

Next meeting: July 21, 1-3 PM

Joint NEWFC/CNF Bi-monthly Meeting Minutes
June 5, 2011

Forest Service attending: Supervisor Laura Jo West, Rodney Smolden, Elizabeth Brann, Al Watson

NEWFC: Russ Vaagen, Ron Gray, Lloyd McGee, Tim Coleman, Steve West, Bob Playfair, Mike Petersen, Derrick Knowles, Maurice Williamson, Jeff Juel, Steve West, Steve McConnell, John Eminger

Others attending: Cassandra Hemphill (U of MT), Mitch Friedman

Agenda:

Introductions; Review Agenda

1. Forest Service Leadership Updates - Laura Jo West
2. NEWFC Updates - Russ
3. Monitoring
4. NEWFC Questions & Comments
5. CNF Follow-up
6. Public Comments

1. Forest Service Updates - Laura Jo West

There are two district ranger vacancies and both should be filled by September. The Rainbow Family now appears to be holding their annual gathering in the Gifford-Pinchot NF. Budget outlook is grim and expectation is budget declines will continue over the next couple of years. Early-out retirement is being offered to department staff, and it is likely that “buy-out” options will also be offered. Both of these will effect several individuals on staff at the CNF. Forest Enterprise Teams offer additional capacity for NEPA or contract preparation. As we look for opportunities to expand the Enterprise Team is an important consideration. FS is going to take a landscape look regarding projects and look forward to working with NEWFC to identify efficiencies so that we are all poised and ready to take advantage of forest restoration opportunities and linking that to the new forest plan.

A Forest Plan revision draft has been given a thumbs up by RO. Expect to roll it out in late June with county commissioners, the public and including NEWFC. There will be open house meetings in various communities around the region during the 60-day comment period. There will be a Colville specific proposal. Controversy is a necessary element of change and that is good and necessary part of the evolutionary aspects of collaboration. There may be some frustration but the Forest is supportive of collaboration over the long haul. Laura Jo encouraged the Coalition to expand its community base.

Q.. CFLRP: what’s the word?

A. The Review Committee is likely to meet in July. 2010 funding came in late last FY and it looks like 2011 will be similar.

Q. How accepting will the FS be regarding the Coalition proposing significant tweaking to its Forest Plan strategy?

A. The Forest has spoken to the RO about the potential for a collaborative forest plan preferred alternative.

2. NEWFC Updates – Russ

The Coalition held its election today. Added to the Board was Bart George from Backcountry Hunters and Anglers. The Coalition is hopeful the inclusion of BHA will attract other groups to participate. The Coalition wants to collaborate with other groups. We have worked toward common ground though it seems often the reason groups won't join the Coalition because the perception is that would cause a loss of autonomy. The Coalition is going to hold a retreat and discuss its future and report back. Russ is now NEWFC president, Ron is VP, Steve is treasurer and Tim is secretary. The Coalition is doing small group outreach about its balanced approach for managing the Colville National Forest which provides for growth opportunities that benefit economic development including increased timber outputs, expanded recreation opportunities including wilderness.

Q. Rodney the Big D (decision) is made at the project level – how do we get the recreation and cattlemen engaged in that process?

A. We've tried and both groups have participated in NEWFC meetings. The challenge is groups being confident that participation does not take away their autonomy.

3. Vegetation management

Elizabeth covered existing projects situation. She will send Tim a copy of the latest vegetation projects and he will distribute it to the Coalition and post it to NEWFC website.

5. Monitoring

Misery Project monitoring is not complete because of weather related impacts that have slowed project completion. Hillary would like to hold a soil survey training session. No discussion has occurred regarding FS team multi-party monitoring objectives being carried out by Maurice's team.

6. Forest Service Wilderness Recommendations

How can the Coalition help the FS put to rest the perception that some PWAs are not wilderness quality? Al explained that some of the misperception on the part of motorized is that PWAs will result in a loss of access. Also there is a misunderstanding that IRAs were identified using a list of criteria from the WO rather than being a local decision.

Mike felt that people are being incorrectly led to believe that the entire national forest in the Kettle Crest is going to be designated as wilderness. John E noted that wilderness has framed the debate and it doesn't need to.

Q. Does the Forest Plan draft give the Forest Service the opportunity to discuss not only wilderness but also other alternative designations that might give assurance to other groups that their use will continue?

A. Laura Jo: We all need to heighten the awareness of groups that there are a lot of non-wilderness opportunities out there.

Opportunities for outreach include field tours, an emphasis on abundance rather than scarcity and thus helping the public to understand everyone's interests are being addressed.

b

End

Adjourned: 3:27 PM

Filename: 11 June Joint CNF-NEWFC mtg notes.doc
Directory: C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\Desktop
Template: C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\Application
Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot
Title: Approved -- Joint NEWFC/CNF Bi-monthly Meeting
Subject:
Author: Tim Coleman
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 6/9/2011 3:18 PM
Change Number: 14
Last Saved On: 7/8/2011 12:52 PM
Last Saved By: Tim Coleman
Total Editing Time: 45 Minutes
Last Printed On: 9/24/2014 4:14 PM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 2
Number of Words: 815 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 4,651 (approx.)