

SWCC Executive Committee

Meeting Notes

July 29, 2011

Present: Cory Davis, Mo Bookwalter, Scott Brennan, Debbie Austin, Sandy Mack, Gary Burnett, Amber Kamps, Megan Birzell

Action Items/Next Steps:

- **Megan** will send out final email to voting members and participants about August meeting date and times (I haven't developed an agenda yet but will also send that out next week.)
 - **Megan and Gary** will ensure that an agenda item addressing integration between the MFRC subcommittees and SWCC is added to the next Lolo and Lincoln RC meetings, respectively.
 - **Megan** will add agenda item to SWCC meeting about integration between MFRC and SWCC and a (related) agenda item addressing the SWCC's process/timeline for moving forward with identifying and approving specific, quantifiable restoration objectives.
 - **Megan** will take notes from today's call re monitoring lessons learned and use them to help structure further discussion at the August 24th ExComm meeting.
 - **Cory and Megan** will work together to develop a proposed work plan and associated timeline for the Monitoring Committee for the coming year before the Sept. 1st Monitoring Committee meeting.
 - **Megan** will send out an email gauging interest from voting members and participants about a field tour to the Colt Summit project area.
 - **Sandy and Megan** will work to get the SWCC Work Plan corrected wrt to "needed infrastructure."
- I. Upcoming August meeting (logistics, etc.)
- a. The suggested timing for the August 24th meeting in Seeley Lake is as follows:
 - i. 8 – 9:30am ExComm meeting
 - ii. 10am – 12:30pm SWCC meeting
 - iii. 1 – 4pm Field Tour of CFLR projects
 - b. The group agreed that the goal of the field tour is to showcase CFLR projects. As such, the group agreed to focus the tour on the Auggie Creek Fuels Reduction/Restoration project and potentially on the aerial weed treatments in the Horseshoe West project area. The group also agreed that a field tour to the Colt Summit project area should be held separately.
 - c. Suggested agenda items for the SWCC business meeting:
 - i. Discussion of the larger role of the MFRC committees in SW Crown and how EMRI's baseline analysis is going to fit into project prioritization. (See item II. below.)

1. Getting access to MFRC subcommittee project support letters to better understand how and why they support the projects.
 - d. The logistics have mostly been taken care of. The community hall has been booked, and we have transportation reserved for the field tour. Gary and Ken will take the lead in organizing the field tour.
 - e. Regarding outreach, Megan drafted a one-pager that the local watershed groups will use to advertise the meeting to their communities.
- II. Integration of SWCC with the Lincoln and Lolo Restoration Committees and the Swan Forest Stewardship Committee
 - a. The group discussed the need to ensure that the SWCC Prioritization Committee's work engages the local committees so that the information can flow both ways. It was suggested that we potentially hold an annual joint meeting of the SWCC and the local committees to facilitate this communication and collaboration.
 - i. **Next Steps:** Add as agenda item to next Lincoln, Lolo, and SWCC meetings.
- III. Lessons learned from the monitoring proposal process
 - a. Suggestions going forward include:
 - i. Allow for a longer process (i.e. more time between advertisement of the RFP, proposal submission, and review) that takes into account the time needed to set up agreements.
 - ii. Make the RFP much more public.
 1. This would need to be framed as a partnership opportunity in order to fit the FS' agreement requirement of "mutual benefit."
 - iii. Potentially add a pre-proposal process.
 - iv. Avoid having a Monitoring Committee member vote down, in the SWCC meeting, a proposal that was recommended by the Monitoring Committee.
 - v. Start planning for the FY2012 process ASAP.
 - vi. Try to set it up so that FY2012 money can be spent in FY2012 (as opposed to FY2013) in order to enable more FS participation.
 - vii. Monitoring Committee should develop a work plan for the year, including a timeline of what will be completed by when, to help ensure that work is done in a timely manner.
 - viii. Ensure as similar an evaluation and funding process as possible between FS-led and non-FS-led monitoring projects.
- IV. Colt Summit project potential field trip & timing

- a. Some SWCC members have requested a field tour of Colt Summit in order to better understand the project. The Executive Committee is supportive of this idea and suggested holding the tour in August, if possible.
 - i. **ACTION ITEM:** Megan will send a Doodle poll to SWCC voting members and participants to get this scheduled.
- b. Update on the Project
 - i. The original project decision was upheld by the review panel, but the Lolo NF was asked to reanalyze the effects of the project on soils. The Lolo NF specialists have completed this second analysis, and they found that the soil impacts resulting from the project are actually less than what was originally stated.
 - ii. Debbie will send a letter next week to interested parties providing and update on the project and stating their intent to move forward with implementation.
 - iii. The Lolo NF is moving forward with the stewardship contract side of the project. They hope to advertise the contracts in late August and to aware them in late September. A public works contract on the project should be awarded within the next couple of weeks.
 - iv. Recently, a goshawk nest was found in one cutting unit, and so the Lolo NF is working to modify that unit to accommodate nest.
 - v. The Lolo NF has been working with FWS on notice of intent to sue under ESA they received. The FWS and Lolo NF recently sent a letter to the opposition's lawyer explaining why they think they are well within the confines of Section 7 of the ESA.

V. UM Biomass facility

- a. The proposed UM biomass facility was recently appealed, and the appeal tied the facility to the SWCC. Given that the SWCC is in no way formally or informally connected to the UM facility, the question was raised as to whether we should clarify our relationship to the UM facility in any way.
- b. The appeal referenced the SWCC Work Plan, in which the UM biomass facility is listed under "infrastructure needed to implement the project."
 - i. This is an inaccuracy in our Work Plan. While we do need some biomass market for the sustainability of our projects, we don't need the UM plant specifically in order to meet our objectives.
 - ii. The Committee recommended that we revise our Work Plan to correct this error.
 - iii. **ACTION ITEM:** Sandy and Megan will work to get the SWCC Work Plan corrected with respect to "needed infrastructure."

VI. Process for moving from NEPA-ready projects to collaboratively developed projects

- a. The group agreed that this is more of an issue for the Swan Lake District, as the Seeley and Lincoln Districts have been working for years with the

Lolo and Lincoln Restoration Committees, respectively, to collaboratively develop projects.

- b. As discussed previously, we will add this to our August 24th SWCC meeting agenda.

VII. Funding as we move forward with implementation

- a. Debbie reported that there is some extra CFLR money due to some CFLR projects coming in under budget. This is fairly typical, as some projects com in a little over, and some a little under, budget due to various reasons.

- i. Right now Debbie isn't sure exactly how much money is left over, but she can find out.

- ii. There are a few options for what to do with this money:

- 1. Rich has expressed interest in using some of it to supplement monitoring funding in the Swan (for Meadow Smith old growth monitoring and cutthroat genetics monitoring).

- 2. The money could be carried over into FY2012, but there is a risk that the money will be lost by not using it this fiscal year.

- 3. The FS can add more work to existing contracts and agreements in order to get more work done.

- iii. Debbie was interested in hearing the Executive Committee's thoughts on what we could do with this extra money.

- 1. The group agreed that we would like to ensure that the money is spent in a manner that is consistent with FLRA, the CFLR Field Guide, and the SWCC's CFLRP proposal while at the same time not hindering the flexibility of the local land managers in terms of deciding where, specifically, this money goes.

- 2. Given the short time frame, the Executive Committee supports the FS moving forward in deciding how to allocate these extra funds consistent with FLRA, the field guide, and our CFLR proposal.