

Sparring Bulls Stakeholder Team Meeting
5/1/09
Three Rivers Ranger District Conference Room

Present:

Forest Service	Stakeholder Team
Mike Herrin, District Ranger	Randy Beacham, Stakeholder Project Leader
Timory Peel, IDT Leader	Tony Johnson
Russ Gauthreax, Veg/Rec/Minerals/Lands Staff	Larry Coryell
Pat Shira, Timber Staff	Ed Levert
Glen Gill, Wildlife, Fisheries, Hydrology, Botany, Cultural Resources Staff	Mike Peterson
Linda Hubbell, Fuels Staff	Tim Dougherty
Kathy Mohar, District NEPA Coordinator	Robyn King
	Sarah Canepa
	Jerry Wandler

The meeting kicked off with introductions. Timory summarized the project status and explained the purpose of the meeting was to meet the district staff and set collaboration expectations.

District Ranger Herrin

Mike reviewed the collaborative framework document (see attached). The Stakeholders Team will be working with the IDT to develop the purpose and need, proposed action, and identify key issues and concerns.

The Kootenai/Salish tribe is interested in working on this project to promote traditional foods. We will be looking at opportunities to stimulate grizzly bear forage and the possibility of the University of Montana helping with monitoring. Some opportunities for the project area may be split off from the Sparring Bulls project, and authorized separately to expedite them (ex. recreation projects).

Mike encouraged the group to help with public involvement such as open houses.

Information requests should be funneled through Randy and then Timory so the IDT can remain focused. We will be posting information on the web page for public consumption.

We reviewed the project timelines (see attached). Mike stressed that the project timelines are tight and it is paramount that we all move expeditiously through the process.

Stakeholder Expectations for Collaboration

Randy: This is the second project the Stakeholder team has been involved in that considers activities outside the WUI, but fortunately they are getting involved earlier in

the process with this one. Compromise will be the key to success. He is particularly concerned with the spread of weeds.

Tim: Agrees with Randy on importance of compromise and stage of process. Looking forward to working with IDT and learning more, for example, about soil requirements and promoting more food for bears.

Mike P.: Same as above. Also interested in IRA and grizzly bear issues, fire and food for bears, and active vs. passive management areas. Jeff Juel will also participate in this project.

Larry: Noted that project area is in Troy's backyard. Concerned with spruce budworm and interested in recreation projects such as improving parking for snowmobilers. Noted that Spar Lake gets a lot of use.

Robyn: Also agreed with others. Interested in bear forage and what we can do to promote. Suggested we invite USFWS grizzly bear biologist Wayne Kasworm to be involved. Mike H. agreed and suggested also USFWS Consultation Biologist Ben Conard would be good to have involved.

Ed: Interested in success with the project, avoiding appeals and litigation, how we can interface with the Firewise program in the WUI, spruce budworm, and timber output to maintain mills and other infrastructure in the area. Herrin noted that part of the direction to the IDT is to work with the Stakeholder group; we'll post that document on the web also.

Tony: Interested in thinning and understory burning, weeds, and wildlife corridors.

Sarah: Interested in balancing management of IRAs and wild country with the ongoing development in this area; for example fuels buildup vs. wildlife needs. Noted that landowners and recreationists should also be contacted. Timory explained that the IDT earlier developed an extensive mailing list of landowners to solicit input on the area.

Jerry Wandler (Troy Snowmobile Club), Bill Martin and Doug Ferrell (Friends of the Scotchmans/Cabinet Resource Group), and Liz Sedler, and Mike Garriety (Alliance for the Wild Rockies) are folks who would have an interest in the project. Mike H. noted that the district mailed a letter to Liz and Mike G. encouraging them to get involved at this early stage.

(Jerry Wandler entered the meeting at this point.—very timely!!)

Staff Round Robin and Related Discussion

Each staff reviewed their program area and the IDT resource specialists they supervise and gave an overview of the project from that standpoint.

Robyn would like more information on spruce budworm. We will try to put the recent insect and disease flight information on the web.

Mike noted that he read the Restoration Principles document attached to the Lands Council comments and agreed they are sound principles and what the IDT assesses and incorporates with our projects.

The topic of the Keeler warming hut project came up with a concern about grizzly bear attractants and Mike explained that this is a good example of how IDT specialists often identify the same concerns during analysis of a project as those brought up by the public. That project includes trigger points to assess if attractants are becoming a problem and how we will deal with them. The Troy Snowmobile Club will be monitoring the trash situation. Robyn asked if they had sought out partners for this, and Jerry replied that they are in the early stages and may at some point.

The district hopes to have the Landscape Assessment compiled in the next few weeks, and will post it on the web.

Timory handed out a summary of the monitoring accomplished for the Spar/Lake Subunits project (2001).

Mike P. suggested that we request a forest plan amendment to allow wildfires to burn in the project area. The district will look into the feasibility of this. There are challenges in the East Cabinets with this due to wind patterns, but it may be a possibility for the West Cabinets area. Mike also asked Glen about travel corridors and Glen talked about the linkage zone south of Bull Lake. We are looking at areas to stimulate White bark pine with burning.

We discussed the Gautreaux/Johnson paper on Grizzly bear forage.

The possibility of fuels reduction in the IRA near Little Joes was discussed and harvest hasn't been ruled out as a tool.

Mike H. explained that if we propose harvest in IRAs or grizzly bear core, it would need to be for a good reason and have a good chance of success.

Glen noted that there are opportunities in this area for the Stakeholders group to initiate cooperative projects with other groups to implement watershed and wildlife corridor improvements on lands outside of federal jurisdiction. Examples include private lands along Iron Creek and Lake Creek and fish passage barriers associated with State Highway 56.

Timory discussed the status of the Travel Analysis process for this project. Mike P. asked about unauthorized routes. Timory explained the district's monitoring efforts through the adopt-a-road program and ongoing monitoring through daily activities in the field. Mike P. then asked how people would be able find out about these activities; the possibility of including this information in the NEPA document in the wildlife or recreation sections was discussed.

Further public involvement was encouraged, with suggestions to contact the Bull Lake Rural Fire Department, hold future meetings at the Bull Lake Rod and Gun Club and/or Angel Island Clubhouse, put up fliers, and post meetings and field trips on the web.

s/Kathy Mohar