

Lincoln County Resource Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes
March 10, 2004

Members Present:

Group A

Lee Disney
Tim Ryan
Tony Johnson
Ken Stevens
Keith Glover

Group B

Robyn King
Peter Kitts
Wayne Hirst

Group C

Gary Huntsberger
Rita Windom
Bruce Vincent
Marianne Roose*
Russ Hudson(phone)
Eileen Carney

Members Absent:

Bill Martin
Tim Lineman

*Designates replacement members

Forest Service Present:

Bob Castaneda – Designated Federal Officer (DFO), Malcolm Edwards – Libby District Ranger, Mike Balboni – Three Rivers District Ranger, Betty Holder – Fortine District Ranger, Glenn McNitt – Rexford District Ranger, Mark Romey – Operations Staff Officer, Greg Kujawa – Public Affairs Officer, Barbara Edgmon – RAC Coordinator and Sandi Mason – Facilitator.

Public Present:

Rocky Schauer, Cliff Ague

Meeting Notes:

Lee Disney led the RAC in the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call was taken.

A motion to accept the minutes from the January 12, 2004 meeting was approved.

Betty Holder was introduced as the new Fortine District Ranger.

Bob Castaneda presented letters of appointment to Tim Ryan and Peter Kitts and a certificate from the USDA to Peter. Bob then addressed the RAC on the following:

- The Kootenai NF budget for FY2004 will be significantly less than last years plus carryover funds from FY2003 will not be returned to the Forest. The Forest plans to keep the major campgrounds open but many trails will not be maintained. There will be fewer temporary seasonal employees hired and this may affect the weeds program. The Healthy Forest Initiative has increased the program targets for the reduction of hazardous fuels.
- The Department has not yet named the RAC replacement members. The hope is to have the confirmed appointments in 30 days.

Mark Romey provided information on the following:

- Update on the current status of funded RAC projects for FY2003 and 2004.
- The Wolverine Cabin project on the Fortine RD may need to have NEPA completed, if so the project will be dropped and funds will be available for other RAC projects.
- Projects need to watch their funding and expenditures. If a project goes over work may have to be stopped if RAC has overspent on all projects.
- Need to watch for possible audit. Track what we do and be able to explain RAC actions.
- If RAC projects bids come in way over estimates the contract will not be awarded. Submitter and RAC will need to review the project.
- Soon there will be 3 budget years to track. Some projects may not use all of their allocated funds so there will be carryovers.
- Mark will provide monthly project updates separate by fiscal year.

Lee Disney provided an update on the RAC sign project. Lee plans to have a prototype ready for the next meeting.

Rocky Schauer of the Back County Horsemen (BCHM) requested that the funding approved by the RAC be redirected from the sweet smelling toilet to the construction phase of the Sheldon Mountain Trailhead project as the State of Montana did not fully fund their grant request. The BCHM are ready to start construction on 3/11/04. BCHM plan to ask Lincoln County for assistance as needed.

Motion to approve the reallocation of funds was unanimously approved.

The District Rangers gave a brief overview of projects they plan to submit to the RAC for funding as follows:

Malcolm Edwards – Libby RD:

- Historical restoration of lookout towers
- Weed projects
- Road BMP and maintenance
- Projects outside partners bring to the District
- Thinning in urban interface and other areas

Mike Balboni – Three Rivers RD:

- Weed projects – 3 year phases
- Fuel reduction
- Restoration of Upper Ford Ranger house to become a fee demo rental
- Trailhead project

Betty Holder – Fortine RD:

- Fuel reduction
- Weed projects

Glen McNitt - Rexford RD:

- Road BMP and watershed, resubmit the W. Kootenai Rd project as safety issue
- Bridge over Dodge Peak
- Recreation mountain bike trail system
- Re-direct Rails to Trails trail with signs
- Interpretive signs on Hwy 37 byways
- Fuel reduction

Tim Ryan reminded Rangers to review the priority list set at the January 12, 2003 meeting.

Robyn King would like a presentation on the fuels map that shows areas of opportunity for fuel reduction.

Sandi Mason provided clarification that Eureka and Fortine are considered on geographical area for RAC funding.

The RAC would like to receive project proposals whenever they are ready. This will give RAC members more time to review. Districts can resubmit previous projects if they so desire (use the new form).

Three Rivers RD will be ready to present projects in May.

Next meeting will be Wednesday April 14th, 2004. Three Rivers RD will host a field trip to the Plateau Fuels project. Meet at the Weigh Station at intersection of Hwys 2 and 56 at 5:00pm. The meeting will start at 6:00pm at the Troy Ranger Station conference room. Dinner will be catered. Sandi and Barbara will make the dinner arrangements.

Next meeting topics will include:

- Urban interface map presentation
- Mark Romey will provide an update on approved projects
- Libby RD project presentations
- Term/appointment limits of RAC members

Meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm.

Notes by Barbara Edgmon
March 18, 2004