

## North Central Idaho Resource Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes  
June 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015

**Meeting Location:** Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, Grangeville Office, Main Meeting Room

**RAC Members Present:** Kent Henderson (Chairperson), Don Ebert, David Bodine, Bob Abbott, Steve Didier, Emmit Taylor, Brett Bennett and Chris St. Germaine.

**RAC Replacement Members Present:** None, positions are currently vacant.

**Guests:** Megan Lucas (Forest Service), Geoff Kaeberle (Forest Service), Bobby Grillo (Montana Conservation Corps), Joe Robinson (President, Back Country Horseman), Shannon Fuchs (District 3 Commissioner, Idaho Forest Products Commission), Carol Hennessey (Forest Service), Ralph Rau (Forest Service), Randy Stephens (Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute), Mitch Silvers (US Senator Mike Crapo), Alex Irby (Clearwater Basin Collaborative), Tam White (Forest Service), Mike Hanna (Senator Risch), Scott Carlton (US Representative Labrador), Michael Cook (Idaho County), Jay Snowdon (Northwest Youth Corp, Idaho Conservation Corps), Jeff Parker (Northwest Youth Corp, Idaho Conservation Corps), Cathy Conover (Forest Service), Sally Ferguson (Selway Bitterroot, Frank Church Foundation), Jeremy Harris (Forest Service)

**Designated Federal Official:** Laura Smith

**Recorder:** Lisa Canaday

### I. Call to Order and Agenda Review

Introductions: 8 members and 19 guests were present.

Agenda Adjustments - None

### II. Presentations of Full Proposals

#### 1 Tam White, 2015 Nez Perce-Clearwater NF's Mark & Cruise, requesting \$95,000.

Tam went over their past accomplishments. Produced 190 Million Board Feet (MBF) of timber outputs, and supported over 400 jobs per year. They have created community stability with timber sale projects. The project works with 3 timber sales that are in different phases of NEPA completion. Johnson Bar will have a final EIS decision and selling this fall. Kay Creek, part of Clear Creek, Lolo WUI, is a fuel abatement project near Lowell, NEPA should be completed this summer, would sell next fiscal year. They are requesting \$95,000; this money would go towards a contract for marking and cruising. Johnson Bar/Lolo WUI and Kay Creek will sell this fall. Project would produce 50 MBF for all 3 sales. Q: When the RAC committee is trying to decide how much money to recommend, could a portion of the money be used, or do you need "All or none?" **Need minimum of \$90,000 to complete Johnson Bar.** If there is money remaining, they would spread money to the other projects, or use appropriated funds. Lowell NEPA falls under the Farm Bill process which is a categorical exclusion. They would issue a decision by the end of September. Kay Creek is part of the Clear Creek project and is in the objection process, so they plan to have a decision by September.

#### 2 Mike Cook/Idaho County, Red River Road (222) Crack Seal/Repair, \$70,000

Red River Ranger Station up to Dixie Summit, 12 miles of crack/seal repair. Project is to fill and repair the cracks in that section of the road. Cracks are from 1 ½ to 3 inches wide, up to 65-70 cracks that go completely across the road. Water gets into the cracks, freezes and thaws, which make the cracks larger.

They are trying to put into the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP), to help with repair. Costs are for an anticipated contractor whom they have worked with before. Mobilization costs are substantial. County support would be doing traffic control, estimate is \$25,000. Can you accept all or none? All, it may cost almost as much to do half the lineal feet.

Q: What kind of timeline before the road reaches critical stage? If they can repair the cracks and get a seal coat on it, they are estimating another 10-12 years. If not, possibly another 3 years.

Q: Is it state highway to Elk City, then county road to Dixie? Yes

Q: Other sources of funding? A: they don't know when they would get to it. It would be at least 3 years before they would hear about FLAP funding.

### **3 Geoff Kaeberle, Central Zone CSE Stand Exam Contracts, \$71,820**

### **4 Geoff Kaeberle, North Zone CSE Stand Exam Contracts, \$45,000**

### **5 Geoff Kaeberle, South Zone CSE Stand Exams, \$79,250**

Geoff reported that the last time he received funding from the RAC, the projects were completed! Stand exams completed and NEPA close to being signed. Now, the projects he is requesting would be implemented next fiscal year. Projects are listed in priority order within the request; in addition, Geoff handed out his priority preferences for all projects combined.

