

Custer-Gallatin National Forest Working Group (CGWG)

Meeting MINUTES: Wednesday, Sept. 13, 2017

Gallatin County Courthouse Community Room

Bozeman, Montana

Agenda:

Time	Topic	Lead	Outcomes
1:00 PM	Opening and introductions; Agenda discussion, Meeting materials:	Prinkki / Atwood	Welcome, introductions, agenda reviewed
1:05	Consent Agenda: Minutes, Financial report/disbursements	Prinkki / Atwood	Vote on consent agenda items
1:10	Membership seats/applications; Guides; Mike Colpo Motorized alt.; Michael Harris	Prinkki / Atwood	Review and vote on membership applications;
1:20	Montana, and Pacific Northwest Fire situation, effect	Rich Stem, Retired Regional Forester	Encourage collaborative efforts to improve forest management
1:40	North Bridger Farm Bill Committee	Eisen / Prinkki	North Bridger subcommittee report
2:00	Smith-Shield Project post decision strategy;	Prinkki	Smith Shields; CGWG file Declaration in conjunction with DNRC/AG's Office
2:10	North Hebgen Project	North Hebgen Committee	Update on project implementation and litigation
2:20	Pryor Mountains Subcommittee	Penfold	Report
2:40	Custer Gallatin National Forest; Forest Plan Revision	Virginia Kelly and Mariah Lueschen	FPR status report: Wilderness recommendations and W&SR recommendations
3:00	Custer Gallatin Forest Service Plan Revision Outreach	Prinkki / All	Further Work on CGWG Community Outreach events
3:15	Federal Legislative update	Christensen	Information
3:30	October meeting plan	Prinkki	Agenda, location, homework
4:00	Close, if not sooner		

Attending:

John Prinkki	Mike Harris	Jackie Musgrove	Mary Erickson
Barb Cestero	Kerry White	Bill Bullock	Richard Stem
Hilary Eisen	Bill Wallace	Steve Caldwell	Don Bachman
Jerry Furtney	Randy Weimer	Michael Christianson	Jason Brey
Joe Skinner	Darcie Warden	Earl Atwood	Nancy Schulz
Darold Zimmer	Jeff Schmidt		

Chairman Prinkki opened the meeting at 1:00 pm, welcoming members and visitors.

Consent Agenda items were presented for approval, including August meeting minutes and financial report. Steve Caldwell moved approval, seconded by Jackie Musgrove. CARRIED

Membership applications were presented for Mike Harris as an alternate for Montana Trail Vehicle Riders association, and Mike Colpo, representing Guides and Outfitters. Mr. Harris was present, however Mr. Colpo is out of State with a prior commitment and could not attend this meeting. Kerry White said he had been in contact with Mr. Colpo and believed he will be able to make the next meeting in October. Members preferred to defer action on Mr. Colpo until he could be in attendance, and took up consideration of Mr. Harris' application. Mr. Harris was given the floor and provided a recap of his extensive experience with forestry issues,

reiterating his desire to participate as a member. Barb Cestero moved to accept his application for membership, seconded by Hilary Eisen. CARRIED

Richard Stem, USFS retired, was introduced and made a presentation on the current situation regarding Montana Wildfires. He focused on the increasing scope of wildfires over recent years, what has contributed to them becoming larger and more intense, and the significant threat posed to Montana forests and residents, including loss of timberland, long term health hazards due to prolonged exposure to smoke, and economic impacts. Mr. Stem appealed to the CGWG members to develop strategies in support of increasing the scale of restoration efforts, and offered some options for the Members to consider. He recommended the topic be on the table in future meetings, and offered to return with more specific recommendations or participate in a panel discussion. The presentation was closed by viewing a Youtube video which highlighted the devastating effects of wildfires in Montana during the 2017 season.

The North Bridger Forest Health subcommittee report was given by Hilary Eisen. Due to the accelerated timeline of the project using the Farm Bill Categorical Exclusion, the subcommittee met shortly after the August meeting to review details of the project and participated in a field trip hosted by the Forest Service to learn more about the project. A follow up call was conducted and resulted in the drafting of pre-scoping comments on the project plan for review and possible adoption by Members at the September meeting. The draft comments were reviewed in detail, with a handful of recommendations offered by attending Members. The revised draft was approved on a motion by Steve Caldwell, seconded by Joe Skinner. Hilary Eisen will provide a final draft of the comments to John Prinkki for his submission to the Forest Service on September 14th.

John Prinkki put on the table the draft Declaration of Environmental, Economic and Social Harm he developed as per Member direction at the August meeting. The draft document was discussed, with minor corrections noted. John will update and get a final version out to members for a last review before submission.

Jason Brey provided an update on the North Hebgen project. Although notice of intent to litigate has been received, no official notice of the lawsuit filing has been received. The White Bark Pine Monitoring project team completed their field study to establish baseline for monitoring.

No report on the Pryors subcommittee was available. John Prinkki shared news with the Members that Mike Penfold has resigned from the CGWG due to personal commitments that no longer allow sufficient time to participate. John will follow up with Mike and Our Montana to determine if they will bring another representative forward to work with the CGWG, or if we will be advertising the seat for another environmental NGO.

Virginia Kelly provided an update on the Forest Plan Revision, with detail on the processes for Wilderness Inventory and Wild and Scenic River eligibility. They are beginning their next round of public meetings which will be completed by end of September.

Michael Christianson provided a brief update on a recent Federal Legislative update with impact on forested lands. Most of that discussion was related to tax policy affecting forested landowners in capital gain or inheritance scenarios.

CGWG Forest Plan Revision Outreach. John Prinkki asked Members for their ideas related to additional outreach opportunities. Most felt that the Forest Service events were providing adequate penetration, with the possible exception of the Billings area to account for recent Pryors Mountain discussions. Consensus was to monitor attendance at the upcoming FS meetings in Red Lodge and Columbus to see if further planning is warranted.

Next meeting: Bozeman location (TBA) on October 11th.

Adjourned at 3:30 pm.