role does the BDWG want to play in bringing dollars to the group. Collaboratives can facilitate projects and grant requests. Could connect private land owners with agencies/NGO's to facilitate projects and grant funding.

**\*\*\*Public Comment Statement:** The Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group prohibit discrimination in our programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital and family status. The public is encouraged to provide comments to the BDWG at the times listed on the agenda. Please limit public comment to 3:00 minutes per person.

Marchion – Only 8% of the BDNF is within timber harvest areas. 92% of the forest is at risk for burning. If we want to be serious about controlling fire risk, we have to have some controlled burns. Don't have enough information to really understand how to engage in helping the BDNF control fire risks. BDWG needs to advocate for more fire management on the BDNF

Aaron Knudson – agrees with Chris Marchion. Carol Hill-Badger Pass Project – collaborating with DNRC and TNC to get fire mitigation/controlled burning done. Trying to improve collaboration to get these types of projects done.

Kimball – think about how you can use grants to fund projects that connect landowners and agencies for landscape-scale wildfire mitigation efforts.

Hatfield – NRCS EQUIP program can be used for fire mitigation efforts on private lands.

Perdue-Dolan – several collaboratives have concerns about the amount of staff required to handle the projects and amount of funding that has gone to federal agencies. Collaboratives can help dictate how that funding is spent in order to get meaningful wildfire mitigation projects done. Getting from the funding to “boots on the ground” is the gap where collaboratives can be highly effective.

Marchion – we should advocate for technical expertise on forests regarding wildfire mitigation.

Steinebach – controlled burns still require NEPA. Pre-treating acreage with timber harvest before prescribed fires makes sense. Mark Finney would be a great speaker for the group.

Kimball – the BDWG dabbled in wildfire risk work with the Basin Creek-Butte Watershed Project, which makes a good template for the group to utilize to engage the BDNF with wildfire mitigation.

Megan – BDNF now has two fuels planners (north and south) thanks to Carol Hatfield and Lisa Timchack's efforts. Need to start looking several years out for projects. Also considering a forest-wide fuels reduction/prescribed burning NEPA project.

Hatfield – Lots of wildfire mitigation work occurring. It's a matter of getting groups together to pursue cross-boundary projects. Proposed a sub-committee be created to start working on these sorts of projects. Need more outreach to private landowners and Tribal entities. This group could be instrumental in this process. Implementation is the issue right now, not funding. 40% of USFS fire positions are vacant across the nation. Aaron Knudson discussed several vacancies he has in fire positions – lots of difficulty filling those positions.

Marchion – question about engaging Anaconda Job Corps to fill fire positions.

Sager – Prison fire crew is an option for wildfire mitigation work.

### **2:15 Public Comment\*\*\***

### **2:25 Supervisor's Office and Dillon Ranger Dist. Update**

Dillon Ranger District, Aaron Knudson – new frontliner and admin assistant, fire hire and temp hiring.

Fire and Fuels – updating burn plans and hoping to get some burning done if the weather holds.

**\*\*\*Public Comment Statement:** The Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group prohibit discrimination in our programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital and family status. The public is encouraged to provide comments to the BDWG at the times listed on the agenda. Please limit public comment to 3:00 minutes per person.

Range – had a good meeting with Beaverhead Co to discuss weed abatement treatments.

Wildlife – Carol Hill/Badger Pass Project is a big push currently. Important for wildlife habitat connectivity. Working with DNRC, TNC, and private landowners on collaboration.

Supervisor's Office, Carol Hatfield – Travel management Planning is still in the works. Lisa Timchak will retire in April. Her position will be flown this month. RAC charter has been signed and will be soliciting membership shortly. Trying to finalize a 5-yr program of work. Trying to finalize where they will get timber and fuels targets, struggling with timber currently. About to sign Selway-Saginaw Project. Utility corridor permits have all expired across BDNF. Utility companies are hesitant to accept the new terms of the permits. Need to reduce fuels and wildfire risk surrounding utility corridors. Pre-planning for the forest management plan begins in 2026 (last was 2009) – hoping to have Travel Management done by then. Scoping for Travel Management likely will go out in March.

Kerry White – will wolverine listing impact travel management? Answer is no, because it is still early enough in the project.

### **3:00 Break**

### **3:10 Enforcement Issues Activity and Discussion**

Scholz couldn't be here. Just had to leave. But job announcements just came out.

Errett – Big problem forest-wide. Efforts are being made.

Wortman – Echoes Errett's frustration. Enforcement has always been an issue and has always been "pushed to the back"

Sheriff Tom Grimsrud (and undersheriff James Everett) – Lake Delmo is an "enforcement/safety nightmare". Transients have become a big problem. Had 96 calls in Delmo Lake last year. Armed assaults, drug trafficking, and theft are huge problems. The question is, how do we "take Delmo Lake" back? Local counties do not have enough resources. Officer safety is a huge issue due to weapons, mental health issues, and drugs being involved in law enforcement encounters. Whatever we can do as a county, we will do.

Perdue-Dolan – how many folks are you talking about? Answer: changes at times, but a lot. You can see several tents just off I-90 over Homestake Pass.

Kambic – how much of your resources are dedicated to UTV accident response around Pipestone. Answer: Commit a lot of EMS time and resources.

