

**Draft \* Draft \* Draft**  
**North Central Idaho Resource Advisory Committee**  
Meeting Notes  
May 21, 2004

**Meeting Location:** Super 8 Motel  
Grangeville, ID

**RAC Members Present:** Kent Henderson (chairman), David Ponozzo, George Enneking, Susan Borowicz, John Nelson, Fred Trevey, Dennis Baird, Harlan Opdahl, Robert Hafer, Donald McPherson, Ronald Hartig, Don Heckman, William Mulligan

**RAC Replacement Members Present:** Bob Abbott, David Bodine

**Designated Federal Official:** Ihor Mereszczak

**Recorder:** Maple Kirtland

## **I. Call to Order and Agenda Review**

Introductions (members and guests): Leanne Wagele, Steve Bess, Meg Foltz, John Keerseemaker, Mike Cook, Jim Rehder, Vern Bretz, Gary Manning, Twila Hornbeck, Joyce Dearstyne, Terry Nevius, Doug Gober, Jack Carlson, Nate Lanegher

Agenda Adjustments – Bill – Update on Status of N. Lochsa Face Lawsuit – None.

## **II. Meeting Minutes – April 13, 2004**

Corrections or suggestions – Salmon River Road project...fee demo for use of the river and not the road.

Page 10 motion maker – Bill Mulligan

**Motion** - Don McPherson

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Bill Mulligan

**Motion Carried**

## **III. Recommendations for Reauthorization of PL 106-393**

### **Comments:**

- ✘ All RAC members agreed and were in favor of the reauthorization.
- ✘ All RAC members agreed this has been a learning experience and feel that they have built a good working relationship from all sectors of the communities and have accomplished some goals.
- ✘ Strong feeling that the counties would not be able to make it without these funds.
- ✘ Funds back to the counties have not been brought back to the levels as before. At this point there is not other way.

- ✘ Although Latah County has not been a big player in this there is support for reauthorization. It has been a big improvement to the schools and roads.
- ✘ Reauthorization is desperately needed for schools. The school districts need the funds for operations, text books, and salaries.
- ✘ Although some of the focus has been on the timber industry it would be good to hear from the recreation side on what is needed to help build up the 25% fund to the counties.
- ✘ This has been a positive and well balanced group.
- ✘ Without the dollars from the RAC counties would have shrinking budgets. It's unlikely that we will see timber harvest back to the levels it was in the past to generate the 25% fund.
- ✘ We need to come up with some long term business that will employ people and bring dollars back into the communities. Would like to see the forest service and environmental groups work together on a project(s) and avoid the fight.
- ✘ For Idaho County where only 17% is county they will not get the funds needed to maintain the schools and roads without reauthorization. At this time Idaho County cannot do without the funds.
- ✘ Need to look farther ahead at some projects such as old clear cuts that have been regenerated and see if there is some project to maintain a healthy forest.
- ✘ Look forward to reaction opportunities also. We need to support some reaction industry so they have the opportunity to come to the front.
- ✘ Without the reauthorization Clearwater County would be cut down to about \$100,000 and would not be able to operate.
- ✘ We need to sell ourselves to let the congressional people know what we've been doing. Make it clear to the legislators that the counties cannot survive without the funds.
- ✘ Make it clear that the FS embraces the RAC as a tool to be able to accomplish their mission. Even though there is a lot of talk about timber the RAC is important to the counties, communities, and the FS. This needs to be communicated clearly to the legislator.
- ✘ The watersheds are important to all communities to be viable. In order to maintain healthy watersheds we need to maintain healthy forests. To maintain healthy forests we need to be able to cut timber. A line of opposition should not be drawn between recreation and timber. To attract people to our communities we need to help the communities be viable.
- ✘ The Idaho Association of Counties passed a resolution to accept a 10% reduction of these funds and expect that they would be picked up by traditional means. The total RAC dollars nation-wide would be reduced 10% to force the communities to come up with those funds. This may be a way to force the FS to increase to make up the 10%. Cannot see the benefit from this.
- ✘ The forests are in a transition phase. We cannot burn out way to sustaining the communities. We still need to cut some timber to assist in keeping our forests healthy.
- ✘ We need to take a look at other areas in terms in bug kill, disease, and fire and then look at what's happening here in the Clearwater Basin. If we use fire to help maintain a healthy forest there are lessons to be learned in other areas were the conditions of the forest are in such a manner that prescribed burning is not safe.
- ✘ We need to keep in mind the revision of the plans on the 2 forests. The way the revision comes out will dictate how we will use the lands and what goes on in the forests. Just a tail end of what we have been talking about.