#1: Center Johnson – South Zone (SZ);

#2: Windy Shingle – SZ;

#3: White Pine – North Zone (NZ)

#4: Deep Saddle – Central Zone (CZ)

#5: Crane Point – NZ

#6: Cayuse Gravy – CZ

#7: Skookumchuck – SZ

#8: Falls Point - CZ

### **6 Jeremy Harris, Crooked River ATV/Snowmobile Bridge at 5-mile: Survey & Design, \$20,000**

This bridge is locked during the summer months, opened in the late fall so that the snowmobile groomer can cross. Amount requested is the average design cost. Bridge would be open to ATVs in the summer months and the groomer in the winter. There are 300 miles of groomed trail in the Elk City area; this also accesses the 807 trail, which is a popular trail in the Elk City area as well.

Q: Bridge was only intended to be a snowmobile bridge, so why the forest is expending time and effort to make this bridge into something that it wasn't originally intended? Is there any other way the ATV traffic can be accommodated so that the bridge can be kept intact for its original use? A: Motorized use is becoming increasingly popular in this area, and recreation is starting earlier in the year, when the water level is high and it is dangerous to cross.

Q: Other funding sources? Talking to the Tribe about adding this to one of their projects once the NEPA is completed, since it is in one of their focus areas.

Q: Is the area suitable for ATV and snowmobile use? A: The area is currently open to both types of motorized vehicles, but is locked in the summer because of safety concerns.

Q: Funding is more for implementation and not design are there any sources of funding for in house design?

A: Jeremy hasn't had much luck with this due to the lack of employees currently here.

Q: If survey and design is funded, do you have any funds to build the bridge? A: Jeremy feels that their recent history with the Tribe and their luck in getting things funded, that this project would compete very highly. Emmitt added that the Tribe may have funding to help with this project because it ties to fish habitat, but they always need a design and cost estimate before they can look at the funding.

Q: Could the State Parks and Recreation program help fund this? Jeremy hasn't checked, but Steve Didier added that he thinks they may fund survey and design. Carol added that they haven't been very successful in getting funds for survey and design with the State.

All or none? If they received half of the funds, he feels that they could leverage other dollars to get this accomplished!

## **7 Jeremy Harris, Fish Creek Toilet Replacement, \$25,000**

Fish Creek is a 4 season recreation area, groomed trails, campground, and Nordic ski trails. There are currently 5 toilets there. Goal is to replace 2 singles with a double toilet. \$25,000 is the current estimate. He feels that if things look nice, people tend to take better care of them, and not vandalize. All or none? He could leverage some funds, between \$5,000- \$8,000. He has been saving money from their campground fees.

Q: Is the structure sound? Why not look at refurbishing the toilets instead of replace? A: It comes to a point where you have replaced things enough, they've replaced a door and window, and in his opinion it is time to replace this toilet.

Q: Why make a bigger target with a bigger toilet?

Blackerby is a prime example of people taking care of something that looks nice. They had problems in this area, replaced the toilet and are having success.

## **8 Michelle Youngquist, Idaho Project Learning Tree, \$8,000**

The presentation was made by Shannon Fuchs, District 3 Commissioner for the Idaho Forest Products Commission. Q: Do you focus on aquatics? A: Yes, they have specific classes focusing on this.

Q: How do you expand into schools? A: They have an extensive network into the schools. Last year they distributed a Forest Service brochure into each 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class. They also sometimes target schools that they haven't gotten into the program.

Q: Are funds from the RAC used for schools in this region? A: Yes, they request money from several RACs and the money goes into one pot.

## **9 Betty Munis, Forest Tours for Educators & Opinion Leaders, \$6,000**

## **10 Bobby Grillo North Fork RD - Deferred Trail Maintenance, \$45,724**

The Montana Conservation Corps sends 7 people into different places. They will be living/working in Clearwater County for the next few months. They hope to fund 4 hitches, plus packing for \$12,000 per hitch.

Q: Three trails, 4 hitches, how many miles per hitch? A: 1.5-2 miles per hitch. The priorities are the St. Joe Divide (that is the primary trail, other trails feed off of it); and Lost Ridge

All or None? The Forest Service could help with some, but probably couldn't utilize the Forest Service pack string.

