

SWCC Executive Committee
Meeting Notes
June 7, 2011

Present: Mo Bookwalter*, Debbie Austin*, Megan Birzell, Scott Brennan*, Gary Burnett*, Barb Beckes

Action Items:

- **Debbie** will have OGC look over the draft due diligence statement.
 - **Debbie** will find out more about this request and the Wildlife Habitat Council's July visit and report back to the Executive Committee.
 - **Gary and Mo** will set up the August 23rd SWCC meeting in Seeley Lake.
 - **Mo and Gary** will work together to set up a meeting with Roger Marshall, Anne Dahl, Melanie Parker, and Rich Kehr to discuss the possibility of extending the MFRC restoration principles to the Swan Valley.
 - **Debbie** will talk to Chip Weber about her experiences with the MFRC effort.
 - **Megan** will ask Chris Partyka to attend the July 12th SWCC meeting to lead a discussion about the details of the Colt Summit project.
 - **Megan** will ensure that the SWCC website references and links to MFRC support letters for all applicable projects.
- I. Approve notes from previous meetings
- a. Notes for the March 15th, April 12th, May 4th, and May 17th Executive Committee meetings were approved unanimously.
- II. Updates/New Information/Issues
- a. Due Diligence Statement
 - i. The Executive Committee slightly revised the language in the due diligence statement to improve clarity and decided that, before it is brought to a vote at the SWCC, it should be reviewed by the Office of General Counsel.
 - ii. ACTION ITEM: **Debbie** will have OGC look over the draft due diligence statement.
 - b. The Department of Agriculture has asked for more information about private investments in the SW Crown. They would like to know what private investments have already been made and any ideas we have about potential corporate partners.
 - i. The Wildlife Habitat Council, a potential partner, will be visiting Missoula in July and has expressed interest in taking a field tour of the SW Crown.
 - ii. ACTION ITEM: **Debbie** will find out more about this request and the Wildlife Habitat Council's July visit and report back to the Executive Committee.

III. Colt Summit Project

- a. An appeal resolution meeting was held via conference call on May 25th. Several members of the public listened to the discussion. No resolution was reached.
- b. The team responsible for developing the Colt Summit Project has gone through each of the 131 appeal points and responded to them in a transmittal letter to the Appeal Review Panel, which is based out of the Regional Office.
- c. Currently, the Appeal Review Panel is reviewing the three appeals and the transmittal letters and will provide a recommendation about how to proceed to the Appeal Officer this week. After further staff work, the Regional Forester will make a decision to uphold, remand, or uphold with conditions the Decision Notice for the Colt Summit Project.
- d. Separately, the Lolo NF also received a notice of intent (NOI) to sue the FS regarding the Colt Summit Project under the Endangered Species Act. This is a different process than the appeals process under NEPA. Within 60 days of receiving the NOI, the FS can work with FWS to make some small changes to the project in response to the NOI without having to change the Decision Notice.
- e. An opinion piece concerning the Colt Summit Project that was authored by Michael Garrity appeared in both the Helena *Independent Record* and the *Missoulian*. There were numerous factual errors in the piece, and the Executive Committee raised the question of whether we should respond directly to these factual errors. They agreed to bring this discussion to the SWCC.

IV. Subcommittee Progress

- a. Prioritization
 - i. There is no update because this Committee hasn't met since the last Executive Committee meeting.
- b. Monitoring
 - i. No written report was provided.
- c. Communications
 - i. The Committee is working with the FS to identify dates and project options for public site visits this summer.
 - ii. The Committee crafted talking points addressing the Colt Summit appeal. This is not a consensus document but is available to any SWCC members who get asked about the Colt Summit project.
 - iii. A press release announcing our FY 2011 funding was sent out on June 1st.
 - iv. The website has been updated with meeting information, and Megan is working with committees to approve a backlog of notes so that they can be posted on the website.

- v. The Committee is working to set up over flights of the SW Crown on June 17th.
- V. Possibility of holding some meetings in SWCC communities
 - a. In response to recommendations of SW Crown community members, the Executive Committee has agreed to hold the August meeting in Seeley Lake. The group also agreed to move the meeting to August 23rd in order to enable more people to participate and to potentially include a field tour in the area.
 - i. ACTION ITEM: **Gary and Mo** will set up the August 23rd SWCC meeting in Seeley Lake.
- VI. MFRC principles as cornerstone of CFLR projects
 - a. The Committee discussed the importance of ensuring that all CFLR projects in all three ranger districts are based on the MFRC Restoration Principles.
 - i. ACTION ITEMS:
 - 1. **Mo and Gary** will work together to set up a meeting with Roger Marshall, Anne Dahl, Melanie Parker, and Rich Kehr to discuss the possibility of extending the MFRC restoration principles to the Swan Valley.
 - 2. **Debbie** will talk to Chip Weber about her experiences with the MFRC effort.
- VII. Clarifying how CFLR projects meet CFLR goals
 - a. The group discussed a need to revisit some CFLR projects in order to remind ourselves of how and why they were developed as well as how and why they are consistent with the goals of the CFLR Program.
 - i. ACTION ITEMS:
 - 1. **Megan** will ask Chris Partyka to attend the July 12th SWCC meeting to lead a discussion about the details of the Colt Summit project.
 - 2. **Megan** will ensure that the SWCC website references and links to MFRC support letters for all applicable projects.
- VIII. Watershed Condition Framework (WCF)
 - a. The WCF tool was developed by the FS in response to requests from Congress and OMB to develop a way to better measure watershed improvement.
 - b. This is an internal, FS-wide process, but collaboration is encouraged throughout.
 - c. There are 6 steps in this process:

- i. Establish a baseline of 6th Code HUC watershed conditions (red/low function, yellow/moderate function, and green/high function) across NFS lands for reference. (This has been done.)
 - ii. Select 1-5 priority watersheds on each Forest for restoration focus. Due by July 15th.
 - iii. Develop action plans to restore priority watersheds by moving them up at least one condition class (i.e. red to yellow or yellow to green). Due by September 30th.
 - iv. Implement action plans.
 - v. Track costs and accomplishments.
 - vi. Monitor and evaluate results.
- d. Each Forest across the US used an Interdisciplinary Team to analyze current 6th Code HUC watershed conditions. The existing conditions were determined based on 12 indicators (24 attributes total) that were analyzed using existing data and professional knowledge. Each indicator was weighted differently. While both terrestrial and aquatic indicators were included, the analysis was heavily weighted to aquatic indicators.
- e. While a consistent methodology was used across forests, the interpretation of the attributes may vary from forest to forest.
- f. After priority watersheds are identified and action plans developed, the Forests will compete for up to \$80 million in the FY2012 FS budget (from the Priority Watersheds and job Stabilization Act) to fund implementation of those action plans. This money can be used for NEPA planning, and we think it can count as match for CFLR program. However, priority watersheds will not be limited to CFLR landscapes.
- g. There may be the potential to coordinate this process with the SWCC's prioritization process.

IX. Update from Mo

- a. Mo will be leaving Northwest Connections this summer but plans to stay engaged in the SWCC. Melanie Parker will begin attending SWCC meetings as the NWC representative.
- b. Mo's term on the Executive Committee ends September 30, 2012. The SWCC Charter indicates that she may continue to serve on the Executive Committee as she transitions out of her role at NWC. She may be out of the country for several months in early 2012, and so the Committee agreed to revisit her role on the Executive Committee in November or December of this year.