

**Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex  
(BMWC) PUBLIC - LAC Meeting Notes  
April 5, 2008 – Hungry Horse Ranger Station**

**Welcome and Introductions**

**LAC** – Limits of Acceptable Change – General Background and quiz questions asked to get interaction occurring. LAC is a planning system developed by a task force of managers and the public to identify management actions to reduce, prevent, or rehabilitate unacceptable resource and social conditions in the BMWC which includes the Bob Marshall, Scapegoat and Great Bear Wilderness Areas. Specific standards were established of acceptable conditions in different parts of the wilderness. The plan also identified how managers will go about determining which management actions are most suitable to address problem areas. The Recreation Management direction was approved April 1987.

There are 4 opportunity classes ranging from pristine to more heavily traveled river corridors. Opportunities I-IV.

We had a few attendees who participated in original Task Force Efforts: including Smoke Elser, Mike Chandler, and Ken Ausk. Note if we missed someone else – please accept our apology.

**Mack Long – FW&Parks**

The wolf has been delisted. The management will go back to MTFW&P which will include harvest as a management tool. In 2007 approximately 130 wolves were removed from the ecosystem. With that there was still a 30% increase in numbers within the Montana landscape. Elk populations were high when wolves were introduced. Initially there was a dip in calf recruitment, total elk numbers in the BMWC have not gone down. Fires are providing ecological benefits to wildlife species.

**South Fork**

Lake and Stream sampling is continuing. Some lakes and streams have not been sampled for 40 years. Genetics are continuing to be analyzed.

**Mountain Goats**

Mountain Goat populations state wide are on the decline. Harvest is being restricted in hunting units outside of the wilderness. The winter transplant in the Scapegoat has been successful. A lot of factors have contributed to the success of this population.

### **Big Horn Sheep**

Wild Horse Island transplants have been successful.

### **Jeff Darraugh FW&Parks Region 2 Warden**

180 hours of patrol time by 3 people in the Scapegoat country.

Seeley lake Case- 5 felonies with \$50,000 fine and hunting privileges permanently suspended. 100 trophies were seized. One will be displayed at hungry Horse Ranger Station. A second case was successful a few years ago. In both cases game trophies will illegally taken from the Scapegoat.

A concern was brought up about wolf snares being encountered close to the Granite Creek trail in 2007. A request was made to express concerns to the ranger district immediately. The district will follow up on this report.

### **Shannon Feix – Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation – Field director**

The BMWF is seeking individuals from the east side who would like to serve on their board of directors. Individuals could provide input and services per their specific interests and talents. Phone number – 387-3808. The Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation Office is located in the Hungry Horse Ranger Station.

The BMWF is bringing the Mountainfilm Festival world tour on Friday and Saturday in Whitefish April 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> with a matinee held in Helena on Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup>. Call phone number above for tickets or check [www.bmwf.org](http://www.bmwf.org) website for additional information.

There will be three crew leader positions this summer, one at Spotted Bear, one at Choteau and one that will work on GV/HH, Lincoln and Seeley districts. A 4<sup>th</sup> position is currently being advertised to provide leadership to Wilderness Treatment Center volunteer crews.

The BMWF website continues to host the BMWC trail condition report.

A request was made to have BMWF crews trained to assist with LAC monitoring. Crew leaders have not been consistently returning to work year after year for the foundation. The amount of training required for LAC monitoring and oversight needed is why we have continued to conduct campsite monitoring with forest service crews.

### **Mike Munoz – Rocky Mountain District Ranger**

Montana Scenic Loop – Business members of communities around the Complex are members. The route takes you around the BMWC. See their map on their website. [www.montanascenicloop.com](http://www.montanascenicloop.com)

Crown of Continent Map – [www.crownofthecontinent.com](http://www.crownofthecontinent.com) – This map was created in partnership with the National Geographic Conservation Park Association and the Montana Scenic loop group. It is a geotoursim map of the Rocky Mountains from Canada to Hwy 200.

### **2002-2007 Fire Season Update and Overview**

2002-2007-Roughly 250,000 acres burned with 325 miles of system trail affected and 300 LAC sites impacted.

2007 - 140,000 acres burned with 160 miles of system trail affected

**Mushroom permits** – No commercial permits will be issued for wilderness. Free personal use permits may be required in and out of the wilderness if you are picking mushrooms and There are some differences on the forest involved due to the differences of land ownership where the fires occurred and being consistent on the forests. These include: the Flathead is requiring the free special use permit for wilderness and non-wilderness lands. The Lolo National Forest will allow up to 5 gallons incidental use in wilderness and non-wilderness, above 5 gallons a free use permit may be obtained. The Lewis and Clark National Forest will allow up to 5 gallons incidental use in wilderness, and in non-wilderness, above 5 gallons a free use permit is required. **The bottom line is All incidental and personal use must be sliced in half.**

The stock closures implemented in the Ahorn Fire area are still in effect on the Rocky Mountain Front. Trail closures are being implemented on the East Fork Teton, Box Canyon and Washboard Reef trails until trail restoration work can be completed. These trails are closed to stock for safety purposes. Large roots have burned out under the trails on some of the steep sections of these trails making it extremely dangerous for stock use. Note clearing of blow down is first priority before starting on these needs. Culvert replacements on the North Fork Teton Road are not likely to be completed until mid-summer and the follow-up with hazard tree removal along the road to the Massey Tract Residence will also be occurring this summer – public access is likely to be limited to weekends. News releases and updates will be provided..