## **11 Megan Lucas, Lolo Pass Weed Wash Station - Feasibility Study, \$47,500**

A lot of invasive species are coming in on equipment. Last year, an inspector noticed that an excavator that we were going to use had 6 inches of dirt that was packed with weed seed. Some possible alternatives to a weed wash station would be: car washes could update their equipment or we could have portable equipment.

Q: Isn't there a contract spec that equipment is weed free? A: a lot of equipment comes from Washington State, southern Idaho, and Montana. There are not a lot of places to wash equipment.

C: It seems like this is a contractor responsibility.

Q: Why couldn't the Forest Service piggy back with the Tribe or Fish and Game? This has been done in other states. A: The location of the site was what most of the funding could be used for. Lake Pend Oreille is having a lot of problems with boats carrying weeds.

C: Most contracting equipment needs a powerful washer, maybe this proposal should only be for ATVs or boats, that would simplify the process.

C: RAC funding is supposed to be used for implementation, not feasibility.

C: If a contractor used the station, would they be charged? Yes.

It is also about educating the community. We realize this is a huge problem on our forest and we are trying to figure out a way to educate.

All or none? They would take any amount of money that they could get. They would also take suggestions. Check with Bell Equipment, among others, to observe them washing equipment before they take it into the shop.

## **12 Cathy Conover, Kirkwood Historic Ranch, \$2,780**

Kirkwood is staffed with volunteers year round. This request is for materials only. Back Country Horseman are interested in helping with the labor for this project. Materials will be purchased from the local Idaho County area. This is a larger project than they can do in a weekend, so it may take longer to complete.

Q: Are there any other areas of funding for the facility? No, it is a recreation facility, not a forest facility.

The Wallowa Whitman NF does not support the Hells Canyon NRA.

## **13 Heather Berg, Fenn Pond Boardwalk, \$62,500**

They applied for an Idaho Department of Park and Recreation grant for the last couple of years and were rejected. They are looking for materials to complete the boardwalk around Fenn Pond. All or None? It is close, they've done the design NEPA, and used lots of other funds for those things. If they didn't receive all of the funding, they would try to find funding elsewhere. If they don't replace the boardwalk, they will lose the accessibility and safety for the disabled. Also, it would not be safe for children to fish in the condition it is currently in.

## **14 Cathy Conover, Hells Canyon Wilderness Deferred Trail Maintenance, \$37,724**

The Hells Canyon NRA does not receive other funds, like a forest would. They only receive funds for recreation. Cathy is the only employee hired to clear trails. She is currently applying for an Idaho Parks and Recreation grant. Cathy would like to fund 4 hitches. These trails have not been maintained in 4 years since they had ARRA money. They would partner with the Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) to get work done in 2016. All or none? They would need \$10,000 per hitch and they have 5 trails identified. The MCC could do more miles of trail in this area. Boise Trail North, Sheep Creek Trail, Dry Diggins Ridge Trail are her priorities.

North Fork Trails are heavy maintenance; this is just clearing the trail.

## **15 IdahoYCC/Northwest YC North Fork/Palouse Developed Recreation Site Maintenance, \$36,294**

## **16 IdahoYCC/Northwest YC North Fork/Palouse Ranger Districts Sign Installation & Trail Maintenance, \$32,994**

All or none? 1 week of work = \$8200 for a 12 person crew.

C: Kudos to the Northwest Youth Corps for getting an Idaho Conservation Corps!

**17 Pierce Recreation District, Chris St. Germaine, Pierce Community Center: Converting facility boiler to woody biomass, \$155,000**

Converting the facility boiler to woody biomass will save the community center \$17,000 per year. The community center touches about 6,000 youth per year. The Clearwater Valley Hospital has a medical clinic in this building, and they will also benefit. The peak use period for the center is now because they are heating the pool. This will provide sustainability for the community. This would be a completed project for the money and it could be started within 30 days.

C: The community center is a huge asset for the city of Pierce. It has things for kids to do; it houses a clinic for people to receive health care. The community center is struggling, so this project would help it. All or none? Yes, all.

Q: In the act, there is a clause for improving the maintenance of the existing infrastructure; does that only apply to forest infrastructure? A: This is a public taxing district; it is a public facility, not a private one. Christine feels this is what makes it legal.

