

**Beaverhead County Collaborative
Notes
Work Session
November 21, 2024
1:00 pm-3:30pm
Virtual on Zoom**

Attending: Tom Welch, HD 72 , Zach Owen, Beaverhead CD, Jeff Wellborn, SD 36, Barb Cestero, The Wilderness Society, Jim Berkey, The Nature Conservancy, Jack Kirkley, quiet recreation, Ryan Chapin, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Jeff Lukas, Trout Unlimited, Craig Blubaugh, Sun Mountain Lumber.

Advisory: Steve Kimbal, MFCN

Public: Kerry White, Center for Balanced Use

Proxies: Jeff Wellborn for Rep. Walsh; Barb Cestero for Jeff Johnson

1:10: Review and Updates

• October Notes

One question on the Beaverhead Outdoors Association. The seat representation is “citizen at large. Could we clarify that the “Beaverhead Outdoors Association” is not the representative, since it is not an organizational seat? Additionally, it would be helpful to clarify this in the future.

The change requested was:

“Note: Gene Loder is representative of the citizen at large seat. He noted that he is the head of the Beaverhead Outdoors Association.”

With this change, Zach Owen moved to approve. Jim Berkey seconded. All accepted with the change and the notes were finalized with full approval.

• Budget Update

The budget has all the member donations are in the budget. As always, almost all the expenses are for meeting facilitation.

Other funding from DNRC - \$2,000 is set aside for meeting, travel and outreach. Mileage reimbursement. Zach Owen has requested that the funding allocation is change to facilitation. DNRC ends next February and MFCN - ends at the end of the year.

• Events and announcements

New People for Existing Organizational Representation:

- Ryan Chapin, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. He is taking over Scott Laird's role. The main objective of TRCP is to advocate for hunters and anglers on public lands. Represents hunters and some things that are. Will approach this and keep open and assist the effort.
- Jeff Lukas, Trout Unlimited: Fill Colin Cooney's role. Is interested in communications and feels that BCC can do some more work on public documents and messaging. TU is made up of problem-solvers and doers. It is about supporting agriculture, as well as fisheries.

October Montana Forest Network Collaborative Conference: Steve Kimball:

- Discussion about collaboration and change. Summary notes will be coming out soon. A lot of transition and a lot of change with the agencies. Partnership agreements with the groups.
- All over, collaborative groups are regrouping and are reducing numbers to become the core group. There is a difference in how the groups are seeing themselves and their missions.
- Forest Service and changes in the timber industry - reductions and difficulty in finding staff loggers and there are implications for what we can do on the ground to develop wood products. Restoration is dropping and there may be limited options for commercial products.
- Ryan Chapin: Breakout groups. DNRC is updating their MT Forest Action Plan - might be opportunities to talk about forest health, forest thinning.
- It was noted that Bell Lime Kiln might be an area for pursuing management.
- MFCN - 2 webinars - Dec. 9, noon on expanding the use of prescribed fire in Montana. Dec. 17 10am - what can we learn from Forest litigation to design better projects. Will explain forest court ruling in Montana and explain to groups that is possible to learn.

Southwest Montana Multi-Area Package - communications

Improving Communications on the BCC and the Southwest Montana Multi-Area Package:

- Internal Information so all BCC members can accurately explain the entire package. The following items need further development:
 - Purpose on our initial package. There needs to be a better clarity on all the public outreach and what happened when.
 - Common language and terms. Want to make sure that people understand what the package is, so they are informed.
- Maps:
 - Before and after maps with the side by side and help someone who is coming - recommending that each area has the labels and make them easy to read.
 - The Wilderness Society may have the capacity to create more maps, but need to see if that is possible. If not, the group needs to think about other options.

Communicating with the Public:

- Communicating with the Public:
 - Simplify the existing handout.
 - Have maps that explain changes from the *status quo* more clearly
 - Outreach plan is needed and other groups and individuals for each stakeholder that can reach out.
 - Need to help each BCC member so it is clear how each member communicates with their stakeholder groups and others in the community. The leadership team is set up as the first point of contact, so there is a need for more information about how each member contributes to ensure that those communications are accurate and have enough support provided.
 - Want help to ensure that written pieces for newsletters and other communications accurately reflect the package information. For now, communications group will look at any that come up.
 - Jeff Johnson met with the regional Stockholders group and a resolution will go to the state Stockgrowers. He was not able to attend this BCC meeting and will give more of an update in the future.
- Communicating with Commission, other Decisionmakers:
 - Some discussion about when to go to the County Commissioners.
 - Spoke to the advice that the group is fully able to discuss the package.
 - It was suggested that presenting to smaller groups and talking with landowners and residents first would be helpful.

Tasks:

Task: Communications sub-group will work on maps, internal FAQ, and an outreach plan. They will bring these to the group at the December meeting.

Task: Zach Owen and Karen Filipovich will take a look at the folder structure and files in the shared drive to clean up where things are so it is easier to find everything.

Task: Zach Owen will look into whether the website page can be updated or more information added to help the public understand the BCC and the package.

Beaverhead County Collaborative Transitions

The group is looking at several transitions coming up. In addition, the group has learned that the charter might provide more direction on how to ensure that a broadly representative group interested in collaboration continues to work together.

Several issues were discussed. These included:

- Several legislators are termed out with replacements coming. The session will make it difficult for new legislators to immediately get up to speed and participate in the BCC. It would be valuable to have them participate as their interests and capacity allows, but that will take a while.
- Current legislative representatives have taken considerable time to learn the issues and contribute to the collaborative process. It would be useful to keep them on in some

capacity, but it is likely that some adaptation and change in how membership is characterized.

- It may make sense to check in with existing members to see if their representation has changed, and how that might be addressed.
- Clearly onboarding and offboarding procedures might be useful to ensure that each member understands the group process, agrees to collaborative norms (such as agreeing that they will not unilaterally object to options such as timber harvesting or wilderness designation). Vetting and education appear to be components that could be developed further.
- As the group looks to new areas, how new landowners and any other stakeholders would be found. The BCC has consistently said that local landowner representation is essential, and no landowner knows all the areas in Beaverhead County.
- The leadership team has a vacancy and the group needs to think about who has capacity to keep that steering function going.

Jack Kirkley brought some draft language to help address transitions. Barb Cestero also agreed to share Charter language from other collaboratives to help the group decide on the best clarifications.

Task: Gather options for charter changes and discuss at the next meeting. (Barb Cestero, Karen Filipovich)

Task: Think about options to ensure group keeps existing expertise and continues to transition members to the BCC.

Location of the BCC Meetings.

Discussion around whether to shift meetings to Dillon was discussed.

- There may be value in holding it in Dillon. The members who travel for the meetings said they would be willing to travel further to meet in Dillon.
- The group still wants a hybrid option and virtual as needed for weather.

Task: Jack Kirkley said he would see if there is a free option available at UM Western. If so, the new meeting location will be announced.

- Still affiliated with the University. Can meet at UW Dillon - might be able to find free space. Jack Kirkley would investigate it.
- Also a lot of work this point forward and more virtual too? And if a place to meet, JW can always bring people in to do hybrid too.
- Zoom in to there.

Questions, Concerns, and Public Comment

Kerry White: No comment at this time.

3:30: Adjourn

Next Meeting - December 19, 2024. Dillon location