

Minutes for Stakeholders Meeting on May 14, 2009.

Discussion with Paul Bradford and Wayne Kasworm on the Grizzly Bear Access Amendment.

Grizzly Bear Access Amendment: Paul Bradford addressed the group on the draft supplemental Environmental Impact Statement forest plan amendment affecting the Selkirk-Yaak and Cabined Bear Recovery Zones. The Forest plan amendment involves three national forests: the Lolo, Idaho Panhandle and the Kootenai. The purpose of the amendments is to provide better security for core bear habitat. There are two alternatives, one called MAX and the other known as the preferred amendment. The MAX amendment treats all bear managements units the same and there would be one blanket standard for all. The preferred would be bear management unit specific.

Total road density open road density with 6 female bears that have reproduced. Took the mean average of what does it take to survive and reproduce and Wayne's Kasworm's addressed the group on the study he has been involved in. Basically, the study involved six female bears that have reproduced and analyzed the total road density and open road density of the bear management unity involved. Put out this study, a specific preferred alternative

Background: Core Open road density and total road density. Did a study and selected 6 female bears that had reproduced and survived and used their habitat or home range as defined over several years what were the levels of open road density and total road density. If those results could be duplicated over the entire grizzly bear habitat, those sub-units could be maintained in such a manner with open road density and total road density that would provide the environment in which bears could reproduce and survive.. The study took the mean of the 6 female bears and the results became the standard for the Grizzly bear access amendment.

The Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement concerning the bear access amendment does not unilaterally close any roads. Each bear management unit will have to be looked at and determine what, if anything, needs to be done to meet the planned or identified open road density and total road density standard.

DNA Population Study: Wayne Kasworm talked about how the population study was conducted in the Glacier Bob Marshall Wilderness areas. In this area about 1000 sites were selected and bear hair collected on four different occasions. The occasions were about 14 days apart. The hair was collected and sent in for an analysis. This was done over a grid system of approximately 6 kilometers on each side. They blanketed the area with these cells and a site was situated within each cell for the collection procedure.

765 bears plus or minus 100. cost was about \$4.5 million. While it would not have to be as intense as the Glacier/Bob Marshall area, it would probably cost \$1.5 million in the Cabinet-Yaak recovery area. Wayne cautioned the group about the difficulty of the study in the Cabinet-Yaak area. Studies have been conducted in the past in the Yaak where

only three Grizzlies were detected and in the Cabinet area where only two—a mother and daughter were discovered. Wayne thought much more studying of the sampling technique needs to be completed to determine the best means to establish the population estimate.

Wayne was asked how he came up with the 45 bear estimate in the Cabinet-Yaak system. The estimate comes from the bears that he knows were alive from 2001 to present day from all sources of information available..

Motion made by Paul Rumelhart and seconded that the Stakeholders draft up a letter supporting a DNA study and what are the goals we wish to achieve. Paul John K and Chuck Roady will prepare the letter to the US Fish and Wildlife Service asking for their thoughts and advise on doing such a study. Paul Bradford and Chuck Roady suggested the Stakeholders engage with the Fish and Wildlife Service before we engage the support of our Congressional Delegation.

Wayne Kasworm expressed his concern in doing a study with any validity due to the small number of bears in the Cabinet-Yaak area. Chuck Roady informed the group that the parameters of the study need to be accurate including the Selkirks and even consider the Canadian population. It was agreed to start the discussion with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on determining the grizzly bear population.

Paul Bradford spoke briefly about he stimulus funding. At this time there is about \$3.5 million available for fuels reduction. Looking at how best to put people to work, whether it be by contracting, partnerships or direct hire. More information should be coming out soon.

Chuck Roady gave a report on the Western Governor's Biomass Conference. Panels were formed and the topic thoroughly discussed. The central issue has been the available of biomass on a sustainable basis from federal sources. The governor wants a report detailing the issues and opportunities dealing with Biomass utilization in Montana. Also discussed was the workforce issue, in that our trained workforce is leaving the area and will become a substantial issue in the immediate future.

John Konzen gave an update of the National Forest Counties and Schools coalition meeting. Much of the meeting centered around the reauthorizing of the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Act and the efforts the coalition ought to take during the next four years. Attached to these minutes is a report from the meeting. John Konzen, Tony Berget Marianne Roose and Paul Rumelhart gave a presentation on the work and successes of the Kootenai Forest Stakeholders to date. Other panel presentations centered around coordinating or cooperating status of counties in their negotiations with the Forest Service.

Cabinet District Report: Lee Kramer talked about the Little Beaver HFRA project which involves about 1,200 acres with 7.2 MMBF. Lee is also considering a field trip for the Stakeholders in his Ranger District to look at some potential landscape projects.

Betty Holder reported on the Meadows project and they are about to sell the last of the units.

Ranger Mike Herrin and Randy Beacham discussed Sparring Bull. Landscape project covers about 60,000 acres. Mike hopes to have a draft out this fall.

Malcolm Edwards and Ed Levert on Flower Creek. The project involves federal, state and City of Libby land ownership. For the Forest Service, it involves 855 with the potential of 4.5 to 6 MMBF. The project impacts the City of Libby Watershed on Flower Creek and Flower Creek Reservoir. The City has 80 acres of the project. The purpose of the project as defined by all the partners is to reduce the fuels load in this watershed in order to protect the water quality, and provide a level of local employment. The State hopes to get their portion of the project started in July.

Glen McNitt, Mike Petersen, Jeff Juel and Ed Levert discussed the Young-Dodge project and what we can learn from the effort to reach consensus. Ed reported that he thought everyone gave it their best shot but could not overcome the regenerating lodge pole stands and lack of linkage of the different units. Mike found the outcome to be disappointing, should be more willing to give and take. Glen stated that he learned a great deal from the process and believes that the district is in a better position now than before on stakeholder projects. Stressed the importance of having agreement on the purpose and need of the project up-front and involve everyone at the inception of the project.

Mike Petersen informed that a field trip to the Colville looking at the Misery Lake timber sale was in the works. This is a project the coalition worked through and it involves two stewardship sales involving 17 MMBF. Potential dates will be sent out to the stakeholders in the immediate future.

Next Meeting July 16th