**18 Chris Wolffig, Road 2002 Van Buren Creek Bridge: Survey & Design, \$20,000**

This is a fairly large culvert on the 2002 road system on the Salmon River Ranger District (RD). There will be extensive timber harvest in the coming years. By replacing the culvert, the stream would be opened up to more spawning habitat. The Tribe is willing to partner with the Forest Service, the Tribe will be kicking in \$5,000.

Q: There is a timber sale going in behind this, why isn't this included in the road package for the timber sale? If the road isn't passable for logging trucks, then they can include it in the road package, but if they are fixing it for fish, that can't be included in the timber sale road package.

Q: What will be done differently to get the fish thru? A: Will ask the A&E design firm if it would be appropriate to put a bridge in or a structural plate arch.

Q: What makes this unpassable for fish currently? A: There is a little bit of a perch outlet right now. This is a waterfall which takes a lot more effort for the fish to get through. If this were improved and mimicked the stream channel, the fish would not have to use as much effort to get through.

Q: If we fund the survey and design, where would you get the funding to implement? A: The Tribe would assist with this funding.

Q: If it is a stewardship sale, wouldn't this be stewardship work? A: The sale that follows isn't a stewardship sale.

Q: Assuming that this problem was caused by erosion, why couldn't you fix the streambed? A: The water in the pipe would still be the problem; there would still be a velocity issue. You could rebuild it this year, but the water would wash it out and it would need to be rebuilt each year.

Q: You have an undersized pipe that is causing problems, how long is it going to be safe to haul? It seems like the timber sale should be paying. A: The road is safe to haul now, but not sure how long it will be. You can't use timber sale money to do extra projects like this. Stewardship dollars will pay to resurface the road, etc. The project would be done in concurrence with the other work on the road so as not to interrupt the timber sale hauling.

**19 Carol Hennessey, Idaho Youth Challenge Foundation Service to the Community Initiative, \$8,000**

Money requested is for a tool trailer and tools for the cadets to do community service. Every cadet needs to do 40 hours of community service; it is a challenge to get enough community service for them to do.

Q: If we didn't fund some other projects, could we use the kids from this program to do some other work?

A: No, because these are high school kids, they can't run power tools.

C: It seems inconceivable that the forest could not supply the cadets with tools, or a trailer. A: The academy doesn't have enough money to purchase things like this. The Forest Service will be supplying tools also. They want to be self-sufficient so they can go anywhere to work.

All or nothing? They would probably take a portion, \$4500 for cargo trailer, and \$3500 for the tools.

## **20 Alex Irby, CBC & RC&D, Clearwater Basin Collaborative (CBC), \$59,950**

The CBC sincerely appreciates all of the funding they have received from the North Central Idaho RAC. Alex read their mission statement and reiterated that they would not be successful without previous support. They would like to ask for more, but they developed a budget that they could live within. In previous years, they have had a carryover, this year, they do not. The funds in the CFLRA area have to be expended on the ground.

Q: Funded thru 2019, what's the difference between RAC funding and CFLR money? A: No money for administration can be used with CFLR money, which is why they rely on the RAC funding.

Alex could bring the 5 year report that they just submitted. The CBC seems to be very well funded.

C: Concerned that the CBC is using RAC dollars to lobby to keep themselves in business. Could we put sideboards on how the RAC funds are spent? Suggest that meetings, trips, maintaining detailed records and finances..... How much travel, meeting, field trips are outside of the Clearwater Basin? None. The projects are all within the Clearwater basin. In the last couple of years, we expanded our boundaries at the request of the Forest Supervisor.

Q: Are you saying the CFLRA program does not provide funds to do administrative work? Correct, neither does the Forest Service. All of their money goes thru RC&D, CBC hires them to handle the money, do the accounting and write the checks. The \$63,000 would be to offset the meetings with the FS, and administration. Travel back to Washington DC to work with the Forest Service.

Q: Per Diem, travel and communication, where does the money for salary and per Diem go? They have a full time coordinator that they have hired. She goes to all meetings, keeps up the website. They have 2 facilitators that they have hired. These are contractors. It is all paid by the RC&D on a contractual basis. If you didn't have this money, would the CBC meeting come to a halt? Yes. The CBC meetings are the only opportunity that several agencies have to discuss projects with their counterparts on other agencies.