Burned area emergency rehabilitation funding was received for the following fires in the following amounts.

Fool Creek - \$160,000

Skyland - \$160,000

Ahorn - \$180,000

This will include replacement of drainage structures including turnpikes, puncheon, water bars and hazard tree removal. Weed funding was received for \$150,000 for all 3 fires mentioned.

If you have questions related to the specifics of Raily Mountain, Corporal, Calbick, or more detail of the Flathead portion of Fool Creek, please talk to Spotted Bear staff. There

is extensive trail work in all of these areas and work is planned for this upcoming field season.

**For 2008 trips into the Complex**

*Contact local district offices*

*Check Trail condition report on bmfw website*

*Report any info you have to the districts*

*Be aware of snags and other hazards*

*Evaluate snag hazards at campsites*

*Evaluate Risks continuously*

Acronym used in fire safety:

**S**top

**N**otice

**A**nd

**G**o

**S**afely

The historic fire map will be posted on the Flathead forest web page.

**HH/GV Program Update – Paula Peterson**

Glacier View Hungry Horse District will have a part time packer for the field season. 2 wilderness rangers have been hired with stock experience. Law enforcement officers for SB and HH/GV will patrol horseback this summer.

**Deb Mucklow – Spotted Bear District Ranger**

The Montana Pilots Association in partnership with the forest service has put together a user's guide for backcountry airstrips and trailheads.

**LAC monitoring**

The BMWC has been conducting LAC monitoring for the last 20 years. We have just completed our 4<sup>th</sup> monitoring cycle. The monitoring dates were as follows:

87-92, 93-98, 99-2002, 2003-2007

The LAC recreation directions states 100% of campsites should be monitored within the 5 year monitoring period. 94% of all campsites were monitored for this 5 year period.

The 6 resource areas were reviewed:

RA-1 South Fork Flathead – Spotted Bear RD – Flathead NF

RA-2 Spotted Bear River – Spotted Bear RD – Flathead NF

RA-3 Middle Fork Flathead – Spotted Bear and Hungry Horse – Flathead NF

RA-4 Rocky Mountain Front – Rocky Mountain Ranger District – Lewis & Clark NF

RA-5 Lincoln – Lincoln Ranger District – Helena National Forest

RA-6 Seeley Lake – Seeley Lake Ranger District – Lolo National Forest

More specific info relating to these resource areas is contained within the LAC 2003-2007 monitoring summary handed.

**Review of data summarized Complex wide:**

Within standard for trail encounter standards

Within standard for occupied camps within site and sound – Have met this standard for 20 years.

**Area of Barren Core – Standard**

<b>Opportunity Class I</b>	<b>Opportunity Class II</b>	<b>Opportunity Class III</b>	<b>Opportunity Class III</b>
100 sq ft permitted	500 sq ft permitted	1000 sq ft permitted	2000 sq ft permitted

**Barren Core –**

<b>Opportunity Class</b>	<b># Sites Monitored</b>	<b># Sites with High Index Rating</b>	<b># of Sites with Barren Core Red Flags</b>
I	95	7	16
II	225	31	24
III	589	72	34
IV	644	86	17

**Number of Human Impacted Sites within 640 acres Standard**

<b>Opportunity Class I</b>	<b>Opportunity Class II</b>	<b>Opportunity Class III</b>	<b>Opportunity Class III</b>
1 permitted	2 permitted	3 permitted	6 permitted

**Human Impacted Sites within 640 Acres**

<b>Opportunity Class</b>	<b># of Areas</b>	<b># of sites</b>
I	11	30
II	15	64
III	36	202
IV	28	267

**Number of Human Impacted Sites by Condition within 640 acres - Standard**

<b>Opportunity Class I</b>	<b>Opportunity Class II</b>	<b>Opportunity Class III</b>	<b>Opportunity Class III</b>
No moderately	No more than 1	No more than	No more than

or highly impacted sites per 640 acre area	moderately impacted site and (0) highly impacted sites per 640 acre area	(2) moderately impacted site and (0) highly impacted sites per 640 acre area	(3) moderately impacted site and (0) highly impacted sites per 640 acre area
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**Sites Exceeding Standard within 640 Acres/ particular Condition Class**

<b>Opportunity Class</b>	<b># of 640 Acre Areas above a particular condition Class</b>	<b>Total # of Moderately Impacted Sites</b>	<b>Total # of Highly Impacted Sites</b>
I	14	15	5
II	23	41	13
III	60	139	66
IV	35	178	57

