

## Beaverhead County Collaborative

### Notes

May 19, 2022

1:00pm-3:30

Whitehall and [Zoom](#)

**Voting Members Attending:** Sen. Tom Wellborn; Jack Kirkley, Jeff Johnson, Byron Martinell, Colin Cooney, Scott Laird, Alec Underwood, Aubrey Bertram, Parke Scott

**Others Attending:** Gene Loder, Beaverhead Outdoors Club; Mitch Staley, resident

**Notes and Facilitation:** Karen Filipovich

### Detailed Notes

#### Summary of Actions

**Action:** This topic of filling the final seat and potentially modifying the charter will be brought up again at the next meeting. Please think about options.

**Action:** For members who are coming on your own dime and not paid by work. Please submit a travel stipend request to Zach Owen at the Beaverhead CD ([zach@beaverheadwatershed.org](mailto:zach@beaverheadwatershed.org)). Reimbursements are for \$.50/mile.

**Action:** Jeff Johnson, County to talk to see if an update of that line around agricultural infrastructure could be redrawn for further consideration

**Action:** Those absent review this Right of Way proposal. If there are further questions, please contact Karen Filipovich ahead of the next meeting if possible. (page 4 in notes)

**Action:** Colin, others contact MT Tech, BLM or other experts to find and share information on mining potential

**Action:** All review Appendix Q on mining and be prepared with ideas and any further questions on potential management and any issues that might affect *status quo* uses.

#### Non-motorized recreation seat

Gene Loder and the Beaverhead Outdoors is more of a representative for motorized travel, but is interested in the process.

At the same time, finding a quiet recreation representative for the open seat is still ongoing. Jack Kirkley sent an inquiry to Charlie O'Leary of Backcountry Horseman but hasn't heard back. Jeff Johnson could contact Jamie Holdfield from the same organization. Barb Cestero wrote that her contact at the SW Mountain Bike association was out of date, but would follow up to see if another could be found.

There was concern voiced that getting up to speed could take significant time at this point.

There were also questions about whether changing the charter was an option or desirable. There was a concern voiced that this could set a precedent.

Several ideas were brought up as potential options:

- Have Parke Scott and Gene Loder have one vote combined for motorized recreation and swap off meetings or jointly represent this seat
- Have Gene Loder be voted in as the citizen at large seat and have Jack Kirby move to the quiet recreation seat. Kirby indicated he would be open to that idea.
- Find another quiet recreation representative
- Change the charter in some way to allow Parke Scott and Gene Loder to both serve

There was not a quorum present.

**Action:** This topic of filling the final seat and potentially modifying the charter will be brought up again at the next meeting. Please think about options.

### **Budget**

There has been no change in the budget since last month.

**Action:** For members who are coming on your own dime and not paid by work. Please submit a travel stipend request to Zach Owen at the Beaverhead CD ([zach@beaverheadwatershed.org](mailto:zach@beaverheadwatershed.org)). Reimbursements are for \$.50/mile.

### **Hidden Pasture Discussion**

Several questions had been raised in the April meeting. Between meetings, several BCC members found information to share with the group.

### Fire Management:

- Access to fight fires is in Wilderness Act - can fight fires in the most restrictive land use designation, allowing things like chainsaws and helicopter work.
- The Backcountry Conservation Area could spell out fire management and manage according to best practices, including mechanical fire fighting and back burns.
- Nothing precludes fire management and fuel loads management in Appendix Q.

### Backcountry Conservation Areas:

- In the BCA, the group put in the narrative the intent that we don't want to restrict normal operation by livestock or water or firefighting operations. Can do things like weed control, emergency access and land managers.
- Activities this group has identified does not preclude restoration activities like forest health, weed, grazing management. Just ID's an area that are special places.
- Fire management and fuel reduction activities can be explicitly included, with management under BLM management practices

