

Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2014 – 1:00 PM

Gallatin County Health Dept., 215 West Mendenhall, Bozeman, Montana

A meeting of the Custer-Gallatin Working Group was led by John Prinkki, Carbon County Commissioner.
Attendees present:

<u>Attendee</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
John Prinkki	Carbon County Commission
Jim Hart	Madison County Commission
Jim Durgan	Park County Commission
Bill Farhat	Big Sky Fire Dept.
Pierre Martineau	Gallatin County Commission
Kevin Germain	Lake Mountain Land Co.
Joe Skinner	Gallatin County Commission
Scott Brennan	The Wilderness Society
John Todd	Montana Wilderness Association
Earl Atwood	Beartooth RC&D
Jennifer Madgic	Sen Tester's Office
Joe Josephson	Gallatin Community Collaborative
Alex Sienkiewicz	USFS
Pam Gardner	USFS
Lin Goettlich	USFS
Kathryn QannaYahu	Enhancing Montana's Wildlife and Habitat (EMWH)
Mary Erickson	USFS Custer Gallatin NF Supervisor
Jerry Furtney	RY Timber
Mike Penfold	Our Montana
Nancy Schultz	Gallatin Wildlife Association
Barb Beck	Beck Consulting

Names in bold denote representatives of seated members

At 1:00 pm Chairman Prinkki opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance.

Introduction of members and guests. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves and identify their affiliation or representation. A number of first-time attendees were present, in response to email invitations extended prior to the meeting. New attendees included:

Bill Farhat, Big Sky Fire Dept.

Kevin Germain, Lake Mountain Land Co.

Scott Brennan, The Wilderness Society

John Todd, Montana Wilderness Association

Pam Gardner, USFS

Lin Goettlich, USFS

Barb Beck, Beck Consulting

Meeting Agenda:

Time	Topic	Lead	Outcomes
1:00	Opening and introductions	Prinkki, Atwood	Welcome, introductions, agenda reviewed, ground rules clear, Aug. meeting minutes approved
1:20	Working Group Guiding Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission Statement • Operations Manual • CGWG Membership 	Prinkki, All	Agreement on mission statement, Edits to Operations Manual identified (if any)
1:40	New participants' interests (within the scope of the mission statement) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What issues should be addressed? • What are the desired outcomes? 	Atwood, All	Revisit preliminary list of focus issues/areas, add new items as identified
2:30	Break		
2:45	Forest Service Program of Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How a program of work is developed 	Gardner, Sienkiewicz, Goettlich	Participants understand how the FS develops a program of work and how/when input could be provided
4:15	Wildfire Disaster Funding Act (S1875, H.R. 3992)	Prinkki, FS, All	Decide on CGWG course of action, follow-up assignments made
4:30	Old Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications, website 	Prinkki, All	Discussion on information dissemination
4:45	New business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda items, assignments for October meeting • Other 	Prinkki, All	List of October agenda items, follow-up assignments
5:00	Adjourn		

Chairman Prinkki presented the agenda. Minutes from the August meeting were reviewed. Jim Hart moved, seconded by Jim Durgan to approved the minutes as presented. Approved.

Organizational Documents

Working group guiding documents were put on the table for discussion. John Prinkki presented three versions of a **mission statement** for consideration of the group. Discussion led to adoption of the following language as the mission statement:

“To recommend, promote and advocate programs and projects within the Custer Gallatin National Forest that will provide for the public health, safety and general welfare of our communities under the sustainable multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of our communities through a transparent, collaborative and mutually supportive process within a diverse and committed stakeholder group.” Motion to approve by Josephson, seconded by Skinner. Approved.

Discussion turned to the Operations Manual, with some focus on the membership provisions. John Prinkki proposed revision to Section 2 to add Big Horn County Commission to the list of Counties

represented. Mary Erickson asked for clarification as to whether this is intended to include the Ashland Ranger District. The group response indicated that was not the intention, rather to focus on the five ranger districts that cover the Beartooth range and eastern Pryors.

John Prinkki also proposed a revision to the organizational categories, specifying the number of board seats, as follows:

ORGANIZATION	Number of Board seats
• County Commissioners	7
• Conservation NGO's	4
• The skiing industry	1
• Agriculture/Ranching	1
• Quiet recreation	1
• Motorized recreation (summer/winter)	1
• Hunting	1
• Fishing	1
• Commercial outfitters (permittee)	1
• Mining and mineral development	1
• Timber	1

From the discussion, additional possible categories were suggested: Tribal, Tourism, Business (Chambers?), Permittees, Non-commercial private landowners (large private land holdings)

Barb Beck offered the suggestion of looking at representation from a geographic distribution perspective in addition to the categories of interest.