Leanne Wagele: It would be beneficial for Senator Craig to hear this from the RAC; either by the group or by category. It's realistic that reauthorization would not be looked at by congress until January. Appreciates that you took the time to talk about this and will take it back to Senator Craig.

However it would also be good to go to Senator Craig and the others highlighting some of the projects and how they helped the communities.

Kent: Beneficial that we put together a letter for all to sign saying that the RAC strongly endorses the reauthorization of the C-W Bill and include specific examples of highlighted projects. This should include the types of projects i.e., fish habitat, watershed, etc. We have time to put this together and come up with projects. Also include the thought of the categories working together.

#### **IV. Financial Report**

Ihor Mereszczak – Letter from Larry Dawson expression appreciation of the RAC.

**\*\*include financial report \*\***

##### Discussion:

- ✘ On the \$885,000 is the balance of our set aside included – Yes
- ✘ Expenditures from last meeting – May 10 – The RAC has approved CE projects of up to \$235,000
- ✘ It should not be there to use the funds unless needed. On the majority of the cases we come out below the actual funds approved.
- ✘ Section 204F projects, no credit was given to that on the CE projects that were approved. Should some percentage of those projects be given credit to section 204F project? Ihor will look into it.

#### **V. Project Proposals**

Deer Creek Highway Project. Authorization for FY 04 Funds.

Motion to approve.

**Motion** - Dave Ponozzo

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup>** - Don Heckman

**Motion Carried Unanimous**

#### **Palouse Stand Exams – Gary Manning, Silviculturist, Palouse RD**

This project includes 5000 acres of stand exams. The Palouse RD has not done exams for 6 or 7 years. Some area exams are 10 years old. The project exams would provide information for restoration of white pine, fuel reductions, and a wide range of projects to be done on the National Forest. At this time the District is using a growth simulation model for data that would be similar to a stand exam. However, without current data, the model is not completely accurate.

##### Discussion:

- NEPA does not need to be done to do stand exams, however to do the projects that are a result of the exams NEPA will need to be done.
- We do look at adjacent ownership for affects and changes that have occurred on their land. It usually does not limit us unless there is cumulative affects on watershed.
- Disappointed that they are asking for \$35,000 and only put up \$5,000 for the project considering this is the basis of their timber harvest.
- Previous discussion was that the moneys allocated were not marked for stand exams. In the early 1990's stand exam funds were not given to the forests to collect the data needed for timber projects. There is no funding in the FS to do stand exams. The \$5,000 is taken from timber management funds.
- Information collect from stand exams is good for about 10 years. That is normally the window of the validity of the information. We have been using old data to input to the models to come up with simulated data.
- This is a good leverage contract item to keep the FS on schedule and information that is needed for making good decisions.

Motion to accept this project.

Point of order – vote on each project and when needed break into groups. Show of hands on votes.

**Motion** – Susie Borowicz

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup>** - Jack Nelson

**Motion Carried**

Suggestion that the forest consider more of these types of projects.

### **Idaho Marina Weeds Signage – Ihor Mereszczak (for Andy Brunelle)**

This project is a State wide effort for each RAC to put in \$2,000 to put signs at marinas for aquatic weed spread and management of aquatic weeds. Educational effort will be contracted. Signs will be placed at all public boat launches at rivers and lakes. There will be contributions from other agencies. Names of the people who contribute will be put on the signs. Parks and Rec. will make up the difference of what is needed to purchase and install the signs.

Motion to accept this project.

**Motion** – Dave Ponozzo

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Don Heckman

**Motion Carried**

### **Mica Mine Closure – Ron Hartig and Vern Bretz:**

This project deals with the safety issue of miles that were abandoned and left. Rather than blowing them shut barriers would be used so future use of the times is not impacted. This would allow for opening them back up if the market were to come back. It also protects the history of the area.

These mines were selected because they are in close proximity of roads and highways. Access to the mines is easy. We do not have the funds or ways to deal with the safety issue. In the future we need to be able to have access to the mines if mineral prices go back up.

It will be a challenge to close the mines. The use of the culvert type of barrier and back fill makes it difficult to get into them. This is cheaper to close them this way rather than to dynamite them shut.

