

Custer-Gallatin Working Group (CGWG)

Meeting MINUTES – June 12, 2024

Bozeman Ranger District Office 3710 Fallon St., Bozeman Montana

Open Meeting , Introductions, Consent Agenda; Minutes and Financial report/disbursements/ Proxies

Meeting opened by Chairman Prinkki with introductions around the table and those connected virtually. Attendees:

John Prinkki	Mike Thom
Jackie Walden	Kathryn Erhlund
Mike Story	Kara Harper
Dan Allhands	Kathy Minor
Hilary Eisen	Jennie Oconnor Card
Nick Horn	Jen Lane
Sally Schrank	Corey Lewellen
Barb Cestero	Wendie Urie
	Earl Atwood

Vote on consent agenda items;
Count proxies for conducting business (2)

Membership Applications and Vacancies. John Prinkki referenced our vacant seats, reminding attending members that we are still looking for representation in the At Large, Ag/Ranch, Motorized Recreation and Multiple use, Community & economic development, University System categories. Also, in cases where a representative for an organization is replaced/succeeded, we may accept notice from the organization of the change in representative without asking for a new membership application and official vote from the full membership.

Custer Gallatin National Forest staff and projects update. Current projects and projects with CGWG involvement. Kathy Minor, Acting Forest Supervisor, announced that the new Forest Supervisor has been selected. Matt Jedra, scheduled to begin August 14th. Corey Lewellan reported on planning associated with a new project in the Bozeman area to deal with fire-affected issues. Red Lodge Mountain project still on track for decision in August. Mike Thom updated on Cooke City project. Jenny Oconnor Card will assume team leader on that project. Scoping comment period is coming up in early July. The group discussed preliminary plans for public meetings in advance of or during the comment period to assist the FS with public engagement. John Prinkki reminded the Group that CGWG does have some funds available to assist with meeting costs. Further discussion about Bozeman area fire-affected, which are on the national list of strategic priorities. Scoping is anticipated for late fall 2024. Multiple funding mechanisms will be available from NRCS and Gallatin County to assist private landowners with costs for participating with mitigation efforts. Hilary Eisen reported the Bridger project is progressing well with many new signs ordered and plans underway for installation along with other related trail improvement work such as trailhead kiosks. Wendy Urie discussed status of the South Plateau (Splat) project. John asked for discussion about following up on the previous White Bark Pine study that CGWG conducted in conjunction with the North Hebgen project. It was agreed we should look into arranging a secondary visit to collect data changes since the baseline was created.

Sibanye Stillwater Mine, Stillwater mine project

Jen Lane provided information and a short presentation on a new project at Stillwater Mine (Project 14), which is proposed for participation by CGWG. A decision on formally undertaking review by a CGWG Subcommittee will be considered at the September meeting. Two slides with summary information about the project were shared and discussed with the Group. John Prinkki suggested a Columbus location for the September meeting, possibly with a tour of the proposed project, and will work on details in coming weeks.

Montana Forest Collaborative Network Kara Harper gave an update on timber sale activities (June 15 to Oct 15) which will result in short term closures of specific trails for several weeks as the contractor completes their field work. A new service forester has been hired for Gallatin and Madison counties. DNRC is looking at moving GNA Administration into her unit. More on that later. John Prinkki asked the to the Group to consider whether CGWG should take sponsorship of a GNA project. Discussion explored possible roles and mechanisms CGWG could adopt to enable that kind of participation. Several ideas and examples were discussed, along with concerns about capacity and funding. The topic will be up for discussion at future meetings.

Custer Gallatin Working Group Operations Manual John Prinkki brought attention to the CGWG Ops Manual for the benefit of new members, and solicited input regarding the categories outlined for member seats for possible updates. Hilary Eisen added there might be opportunities to make amendments to make it easier to align the categories with engaged interest groups.

Next meeting date September 11th in Columbus.