

MEMORANDUM

To: Tenmile South Helena Forest Restoration Committee, the City of Helena, stakeholders, resources, and media
From: Sarah Elkins, City of Helena Point-of-Contact (Notes taken by Mike Bishop)
Date: January 12, 2017
Re: Meeting notes for Wednesday, January 11, 2017 Collaborative meeting from 1:30pm-3:30pm in room 426 of the City-County Building

Attendance

Collaborative Committee Members – Chairman Joe Cohenour, conservation organization representative, Co-Vice Chair Jordan Alexander, fire community representative, Co-Vice Chair Mike Bishop, citizen at-large representative, Brad Langsather, City of Helena representative (for Ron Alles), Jeff Chaffee, commercial use representative, Doug Powell, citizen at-large
Stakeholders – Robert Rasmussen (interested citizen, Prickly Pear Land Trust)
Resources – Abigail Lane (FS), Sarah Elkins (City of Helena), Jill Feldhusen (MT Watershed Coordination Council)

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:30PM

REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes requested or suggested.

HEAR THE PUBLIC

No comments.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

- TSHC re-authorization – Nothing to report. A committee will be convened in February or March to review the current resolution and make suggested changes to present to the city manager and City Commission.
- Joe shared an update about his presentation to the City Commission at their administrative meeting on January 4, 2017. The slide show he used is available on the website, and he distributed a few copies of the printed presentation. He was asked by the Helena Citizens Council to give a similar presentation; they were unaware of the activities of the collaborative.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Mt Forest Collaboration Network statewide meeting-Jeff, Mike, Brad, & Joe

Jeff described the meeting as well attended, with 18+ collaborative organizations represented, creating an impressive state-wide network.

Mike said the break-out sessions on the last day were eye-opening in that each group described key statewide issues and there were quite a few common concerns. Each group came up with issues and Mike is hopeful that all of those will be shared in the coming months. He was impressed with the Forest Service's encouragement of collaborative efforts.

Brad is optimistic in the new parties getting seats at the table, particularly recreation representatives. He mentioned that having this kind of participation at all levels improves end

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results. A discussion continued regarding the huge economic and environmental impacts of outdoor recreation on our forests/watersheds and on the state in general.

Joe mentioned the series of Missoulian articles on the topic of collaborations by Rob Chaney; he's glad to see these efforts being recognized and valued, and bringing attention to them from a broader audience (newspaper/community readers).

2. Montana Watershed Coordination Council, Jill Feldhusen (<http://mtwatersheds.org/app/>)

Annual meeting: February 3, 10am – 4:30pm at Montana Wild \$30, lunch included. Register on their website: <http://mtwatersheds.org/app/annual-meeting-registration/>. There are scholarships available.

Jill mentioned some of the speakers, Tom Livers, John Tubbs, FWP representative, Governor's Office representative, Chris Smith from Wildlife Management Institute, Bryce Maxell from National Heritage Program.

Jill mentioned the State Watersheds Report compiled in response to a request by DNRC. She will distribute some hard copies to us when it is published, and we will link to the report and their website from our website. The MWCC will produce legislative bulletins throughout the session, identifying and following bills impacting budget and policy related to our Montana watersheds. They also produce monthly newsletters with events and updates, job openings, etc.

3. Hln L&C Forest Plan-USFS

Public Meeting: January 24, 4pm – 7pm at the Radisson Hotel in Helena, and at the Townsend Library on January 25, 5pm – 7pm.

Abby gave a brief update on the Forest Plan and the intention for the public meetings, which is a different format from previous meetings. The focus of the public meetings scheduled is to help the public understand how to comment more effectively on the plan, not necessarily to introduce the plan in a workshop-type setting. They will answer questions about the plan, but the intention is more to educate the public about the way comments are received, reviewed, and incorporated into decisions.

The plan was released on December 1, 2016 for the 120 day comment period, which ends on March 31, 2017.

The collaborative discussed the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum map, which demonstrates different categories, or zones of acceptable recreation use across the forest. Joe mentioned some concern about cyclists creating trails off the system trails, particularly in the Elkhorns, which is the only Wildlife Management Block of its kind in the country. Here's the [article](#) Joe mentioned on recreation vs. wildlife.

All at the table agreed that there is concern about the impact of cyclists, horseback riders, and hikers on wildlife and the overall IRA and wilderness areas. Similar to the changes to motorized vehicle access years ago, e.g. 4-wheelers and snowmobiles, there needs to be discussion about

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the impact of cyclists, horseback riders and hikers on the landscape and wildlife. All agreed that as long as there are representatives of those recreation groups, compromises can be reached.

Discussion continued regarding how to visualize and apply these Recreation Opportunity Spectrum designations using city and county zoning concepts. Zoning is often considered a limit to personal choices on personal property; the overall community benefits from thoughtful zoning decisions.

Regarding comments to be discussed and submitted by the collaborative, it was agreed that collaborative members are encouraged to read chapter 2 thoroughly, as well as the Divide Geographic Area (about 10 pages), and the appendices. Joe highlighted appendix C, Wildlife Habitat Impacts, as one to read closely, as that has major potential for litigation after the recent [Cottonwood](#) decision.

At the next collaborative meeting, the group will follow the structure of the DEIS comments, and will break into groups to address each category. Individuals are encouraged to review the other geographic areas in the Forest Plan to provide their own comments, outside the collaborative comments, particularly if they wish to have individual standing later in the process.

Joe said he would contact Lois Olsen, a retired FS resource to help with review and comments for the next meeting.

- **Action Item:** Members are asked to review the Forest Plan as directed above, and send a bullet list of concerns/issues to address with the group. This will help the group identify common concerns/issues to focus attention on in the overall comments.
- **Action Item:** As per Doug Powell's comment regarding the limited mapped area of proposed wilderness in the Lazyman IRA (only a small eastern portion is mapped because of Superfund status in the majority, western portion of the site), and Robert Rasmussen's revelation that it was mapped the same way in the South Helena/Tenmile Watershed DEIS, **Mike Bishop** will assist **Doug Powell** and others in identifying who needs to be contacted to address the issues in both projects. (FS-Alan Byrd, DEQ, EPA, etc.)

FUTURE MEETING DATES AND AGENDA ITEMS:

1. **February 8, 2017** – (Sarah & Abby are not available for this meeting. Collaborative members must plan for an alternative note-taker.)
Collaborative members will begin the comment process, breaking into groups to address categories.
2. **March 8, 2017** – This meeting will focus on break-out group comments proposed to compile for the March 31, 2017 deadline.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 3:35 PM