This is the first mining related project brought before the RAC and if there are resources inside the mines that we need to be able to get back into them

Motion to approve this project.

**Motion** - Bill Mulligan

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup>** - Harlan Opdahl

**Motion Carried**

Break for lunch at 12:00.

Meeting called back to order at 1:00 pm

### **Elk City Defensible Space – Joyce Dearstyne/ Terry Nevius**

This project is for reduction of fuels in and around at-risk structures to provide for structure protection and fire fighter safety.

It is a multi-year agreement. Chip and scatter the branches back into the forest and in some areas be able to grass seed with native grasses. This will provide forage habitat and possibly force out weeds by grass planting. Framing Our Community would like to see the materials cut, i.e. small diameter trees be used as merchantable materials. As was discussed at the last meeting we have also applied for Stevens Funds to treat the private ground adjacent to FS land.

Machines used will be the type with a grapple type of attachment to be able to bring cut trees out in groups rather than skid them out. The trees will then be decked in one area for merchantable material. This type of machine will also cut trees at ground level to leave a park type of appearance.

#### **Discussion:**

- What type of slope will this operate on? Most of the area does not have much slope. In areas where there is a 30% slope we will look at other type of equipment.
- Why didn't this project fall under the fire plan money or under the Healthy Forest Initiative? It's a matter appropriation of moneys by congress. Due to the budget cycle the \$7 M has not been appropriated and at this time we cannot wait. We would like to get out on the ground by mid-June.
- If this project is not funded by RAC do you see this project getting done? If the fire season does not take our workforce away it will. The fire crew is our workforce to getting this done.

- The RAC funds will not pay for FS employees. The FS will pay for monitoring employees and the RAC funding will pay for other employees hired from the community. If the Forest Service does this project the FOC will not be a participating organization. It will also not produce the commodity from the trees that will be cut.
- Merchantable material will be burned in slash piles if the FS fire fighters do the project. With FOC crews the material will be used as merchantable. With the participating agreement we give back to each of the participating agencies a percentage of funds with the FOC keeping only 10% for operating expenses. It's unique that there is a project that will pay back. If we put the moneys back into the pot it will possibly help fund another project.
- Under the fire plan the moneys for this area are not as much as the urban areas. There is not enough to even fund the fire fighters that had to be hired from the fire plan.

Motion to accept this project as a stewardship project and use the goods for services.

**Motion – Bill Mulligan**

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> – Susie Borowicz**

**Motion Carried Unanimous**

Commend Joyce for bringing this project to the RAC.

### **Lochsa Weeds - Nate**

At this time we are only asking for approval of the first portion of the project using goats. This was agreed to by phone from Joni Packard, Powell District Ranger. The long term view is to do treatments using goats to kill back the knapweed and then plant back native grasses. Goats will eat just about anything and have been used successfully in Southern Idaho. When planting grass seed back in to the areas where goats are currently being used the goats' hooves act as planting drills to put the seeds back in the ground. This year it would cost \$4,500. The contractor is from Salmon Idaho. Goats are also being used in thinning projects.

Motion to accept the first portion of this project for \$4,500.

**Motion - Bob Hafer**

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> – Don McPherson**

**Motion Carried**

### **Gezel Creek Heritage – Doug Gober** **CNF Heritage Resource – Steve Bess**

Gezel Creek Heritage -We currently have 2 contracted employees who are doing this type of work and who do not have all their time funded. This would give us the latitude to schedule their time to do this work. We go out to a contract agency with specs on what type of experience we need and the contract agency provides the people. This project is specific to the Gezel Creek area.

CNF Heritage Resource – Under this project the CNF would hire 2 season employees to do heritage surveys across the forest. The sites are spread throughout the forest.

Discussion:

- ✘ It would be more palatable if the CNF would contract these employees.
- ✘ The summer marking crew project is also asking to fund seasonal employees. We should not make a hard and fast rule about not funding employees. We should apply this to permanent employees but not necessarily to seasonal employees.

Motion to accept both of the projects using a contractor. Amend to split the contract to not hold up Gezel Creek project and reevaluate the CNF Heritage to use a contractor.

**Motion** – Dave Ponozzo

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Bill Mulligan

**Motion Carried**

Further Discussion: For the CNF project it may end up costing more under a contract since the sites are scattered across the forest.