**The BIG Picture**

<b>Ranger District</b>	<b>1991 Wilderness Funding</b>	<b>Minimum funding needed to implement Wilderness Objectives 1991</b>	<b>2008 Wilderness Funding</b>
Lincoln RD	\$37,000	\$106,900	\$ 20,000
Seeley Lake RD	\$41,000	\$128,500	\$ 27,000
Hungry Horse RD	\$49,500	\$ 90,000	\$ 36,000
Rocky Mtn RD	\$69,600	\$240,000	\$118,000
Spotted Bear RD	\$219,000	\$463,000	\$212,000
<b>BMWC Total</b>	<b>\$416,100</b>	<b>\$1,028,400</b>	<b>\$406,800</b>

The funding received from Outfitter and Guide revenues and Trails is not included in this chart – just appropriated wilderness (NFRW) funds.

The meeting proceeded with a approximately 1 ½ hour break out time so participants could meet with individual wilderness managers familiar with respective resource areas and review the maps (posted on Flathead Forest web page) and understand the areas of concern identified – and share specific feedback of ideas for management needs, more monitoring, agreement or disagreement with monitoring as completed. Very positive feedback on the one on one interaction was received.

## **Newsletter:**

Discussed the value of the newsletter – suggested dropping, issuing every 2 years, issuing annually or preparing twice a year. The participants asked that we consider continuing on a annual basis.

## **Recommended Management Action Recommendations and Discussion**

### **Forks of the Flathead River Float Guide and Proposed Regulations**

Float Guide will be published sometime this spring.

Will include new river regulations for the Middle fork from Schaefer to Bear Creek

Floaters will be required:

To have 100% solid waste containment

Use a fire pan or fire blanket

Education and outreach will be through contacts with Pilots, livery service providers, river rangers and wilderness rangers stationed at Schaefer.

The above management practices will be recommended on the Upper South Fork of the Flathead.

### **Steve McCool's visitor use study and expected visitor use patterns after the fires**

Increase shown on day use – not a large significant increase.

Stock use has remained static

A spike in users occurred in 2004 with visitors interested in seeing the country after the 2003 fire season. The shorter lengths of stay for stock and hiking trips were observed.

It was suggested that with gas prices, trips from trailheads with a long drive may see less day use and more 2-3-day trips.

A request was made to provide maps that show how the fires burned in mosaic patterns, so that visitors do not get the impression that all of the burned areas on our maps are black and shift all use to the green areas left.

Mike Munoz offered to look at putting together a map from the burn intensity maps compiled for the burned area emergency rehabilitation projects for the Rocky Mountain District. Still encourage folks to make initial contact with districts regarding conditions in the field.

### **Range and Weed Concerns**

Reviewing maps a question was raised on emphasis of knapweed on Seeley. Seeley is continuing to direct efforts to knapweed populations.

Spotted Bear is in a confinement strategy for the knapweed along the South Fork.

Spotted Bear will conduct a thorough evaluation at Bar Meadows to consider lifting grazing closure.

Trailheads and roadways continue to be a priority for spraying. Bear Creek was raised as an area of concern for more emphasis.

Standards for range indicators for each opportunity class were developed within the LAC process. The standards developed are difficult to implement. For the last 5 year period weeds inventory has been the emphasis as an indicator for range conditions.

### **Campsite Management and Monitoring Recommendations/Discussion**

No plans for closures in any of the area of concerns.

Recommended emphasis for next 5 year period – emphasize resource monitoring with less emphasis on social monitoring standards.

Continue to monitor trail encounters on South Fork.

Cut back on social monitoring, but keep resource monitoring.

Possibly back off on monitoring highly impacted sites on a yearly basis.

Emphasize restoration work on these highly impacted sites to contain growth of site.

Focus restoration and obliteration work on the moderately impacted sites.

Sunburst campsite program has been successful – decrease in overall number of campsites.

Recommendation to have a statistician review the monitoring guidelines to evaluate a sampling strategy vs. a 100% inventory of sites.

There is a need to evaluate some heavily used stock campsites and consider the use of the tool of construction of removable hitchrails or highlines for use during the entire summer/fall use season. Elk Lake has been a success. Concern was expressed over the serviceability and maintenance of these facilities. If/when decision is made to put in a highline or hitchrail at a site, may be a good project to partner with BCH chapter and BMWF.

The working group will review all the specific comments received – the overall message was more management actions is probably better than continued monitoring assuming it can't be all done, but if the \$ and resources were available all is the best – do the monitoring and continue to implement priority needs.

### **Opportunity Class Review**

This may be the time to conduct a thorough review of the spaghetti line opportunity classes. Is there a need to possibly change some of the boundaries? Bring together a group of interested folks including the initial task force members to review.

Meeting ended with compliments and thanks to all who contributed to the presentations, all of the maps, breakout session information regarding each resource area/opportunity class, and monitoring summary report. A good interchange with a lot of information presented.