

## Beaverhead County Collaborative meeting notes

February 17, 2022

Borden's Hotel, Whitehall MT

### Attendees

#### Members

Colin Cooney, Jeff Welborn, Jeff Johnson, Byron Martinell, Zach Owen, Barb Cestero, Emily Cleveland, Alec Underwood, Parke Scott, Scott Laird, Ken Walsh, Sean Steinebach, Tom Rice, Jack Kirkley, Chris Edgington

#### Agency

Jamie Tripp (FS), Katie Stevens (BLM), Amanda James (BLM)

#### Guests

Tim Love (MFCN), Steve Kimball (DNRC), Karen Filipovich (facilitator candidate), Arica Crootof (facilitator candidate)

### Administrative

- Colin updated group on the response received from the CSKT and Shoshone Bannock tribes, including the letter from the CSKT. Barb offered to help coordinate with the CSKT and Colin will send an invite to Mike Durglo, Head of the Tribal Preservation Department at CSKT to join our next meeting.
- Arica Crootof and Karen Filipovich joined the meeting and spoke about themselves and what they could bring to the group as facilitators, (see the meeting agenda for their bios). The steering committee will discuss these candidates and send our recommendations to the whole group.
- Tim Love discussed how the BCC could join the Montana Forest Collaboration Network by submitting an Affirmation document to the MFCN. There is no fee to join, it gives the BCC even more credibility as a group and the MFCN is a great resource for collaborative efforts. Jeff Johnson motioned to submit that Affirmation document, seconded by Zach and the group supported in unanimously. Colin will submit that document to the MFCN.
- Additionally, Tim talked about the 2022 MFCN Collaborative Forest Planning Support grant application. This is a funding opportunity for collaborative groups to receive up to \$5,000 for their work and work that advances the Montana Forest Action Plan. Colin will be submitting that grant application before the deadline on Feb 28.
- Sean Steinebach from Sun Mountain Lumber asked to formally join the group and fill the wood products seat. Tom Rice moved with Scott Laird seconding; group voted to approve unanimously.

### Main meeting topics

#### Hidden Pasture WSA and BLM recommendations

- The group started by going over and discussing the original reasons the BLM designated and then recommended for release the Hidden Pastures WSA.
  - Reasons for designation in the wilderness inventory conducted from 1978 to 1980 was (1) appears primarily natural, (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation, (3) 5,000+ acres, (4) other special features or resources.

- It was found that Hidden Pastures did meet the minimum requirements for Wilderness designation, however it was not recommended because it was determined that it did not possess the characteristics and quality that would enhance the National Wilderness Preservation System. Additionally, substantial enforcement resources would be required to police hunting season and motorized users if it was a wilderness area due to the lack of physical barriers.
- The group discussed the need to create more maps that contain more values in the Big Sheep Creek watershed. Jeff Johnson was going to talk to the BLM about maps that show infrastructure.
- The group can look into producing hard copy maps or we have the ability to use GIS maps and layers that are on shared data bases. **Please think of values and ideas you would like to see mapped in addition to what we already have.**
- The group looked at the Hidden Pastures area and what other designations and recommendations it has IF the WSA was to be released, these recommendations come from the [2009 BLM RMP](#), pages 137 and 175
  - According to the RMP, if the WSA was outright released management would fall back to general range land management with certain stipulations. This management practices would include:
    - Semi-Primitive non-motorized recreation
    - VRM Class III
    - Land Adjustment Category 2
    - Locatable oil, gas and minerals
    - The Muddy Creek ACEC would still be designated to protect cultural values
    - Timing limitations for industrial activities in sage grouse areas
    - No Surface Occupancy (NSO) in Hidden Pastures due to core big horn habitat
    - Timing limitations for big game winter range, spring range and calving areas
    - NSO allowed within ½ mile from centerline of streams containing cutthroat.
- Katie Stevens, Western BLM District lead, joining to discuss different designations both administrative and legislative.
  - Administrative
    - [ACEC- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern](#)
    - SRMA- Special Recreation Management Areas- *The BLM's land use plans may designate SRMAs to provide specific for recreational opportunities, such as developing trailhead areas for hikers, mountain bikers, or off-road vehicle users.*
    - ERMA- Extensive Recreation Management Areas- *Designation on BLM-administered lands that require specific management consideration in order to address recreation use and demand. The ERMAs are managed to support and sustain the principal recreation activities and associated qualities and conditions*
    - BCA-[Backcountry Conservation Areas](#)
  - Congressional designation
    - Wilderness
    - National Monuments
    - [National Conservation Areas](#)

- It was pointed out that each one of the administrative designations and the National Conservation Areas designations can be fashioned to fit the area they are being designated in. Grazing, logging, motorized use can still be allowed if it is stipulated that way.
- Amanda James, Director of the Dillon BLM Field Office, joined the call and discussed the Dillon BLM RMP evaluation currently in process. The Dillon office is accepting public comments, not formally part of NEPA, on what the BLM should focus on in their evaluation, what areas of the RMP need to be amended or updated. This public comment period is open until March 9<sup>th</sup> and the group agreed we should submit a one pager on the work we are doing, focusing on the Big Sheep Creek watershed and Hidden Pastures and how the BLM could incorporate our work in the evaluation. The Steering Committee will discuss these comments and work on a draft to circulate to the group.
- We ran out of time and were unable to get to the last agenda item on which was the Elevator Pitch – what is the purpose and desired outcome of the Collaborative? Developing clear description for future outreach work. This will be one of the main topics of our next meeting, please come prepared with ideas.