

Greys River Forest Collaborative

August 29, 2019

Dean Burnham Judy Reide Kay Lynn Nield Jerry Harmon Kent Connelly Robert King
 Evan Simpson
 Ted Jenkins Patty Pringle Nate Wilson Joe Nield Mel Shumway Chuck Butterfield
 Justin Laycock

Updates from Justin Laycock:

Tri-Basin layout is complete. There will be a show me trip with purchasers next week. There is 7500 ccf out of Tri-Basin, which is more than is expected. The sale was to be offered this fall, but the regional office put off the sale to meet timber harvest goals in the next fiscal year. The new fiscal year starts October 2019. County commissioners expressed dissatisfaction with Regional office decision.

Cabin Creek Loop is completed and open for use. Wyoming State Trails will be completing the Three Forks Loop. The Bear Creek connector is open for use with finishing touches in 2020. FS is doing work on signage and will open up trails as soon as constructed.

- Need groups to help with signage

Fire Trail-Murphy Creek-FS and Lincoln County are reconstructing the road for a timber sale using Schedule A. This provides recreation access as well as access for timber harvest. Roosevelt Fire made NEPA this fiscal year not possible. NEPA should be completed in the next fiscal year. Wildlife crews are doing hiding board cover assessment for Lynx. Stand assessments are done. FS crews are doing analysis of the timber sale in preparation for the NEPA.

Jeremy Larson asked how far the road would be bladed. Answer was the full length. State Trails worked on the trail last year it was a 50 inch or less trail. FS is doing analysis to accommodate 64-inch side by sides for this trail. This is now the industry standard for side by sides.

There is a possibility of using Good Neighbor Authority/Stewardship Agreements for Fire Trail-Murphy.

There were questions about the 5-year plan. There are plans to do large scale aspen projects on the Greys River and Kemmerer in 5 years. The Star Valley front controlled burn near Strawberry Creek should happen this fall. FS want to do more burning South of Strawberry Creek. The re-entry timber harvest for Cabin Creek is on the plan, also looking into Little Greys, Grover Park, and Buck Creek. Commissioners asked that Elk Creek also be included. The 2018 Farm Bill allows for an increase in area and disease designation map. It allows for up to 3000 acres to be harvested. There are still roadless areas and lynx to consider though.

Judy Reide had questions on the impacts of road work and timber sales on wildlife populations. She asked whether migration corridors are considered.

The FS said they do take that into consideration. Ted Jenkins spoke from his experience of how thinning brought mule deer/elk into his hunt area. The first year was a mess but the grass grew back, and he sees more mule deer using the area. Timber harvests can rejuvenate an area, so wildlife use it more. Ted also spoke of how the road being closed on Blind Bull the wildlife are coming back in and using the area more. FS spoke about how routes that are opened are temporary unless they are existing roads. The routes are usually open for 3-4 years depending on the window for harvest. All projects are evaluated by the Game and Fish also. The group discussed balance on access and habitat.

Smith Fork- The parking lot is complete, and toilet installed. This will move snowmobile parking off of the corner on the South end and make it safer to access the forest. The first 3 miles of Smith's Fork road has been improved. This was a project with Lincoln County, Snowmobile clubs, Simplot, Kilroy LLC, and FS. This also will be the haul route for the Tri-Basin timber sale.

Blind Bull will reopen post slide but will continue to move and will require more work next year. It will be open for the archery season. Evan Simpson noted that \$2 million dollars in federal highway funds was used for the reconstruction.

There is a new vault toilet in place up Little Greys.

Dean Burnham has been hired by Lincoln County to help coordinate timber sales in the Greys River area with the FS. He is compiling a list of areas and maps that could be helpful to the FS. He will be looking at possible areas where re-entries could be done from previous harvested areas.

Judy asked how much a timber sale costs to implement and how much \$ are produced off of the sale. Do they pay for themselves or are they subsidized from tax dollars?

Bob answered that the goal is that the timber sales will be self-perpetuating. Justin said the FS doesn't do deficit sales. Good neighbor authority should help initial timber sale to be able to use the receipts to pay for the next sale. Wyoming State Forestry would oversee funding. This is a way to fund timber sales outside of the general budget funding the FS receives. There is a proposal in the legislature to open a good neighbor state account.

Patty Pringle with Lincoln County Fuels Mitigation gave an update on CMAT (Community Mitigation Assistance Team) that will be coming to the Alpine area. They will come in November and look at fire risks and techniques to manage fire. They will come up with recommendations on how to reduce the risks of a catastrophic wildfire. The goal is to protect subdivisions and the town of Alpine in the event of a fire. This might be an area for targeted timber harvests.

Byron had questions on seasonal closures in the BT. Caribou Targhee has different closure dates. Justin explained that it is a unique area and some of the closures are for elk calving and deer fawning for spring and hiding cover for fall. Justin did note that there are mixed dates throughout the forest and consistency would be better. FS is open to making the road closure dates more uniform and did note that better mapping and signage would help users know what is open and what isn't. This would

require some NEPA work but if there is interest, he is willing to address some of the issues. Kent noted the importance of looped trails to address the needs of motorized recreation.

As a side note: Middle Greys Project some of the routes had closures. The FS compromised by putting a July 1 open dated and left the trails open later in the fall for hunting. The migration corridors were considered in the process.

Jerry noted that in the previous timber sales environmental assessments that seasonal cover and migration was taken into account.

Jeremy noted that horseback users, bikes, and hikers welcome the closures to be able to use the trails without motorized recreation.

Judy noted that there seems to be a push for more and more trails.

Ted noted that the community has changed and how they use the forest has changed. It used to be more horseback now people can access with side by sides.

Buying stickers from state trails helps to keep trails maintained. There was talk of a need for a travel management plan.

Grover Park- The group discussed the field trip to Grover Park. Evan Simpson proposed a subcommittee to map Grover park and come up with recommendations to present to the FS. The collaborative decided this is something they would like to see. The group will meet in October everyone is welcome to come. Kay Lynn will send out dates. Evan will work with Destry Deardon (Lincoln County GIS) and map the existing 4-wheeler trails and what is on the ground in Grover Park. Dean Burnham will look at forest projects that could be done in that area.

Kay Lynn Nield from Star Valley Conservation District will take over facilitation of the Greys River Collaborative. Thanks to University of Wyoming Ruckelshaus Institute and Jessica Western for getting us to this point. We will discuss the charter at the next meeting on November 14 and get it up to date for 2020. Grover Park recommendations will also be discussed.