**Pierce-Superior Surface Treatment – Doug Gober**

Provide dust abatement and stabilization on the French Mountain road. It is a main route to the North Fork. This will be contracted. It is not shown as a cost-share; however there will be work done on the lower nine miles of this road.

Discussion:

- Would like to see this tied to another project such as a timber sale.
- What percentage goes through potlatch owned land? None, all on FS land.
- If not funded, through RAC this project will probably not get done.
- This road is and will be an on going problem. The FS needs to look at places like this for long term solutions.
- This is the type of project that would be good to highlight and bring forward to the congressional representatives.
- Not treating this road and not protecting the capital investment on this road would be a waste. This is the kind of project we can fund and send a message back to the FS to find solutions for long term.
- There is a relationship to the Pierce community with people using the road for recreation.
- If not done we will lose the investment on the road and it will cost more in the future to fix if there is a timber sale or other projects back in that area. This is an important road.
- Would like to see a sign on both ends of the road so we get credit.
- With the repaired road would like to recommend going back to the FS to recommend a timber sale in that area.

Motion to accept this project to include signage on both ends.

**Motion** – Don McPherson

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Don Heckman

## **Motion Carried**

## **VI. Public Forum**

Jim Rehder: Find this to be a very positive interaction between the public and FS. Recommend that we continue.

## **VII. Project Proposals (continued)**

### Update on the Salmon River Project – George Enneking/Mike Cook

- ✘ This project would include about 13.5 miles from Partridge Creek to the end of the road. The project would be to put a hard surface on the road so that dust abatement would not be a concern. It would cost approximately \$900,000 to \$1.0 M to do the work. The SW Idaho RAC is also interested in getting this project done. It can be split into a 2 phase plan.
- ✘ Central Idaho RAC, SW Idaho RAC, Nez Perce NF, Salmon-Challis NF, and Idaho County, are interested in working on getting this project done. There is no way that Idaho County can do this alone and this RAC can't do it alone. Maybe if we can get all the interested parties involved and split the cost then it can get done. They Payette NF is also interested.
- ✘ There is no proposal for this project but would like to see if there is a possibility to set aside some funds contingent on getting the other parties involved.

### Decision:

- ★ Draft a letter from the Forest Service and RAC to each of the entities for interest in this project and set up a date to sit down and talk with them. Mike will get the addresses.
- ★ Signatures on the letter should include Idaho County commissioner. May also want to include the SW Idaho RAC. To show that we are sincere in this effort we should set aside funds similar to the CE money. Will talk more about it at the June meeting

### Seven Devils Road – Mike Cook/George Enneking

This project is completed through the first part. The second part will be complete. They will put together an information package for the RAC to highlight this project and can use it to take to the congressional reps to show a positive project.

### CNF roadside brushing – Doug Gober

### CNF Road signs and Installation – Doug Gober

Both proposals are on all districts on the Clearwater NF. The brushing would include doing some hand brushing on roads that are used for timber sales. The signs and installation is on various roads. Both proposals are due to lack of budget. The signage and roadside brushing would also help with safety. Road use and width is reduced to sometimes 1 lane roads because of brush growing into the road.

The signs would be bought and installed by a contractor.

No motion for the projects.

**Meadow Creek Slide Stabilization – Mike Cook**

**Meadow Face Culvert – Mike Cook**

Meadow Cr. slide is a main contributor to the sediment that is put in the South Fork of the Clearwater River. The NEPA is done. It would be put out for contracting.

Meadow Face Culvert replacement is to do the survey and design through a contract. There are several culverts in the area that are fish passage culverts and have barriers to fish passage.

Both project were part of the Otter Winter timber sale.

Motion to accept the projects.

**Motion** – George Enneking

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Don McPherson

**Motion Carried Unanimous**

**Fish Creek Riparian Fence – Mike Cook**

This project has a fair number of other contributors who want to participate. There is the Tribe, the Permittee, and FS to complete this project. The plan is to put in both wire and pole fencing to protect habitat. Pole fence would be in the scene area and wire fencing in other parts. This would also eliminate putting in hot wire fencing.

Maintenance on the existing fence is being done by the permittee and the FS. On the new fence the maintenance would be done by permittee and Tribe. This would also help with fish habitat by keeping the stock out of the creek.