- Jeff Johnson summarized the discussion some members had with Pat Fosse at the BLM office. For the BLM, the backcountry designation and management in Appendix are modern ways to be flexible about what they can do, given the rules that the BLM plays with. They got information on grazing, and fire fighting and this does have flexibility. The only other way to do it is to go through an RMP (Resource Management Plan). BLM does their RMP and it is a route, but in order to the RMP, it takes a lot of man hours and this area is on schedule. If they get sued, they win because they have it in place. The current RMP is from 2006, but BCA was added in 2018 as a quicker approach for specific areas.
- Pat Fosse suggested this is the tool for this group and its aims
- Alec Underwood (MT Wildlife Federation) supports BCA designations. They are designed to be fairly flexible in nature. Alec has supported that and is comfortable.
- Aubrey Bertram (Wild Montana) - very flexible tool and place-based tool, so wildlife is important.
- There was a question on whether current activities would be allowed to continue. Scott says it is allowed to continue if it's in Appendix Q. Setting the management terms is important so management intent is clear.
- In the instructional information about the BCS, everything from roads and access to fuel reduction and increasing forage is allowed. BLM designated toolkit. BLM/Forest Service brought that.
- Forest Service has used the term on BCA too, though it isn't official - a couple of BCAs in the Custer-Gallatin Forest.

#### Appendix Q:

There were several considerations brought up and discussed that pertain to specific provisions in Appendix Q.

What to include in a BCA vs. pulling out and managing according to something like the current underlying Appendix Q.

It was noted that BCA or anything else still requires a Congressional change and changing from WSA status

#### Maps with Potential Minor Boundary Changes:

- Commissioner Rice and Beaverhead County provided some maps with ideas of possible boundary changes that could alleviate some of the concerns raised around use with the current boundaries.
- Sheep Creek Road Area
  - Would move all major access - road, fiber, power line out of BCA area (and current WSA boundary)
  - Setback varies, but tried to find a steep slope where possible to change in management would not likely affect use

- Muddy Creek Road: - There was a question on whether this access needs any change. It appears that answer is no change is needed
- Farmed area - Jeff Johnson adjacent land:
  - Need to work further on proposed boundary changes. The way the line was drawn on this map still has some irrigation infrastructure and part of the private road in the BCA. It may make more sense to move that line slightly out to avoid that infrastructure or perhaps draw it straight across as Scott did in his initial ideas that were brought in April

Quarry Rock:

- Angular rock: There is some good rock, particularly in the area of the old quarry. According to BLM, the quarry was shut down for safety issues. It could be done safely, it could be open. Sandstone rock is pretty good rock.
- It appears most of this is out of the minor boundary change.
- **Action:** Jeff Johnson, County to talk to see if an update of that line around agricultural infrastructure could be redrawn for further consideration

Appendix Q Right of Way Discussion:

Right of Way Discussion:

The group then moved to considering what kind of Right of Way would be most appropriate for a BCA managed area:

- There were questions about any future need to run major power lines or development through the area. The answer appears to be no since parcels have conservation easements. Sen. Wellborn has one piece of property that could be further developed, but major siting issues did not appear to be a factor.

There was a proposal for this ROW formulation for management:

- Minor Right of Way: Allowed where it supports existing character and uses. This would include minor power lines, stock water access and continued use and maintenance of existing county roads
- Major Right of Way: Not allowed in the area. There would be no major transmission lines, pipelines or other ROW changes that would make major differences in the character and use. These would be excluded

All present agreed that these are acceptable.

**Action:** Those absent review this Right of Way proposal. If there are further questions, please contact Karen Filipovich ahead of the next meeting if possible.

#### Mining Discussion:

- Several members present had questions about the types of mining that might be allowed or disallowed. There are several classes of mining in Appendix Q and a decision can be made on each
- Would it be possible to get a geologic map of the area?
- Is there any information on mining potential in the area?
- **Action:** Colin, others contact MT Tech, BLM or other experts to find and share information on mining potential
- **Action:** All review Appendix Q on mining and be prepared with ideas and any further questions on potential management and any issues that might affect *status quo* uses.

#### Further Questions and Public Comment:

Public Comment: Mitch Staley, Beaverhead County Resident: Interested in process and would like to know more about process and encourage more public engagement as the group moves forward. Asked why meetings are not held in Beaverhead County. The answer is that the first two were, but Whitehall is a more central location between all the voting members. He also indicated he thought the idea of shifting representation in seats sounded reasonable. Finally, he thought a Minerals Inventory might have some of the information the group was looking for.

Some members also liked the idea of thinking more about public engagement and suggested it as a future meeting topic.

**The next meeting is June 16. Meetings are 1-3:30, the third Thursday of each month.**