

**Custer-Gallatin Working Group (CGWG)**  
**Meeting MINUTES;**  
**Wednesday, September 9, 2020**  
(Virtual meeting)

Time	Topic	Lead	Outcomes
	<b>Opening:</b> Introductions; Review Agenda, Meeting materials	Prinkki/Atwood	Welcome, introductions, agenda reviewed
Attendance:			
John Prinkki	Steve Caldwell		Earl Atwood
Hilary Eisen	Joe Skinner		Mary Erickson
Colin Cooney	Darcie Warden		Stephen Kimball
Randy Weimer	Jim Hart		Virginia Kelly
Barb Cestero	Jackie Walden		Kathy Minor
Bill Bullock			
<b>Consent Agenda:</b>	Past Minutes and Financial report/disbursements	Prinkki/Atwood	Vote on consent agenda items
Steve Campbell moved approval of consent agenda items, seconded by Hilary Eisen. APPROVED			
<b>Membership</b>		Prinkki/Atwood	Discuss membership application Powder River and Rosebud County Commissioners, Lee Randall and Ed Joiner respectfully
John Prinkki opened discussion with updates on new County Commission members from Rosebud and Powder River Counties Lee Randall and Ed Joiner. Open seats were reviewed along with options for recruitment to fill those, as well as outreach to Tribes for appointment of a representative(s).			
<b>Tribal Representation</b>		Prinkki/Atwood /Eisen	Draft letter
Darcie Warden presented a draft outreach letter to the Tribes for consideration. John will make contacts before the December meeting.			
<b>Report on Montana Forest Action Committee priorities</b>		Schmidt/Warden	MFAC recent events, priorities and actions
Darcie reported that the MFAC will soon release its proposed actions in a letter within a week or two. Final comments from MFAC members on the topic are being taken until the end of this week. Public comments will be taken on the letter through October 24 <sup>th</sup> , with final plan release expected in November. The final action plan is coming along well, focusing on identification of priority areas in the state, specific recommendation for implementation, and monitoring/applying adaptive management practices. A distillation of the Forest Action Plan is expected soon (possibly as a Powerpoint presentation).			
<b>DNRC:</b> LGA grant distribution, July LGA grants, other DNRC projects		Stephen Kimball, Local Government Forest Advisor	Information of how LGA funds were allocated, next round of LGA grants and other DNRC forestry topics
Stephen Campbell (DNRC) provided an update on Local Government Forestry Assistance grants including those currently awarded to CGWG. He reminded the group that DNRC reviews NEPA plans statewide and			

comments on them when appropriate. They have also been filing support documents in support of the CGNF on litigated projects. The Forestry Assistance Bureau at DNRC is updating their strategic plan to help landowners and others on forest health issues.

<p><b>Custer Gallatin Forest Team Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forest Plan Revision status</li> <li>- Current Projects (North Hebgen, Smith Shields) and litigation update</li> <li>- BMW project</li> </ul>	<p>Mary Erickson and staff</p>	<p>Updates, introduction of new staff members, dialog with CGWG concerning new projects and priorities going forward.</p>
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Mary Erickson provided an overview of recent key projects including the Forest Plan Revision, the Bridgers fire, vegetation projects, and the Great Outdoors Act. The Forest submitted one project (West Yellowstone Rail Trial) that was selected as the #1 project for the Region! Impacts of current fires: Bridgers Foothills Fire has a Type I team assigned. They are close to containment but have some potential for impacting other assets like Bridger Bowl if the fire moves north again. 28 homes destroyed. Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) is involved now as well to help out. Jackie Walden raised discussion about strategies for monitoring and containment on coal seam fires in the Ashland area. On existing projects:

- North Bridgers project road reconstruction was implemented but suspended during fire season due to resource reallocation
- Bozeman Municipal Watershed project bids are in
- Smith Shields project is virtually complete
- East Boulder project is the first Good Neighbor Authority project in the State, with the contract being let by DNRC
- North Hebgen project litigation concluded and is now cleared to go ahead with three (3) timber sales beginning this fall, with others awarded to begin next summer

Virginia Kelly then addressed details on the Forest Plan Revision. 2,800 objections to various aspects of the proposed Plan Revision have been received so far, noting that many of these were duplicative. These will need to be reviewed for standing, then coded. Key areas of objection include Bison management, land allocation and use issues, timber management, recreation (access, uses, and area size). Interested Persons (IP) can participate in objection resolution in November, however this process may be cumbersome due to heavy reliance on virtual interaction. The meeting will be structured around topics. CGWG members discussed whether to register as an IP and concluded it would be best to rely on each member to determine their own level of participation.

<p><b>Report form the three new committees:</b> East Gallatin (Bozeman Ranger Dist.), Cooke City (Livingston Ranger Dist.), and South Otter (Ashland Ranger Dist.)</p>	<p>Prinkki/Atwood</p>	<p>Review progress and discuss next steps</p>
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No specifics yet as these projects are still in very early stages. Initial meetings with District Rangers are being planned.

<p><b>CGWG Meeting schedule</b></p>	<p>Prinkki / Atwood</p>	<p>Agree on December date</p>
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**Next Meeting will be held virtually on December 9, 2020.**