**Discussion:**

- ✘ From a rancher's standpoint it is a positive project.
- ✘ There is a concern with barb wire fence for snowmobiles. Barb wire fencing is dangerous in deep snow and in the dark. Snowmobile routes are in this area. Agrees that this project should be done however would like to have input on the material used for the fencing.
- ✘ For use with the let down fencing the FS should be the ones responsible for letting them down.
- ✘ Maybe it would be appropriate to put it in the monitoring plan that the FS would put them down.

Motion to accept this project with let down fence and that the FS will be responsible to let it down, maintenance will be done by the permittee, Tribe, and FS. If there is a cost under run then it will be returned to the RAC.

**Motion** – Don Heckman  
**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Bill Mulligan  
**Motion Carried**

Will check out partnership with the Parks and Rec.

**Middle Black noxious weeds – Doug Gober**  
**Middle Black Shrub Cutting – Doug Gober**

Withdraw the noxious weeds project.

Shrub cutting – shrub cuttings are to open the areas to better show the middle age stands. Project would open the area around the conifers. The shrubs are sometimes 3 inches in diameter which is above the level of big game use for food. This also allows for new shrubs to grow and is browsed by big game. There has been good results in areas where this has been done and elk do come back to use the area.

Is this all in the winter range areas? No, most of it would fall in summer range areas. It would be desirable to do about 90 more acres.

This is the kind of project that would be good to have monitoring for 5 to 7 years. If this is the kind of projects that provides for a healthy forest, than we should do it.

Motion to accept

**Motion** – Susie Borowicz  
**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Ron Hartig  
**Motion Carried**

**Summer Marking Crew – Steve Bess**

Hire 2 seasonals for marking and cruising and a clerk for inputting.

Discussion:

- ✘ This brings back the same discussion we had earlier about contracting work. It would be more desirable to do under a contract.
- ✘ There are no matching funds from the government or others.
- ✘ If there are contractors around then we should use them. Whether we train seasonals or use contractors it would be the same.
- ✘ It would also be better to do under a contract so that they do not get pulled away for fire

Motion to approve with the change of doing it under a contract

**Motion** – Bill Mulligan  
**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Jack Nelson

**Motion Carried Unanimously**

**West Fork Channel Restoration – Meg Foltz**

Map handout and pictures of channeling due to railroad grades. Channeling would be done to make the channels sinuous. This would also provide for fish habitat for return of steelhead to this stream.

Discussion:

How long will it be before the livestock permittee would be fenced away from the creek? Fencing is not a part of this project.

Clearance from SHPO has been done and consultation has been done with NOAA and fish and game. We still need the channel restoration permit.

Is funding for one year or more? If we can get our funding this year, than we would do it this year.

Is this project for steelhead restoration? Yes, there is some concern about private ownership however fish are making it up to the West Fork.

Do you plan to put brush or shrub in? Yes.

Project fails with no motion

**Jerry Johnson Rehab – Doug Gober**

This project is due to significant removal of hazard trees in the campground. It is a controversial project.

Discussion:

Are they thinking of putting in larger stock of trees in this campground? Yes. Trees both larger and smaller were put in last week.

Would like to hear the ranger about this project.

What happened to the trees that were cut? Logging was done by a service contact and logs were taken to a mill.

Joni is one of the rangers who has not been real involved with the RAC. Would like to hear from Joni and possibly highlight this project.

Another ranger who has not been real involved with the RAC is from the Clearwater RD. Would also would like to have Darcy come too.

Motion to invite Joni to the next RAC meeting and bring visuals of this project.

**Motion – Fred Trevey**

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> – Susie Borowicz**

**Motion Carried**

**Further discussion before moving on with Agenda:**

- ☺ Personally thank Leanne for all her time with the RAC. She has attended most all meetings and has stayed throughout the meetings. Leanne is moving to Seattle.
- ☺ Also, Susie received the Governors Award for her participation and leadership in the Capitol Christmas Tree project.
- ☺ The Boise Trail project was withdrawn.
- ☺ If either of the forests have cat ex projects bring them forward. Our next meeting will be a field trip however we can break out to have a short business meeting to discuss them.

### **VIII. Summer Field Trip – Next Meeting**

Field Trip – Seven Devil’s Road

Date – Thursday, July 22, 2004; 0800

Potluck Lunch

Kent – commends everyone for their participation and getting through the projects.

### **IX. Meeting Adjourned at 4:30 PM by Kent Henderson**