

Notes – November 13, 2014

Tenmile – South Helena Forest Restoration Collaborative Committee

Attending as Collaborative Members: Joe Cohenour, Gary Marks, Leonard Wortman, Jordan Alexander, Mike Bishop, Doug Powell, Ron Alles

Attending as resources: Brian Kahn, Allen Byrd, Sarah Elkins, Dave Callory (HNF), Sharon Scott (HNF), Brad Langsather (City of Helena)

Next meeting: Wednesday, December 3 – 1pm City/County building

Discuss governance, review comments, create list

1. Brian Kahn described the collaborative process and offered examples of work with the original Tenmile Collaborative working group. A few questions were raised:
 - While working with a consensus based group, what happens if someone votes no?*
 - When making a decision, individuals may vote thumbs up, thumbs sideways (can live with it), or thumbs down. The minority voter(s) must take the responsibility to find solutions. Brian suggested the group give the facilitator authority to request a private meeting when necessary.
 - How do we prevent or limit litigation?*
 - Brian reminded the group that while we cannot control the court, the court will appreciate and give special consideration to plans approved by collaborative working groups. The support from a variety of community members speaks volumes in those decisions by the court.
 - It will also help to have a variety of people at the table, participating. The current group is still short two members: a recreational user/organization representative, and a conservation organization representative. It's imperative that the group have representatives from those organizations.
 - Understanding issues brought up in specific areas, and researching those issues to come up with compromises and solutions will also help in terms of limiting litigation activities. The group must honestly reach out to all constituencies to understand issues and concerns to fully recognize the need for compromise.
2. Ron Alles & Allen Byrd spoke about the expectations for the collaborative, Allen distributed a variety of materials: original collaborative recommendations, Tri-County Regional Community Wildfire Protection Plan (both of these helped inform the FS when creating the current scoping document), the collaborative contact list, scoping document & map (large format for each participant). Allen explained in some detail the use of fire behavior modeling tools in developing the proposal.

Discussion points throughout the meeting follow:

- Roads -
Discussion on fire fighter access via roads – topic for discussion (Jordan Alexander has some ideas about which roads are tactical/essential for firefighting & access, he will collect those as much as possible from other fire agencies to bring forward for discussion.)
Temporary: decommissioned when projects are complete

Page 5 of scoping – uses language from original recommendations; an equal distance of existing system and non-system road needs to have been decommissioned in follow up to the travel planning process or by other means, in advance of the construction of the temporary road, and a legally binding mechanism is used to assure timely removal.

- Elk cover – topic for discussion
Two different definitions, FS vs. FWS. For this project we're using the FS definition and there will be discussion to combine and fine tune the definition to be used
- Roadless area will be biggest target; will need to work hard at alternatives and solutions
- Concern – buffer zone between FS/public & private properties. Buffer zones serve multiple purposes: protect homes, protect transportation corridors, slow spread, decrease risk to city & city water.
- Can the group tour areas treated in the variety of treatments being proposed to use those observations in decision making? This will help in speaking to the public and developing buy-in.

ACTION ITEMS:

Group will review scoping document and map on their own; bring site specific comments and recommendations to the next meeting. *Comments during scoping period must be specific - site specific, specific concern, i.e. fire, elk, other wildlife. Forest Service will have two strategies: analyze particular item, develop alternatives (proposal, action on the ground).*

Comments should be submitted to the FS individually and copy Sarah (selkins@helenamt.gov). At the next meeting, all comments will be discussed. The collaborative will provide a list of recommendations and comments. The list may not be fully vetted and listed as a consensus recommendation, but will offer insights of the group while FS works through alternatives. FS may provide comments from the public as part of the next meeting so the committee can see the more broad community attitude toward proposals.