Several attendees indicated intention or consideration toward becoming members:

- Jerry Furtney – will be supplying member application to represent RY Timber
- Mike Penfold – likely to make application representing Our Montana
- Joe Josephson – will jointly represent Greater Yellowstone Coalition and Gallatin Community Collaborative with Barb Cestero
- Nancy Shultz – will discuss membership with the Board of Gallatin Wildlife Association
- Scott Brennan – too soon to say yet whether Wilderness Society will apply, but will definitely track the progress of the group and participate in meetings

Additional points were raised about provisions that may be needed in the Operations Manual:

Joe Skinner recommended we provide clarification on the section dealing with majority threshold on votes, establishing quorum for meetings, and proxies.

Discussion closed on the Operations manual with general agreement to work on updates to address these points of discussion, to be developed and brought to the October or November meeting for consideration.

Presentation by Forest Service

Mary Erickson announced to the Working Group that just recently the Custer and Gallatin National Forests were consolidated into the Custer Gallatin Forest. She introduced Pam Gardner, Deputy Forest Supervisor, and Lin Goettlich, Budget Officer, to provide an overview of the general budget process and other information pertaining to the consolidation.

Under the consolidation, Bozeman will be the location of the Forest Supervisor's office. Lin Goettlich has relocated from Billings to Bozeman. Billings will continue to have about 25 staff members, but will be co-locating in new office space with BLM at a location near Cabelas. The move will be completed by December 1.

They are currently closing out their books for FY14. A budget team has been formed and are currently working on merging the budget processes for the Custer and Gallatin districts.

Lin Goettlich explained that the budget for their operations is determined within a hierarchy, with resource allocation managed on a competitive basis at each level:

Washington Office (WO)

 Regional Office (RO) (competes with 8 other regions for resources)

 Forest (Forest Supv.) (competes with 10 other forests within the region)

 Ranger District (RD) (competes with 7 other districts within the forest)

For FY15, the budget for Custer Gallatin is \$16.5 million, ~9.5% of the regional budget.

Pam and Lin provided an overview of the process used to develop the plan of work for the budget period. Most actions identified in the plan are tied directly to statutory direction, or defined by desired conditions spelled out in the forest plan. Targets are usually associated to projects, e.g. board feet, miles of stream managed, miles of trails developed or maintained, etc.

As expected, there are always more projects proposed than there is available funding. Currently their teams are prioritizing for FY15, with the leadership team expected to deliver the FY15 Program of Work around Oct. 1. November through March, 2015 will be focused on 3-5 year planning (FY 16-19).

The Forest's web site contains a schedule of proposed actions that is an important tool in determining appropriate timing for input to the process. Mary Erikson emphasized that our best opportunities for providing input to the planning process will be in developing recommendations or supporting project features (trails, timber sales, etc.) that accomplish integrated objectives.

Scott Brennan (Wilderness Society) commented that our group would benefit from further training available from the Forest Service that covers the standard process points where we can weigh in with recommendations,/concerns. He also suggested there are many optional points along the way where this can happen, which he might be able to discuss at future meetings.

Mary also offered to share an analysis document on the 2014 Farm Bill that provides a breakdown of the key features of the bill pertaining to forestry.

Wildfire Disaster Funding Act H.R.3992

John Prinkki moved the topic to the the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act H.R.3992. This bill would implement a budget cap adjustment similar to that used by FEMA to address the impact that high wildfire suppression costs have had on the budgets of agencies in the Department of Interior and USFS.

Mr. Prinkki proposed that this is an issue where the Working Group can endorse legislation that will greatly assist the agencies with forest responsibilities in Montana, and requested approval by the group to generate a letter of support to be sent to the Montana Congressional delegation.

All seated members agreed that a letter of support would be appropriate. Most non-members in attendance also stated they were in favor of a letter of support to be issued by the Working Group, although two attendees (Nancy Schultz and Kathryn QannaYahu) indicated they could not offer an official position without further details and/or discussion with their Board.

Having consensus among Group members, and broad support in the room among attendess, it was agreed the Chairman should develop a support letter on behalf of CGWG and distribute it to the Montana Congressional delegation.

Miscellaneous

As the meeting was nearing close, Barb Beck suggested that for future meetings it would be beneficial to include media in the circulated meeting announcements, and to implement version control on key documents that will be revised over time, particularly the Operations Manual.

It was also noted that for future meetings, we need to arrange for refreshments (at least beverages) to be available during meeting break(s).

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for October 8, 2014 in Bozeman, Montana at the Gallatin County Dentention Center, 1:00 pm.

Preliminary agenda for the October meeting will include:

- Approval of past meeting minutes
- Report on status of funding alternatives
- Present updates to Operations Manual
- Present updates on Wildfire Disaster Funding Act and Farm Bill analysis
- Seat additional members according to Operation Manual protocol
- Continue process of identifying shared interests as basis for group action

Chairman Prinkki thanked everyone in attendance, adjourning the meeting at 4:45 pm.