Errett – businesses that rent OHV's and other motorized equipment are significantly contributing to enforcement issues in Pipestone/Delmo Area. These businesses are attracting national visitation and recreation with folks who are less knowledgeable about the area, safety, and rules.

Steinebach – any other opportunities for improvement? Not going to add enough LEO's. Answer: closing this area to motorized has to happen. Controlling access and enforcing penalties for violating access rules is critical.

**\*\*\*Public Comment Statement:** The Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group prohibit discrimination in our programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital and family status. The public is encouraged to provide comments to the BDWG at the times listed on the agenda. Please limit public comment to 3:00 minutes per person.

Knudson – Two prevention technicians positions just opened. Will have a presence in the Forest, but are unarmed and only intervene in certain situations. Goal is to get a technician on every district.

### **3:45 BDNF presentation and Q &A - Guide and Outfitter EA Project**

Megan – Project was started in 2018. Scoped in Jan 2020, but not a lot in the proposed action at the time. Draft EA was released for comment in Feb 2022. It was determined that the initial draft EA was not written appropriately. So, second draft came out in Nov 2023. 33,416 service days from 13,175 service days. A service day is any part of a day on the forest and each user uses one day each day they access. The main driver behind doing this was to recognize and adapt to the change of user types and groups – not necessarily fishing and hunting users. Very difficult to revoke a user permit. There is a 2 yr probationary period for the 10 yr permit. However, once a permit holder makes it past the 2 yr probationary period, they will be issued a new permit every 10 years in perpetuity. Hoping to get a draft EA done and out for comment by April 2024. If there is a competitive interest, issuing officer and request proposals for permits, and then choose one permit holder based on a competitive process. 30-day comment period was for objection standing, but the plan can be revised over time and additional comments can be taken and considered.

### **4:35 New Membership and Co-chair Discussion and Vote**

Cindy Perdue-Dolan expressed concern regarding closing the meeting during membership discussion. Meeting attendees were allowed to stay for Kerry White's Q&A session.

Angela Smith couldn't attend today but is interested in joining the group.

Kerry White addressed the group and applied for membership. Could serve as Motorized, Mining, or Agricultural position.

Wortman motioned and Sager seconded – Vote: unanimous yes.

Errett for co-chair. Sager motioned, Kambic second – Vote: unanimous yes.

### **4:55 Closing thoughts/call for agenda items**

Mark Finney (sp?) presentation on fire impacts to forested landscapes?

Nick Scholz for next meeting – need to follow-up on his email.

Need to review operations manual in Feb – may want to add language about removing problematic group members.

Membership – need to notify Kerry that he is in the group representing.... And resend onboarding email to Angela

### **5:00 Adjourn**

**Next Meetings:** Feb 7 ('24), Mar 6 ('24), Apr 3 ('24)

**\*\*\*Public Comment Statement:** The Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group prohibit discrimination in our programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital and family status. The public is encouraged to provide comments to the BDWG at the times listed on the agenda. Please limit public comment to 3:00 minutes per person.

| <b><u>Interest Group</u></b> | <b><u>Representative</u></b>                                  | <b><u>Professional Affiliation</u></b>                       | <b><u>Email</u></b>                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Timber</b>                | Sean Steinebach                                               | Sun Mountain Lumber                                          | sean.steinebach@sunmtnlumber.com                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Co. Commish – N</b>       | Dan Sager                                                     | Powell County                                                | dsager@powellcountymt.gov                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Co. Commish – S</b>       | Tom Rice<br>Dan Allhands<br>Dan Hagerty                       | Beaverhead County<br>Madison County<br>Jefferson County      | trice@beaverheadcounty.org<br><a href="mailto:dallhands@madisoncountymt.gov">dallhands@madisoncountymt.gov</a><br>dhagerty@jeffersoncounty-mt.gov                                 |
| <b>Ag/Ranch</b>              | Empty                                                         |                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Quite Rec</b>             | Empty                                                         |                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Motorized Rec</b>         | Empty                                                         |                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Conservation/NGO</b>      | Empty                                                         |                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Hunting</b>               | Joe Kambic                                                    | MT Fish, Wildlife, & Parks                                   | jkambic@mt.gov                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Fishing</b>               | Empty                                                         |                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Comm. Outfitters</b>      | Empty                                                         |                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Mining</b>                | Empty                                                         |                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>At Large</b>              | Chris Marchion<br>Maureen Conner<br>Jim Keenan<br>Vaia Errett | Anaconda Sportsman<br>Citizen<br>Butte-Silver Bow<br>Citizen | cjmarchion@outlook.com<br><a href="mailto:fatponyfarm@gmail.com">fatponyfarm@gmail.com</a><br><a href="mailto:jkeenan@bsb.mt.gov">jkeenan@bsb.mt.gov</a><br>vaia.errett@gmail.com |

**\*\*\*Public Comment Statement:** The Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group prohibit discrimination in our programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital and family status. The public is encouraged to provide comments to the BDWG at the times listed on the agenda. Please limit public comment to 3:00 minutes per person.

**\*\*\*Public Comment Statement:** The Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group prohibit discrimination in our programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital and family status. The public is encouraged to provide comments to the BDWG at the times listed on the agenda. Please limit public comment to 3:00 minutes per person.