Q: Had we not had this renewal of RAC money, would the CBC have gone away? Maybe. What does Senator Crapo representative say about that? The money that comes from the Forest Service cannot be used for administrative functions, but yet, it requires that we have a collaborative to conduct the monitoring. In hindsight, this is probably something that should have been looked at, and it may be when the Act comes up for reauthorization. It would be a great thing to possibly add when they vote on the reauthorization.

The point in bringing all of this up is to point out that Congress needs to look at it.

Most of the administrative costs go to pay for the 3 contractors mentioned above that live in our area.

The CBC will bring in \$3.8 million, and administrative costs of \$63,000. This is a good tradeoff for the dollars.

RC&D receives 10% of the money for doing this. Has the CBC discussed having RC&D taking on a little more duties for a couple more percent? Yes, they have been talking about this with them. They are also looking at the Blackfoot Challenge in Montana as a way to conduct business in the future. If the CBC was funded at half the amount they requested, would RC&D take on additional duties? No.

## **21 Randy Doman, Gem Trail Graphic Design, \$3,000**

Randy serves as the co-chair on the recreation subcommittee on the CBC. The goal is to create a motorized trail from Avery, ID to Elk City, ID. They are seeing progress in this trail. On July 14<sup>th</sup>, Kathy Mueller will

be in Elk City to look at the trailhead. The trail is becoming a reality and they need to “brand” it. They will be working with a graphic designer to come up with a “brand”. Once that is completed, they will apply for an Idaho Dept. of Parks and Rec (IDPR) to fund other things. This money will be used as match when they go to IDPR for money to produce the signs.

Q: Is this what we used to call the North/South trail? Yes

Q: Do you know that you could have someone take a class at the LCSC outreach center for \$240 and be trained in graphic design? A: It’s more than just a computer program; it’s looking into the history of the trail. The branding will go national, it will be everywhere and they want to do it right.

Q: How much of this trail is located on or adjacent to the centennial trail? Not much, there is some. Parts also need to go on private land. If they can’t do that, it will all be on private land. They have communities begging to be on the trail.

They want it to be an integrated community design.

They can’t give their existing staff more to do.

All or none? Yes.

## **22 Carol Hennessey, Forest wide Trail Brushing, \$101,850**

Carol appreciates all of the money that she has received from the RAC committee.

Q: Why is Frenchman Butte priority #10? She prioritized amongst the districts first, but it would be okay for the RAC to pick and choose. She mentioned that contracts under \$5,000 are not desirable. Chris pointed out that the Palouse projects were under that amount. Carol feels that if those trails were grouped together it would be a desirable project.

Q: What is the Centennial trail significance? It goes north from the border to south to the border that was created when we had our centennial. Most of it is outside the wilderness and motorized access. The state trail contractors don’t brush; otherwise we might be able to use them.

All or none: No, there is a chart in her proposal that splits out the trails.

## **23 Connie (Kahne) Jensen-Blyth, Idaho County New Invader Emphasis, \$80,000**

## **24 Connie (Kahne) Jensen-Blyth, Road Corridor & Private Interface Weed Treatment, \$80,000**

These projects never really have a completion date, weeds are a constant battle! That is why these projects keep being proposed year after year.

They are proposing to treat county roads that go into the forest. They have many sites that they have inventoried of plant invasions and they have labeled them 1-5. The 1H and 2H labels are their high priority.

With past funding from the RAC, they were able to make 2500 site visits.

Q: How much does Idaho County levy for weeds? A: Kahne doesn’t know, but she will find out. It isn’t enough.

Q: What is the whole county weed budget? A: She thinks it is \$1.7M, but 50% comes from the Forest Service.

**25 Randy Stephens (PCEI), Riparian Restoration & Trail Work w/in Nez Perce-Clearwater Nat'l Forests, \$72,907**

They have completed surveys on 9 miles of ATV trails that they are currently decommissioning. They would have a 6 person crew along with a crew leader that ranges in age from 18-22. The request would fund the group for 12 weeks. This group fills a little different niche than others. They work in road and trail decommissioning, but can also do trail work if needed. Their goal is to supplement projects in the forest and to protect natural resources, natural habitat and expand recreational opportunities. **They could take about a 50% reduction in their funding request.**

Q: Is this funding supplementing your work with the Forest Service? They would like to get to more of the priority areas that their funding won't allow.

Q: Why is this organization involved in road decommissioning? A: The road decommissioning work they have done has mostly been inventory and surveys. There are thousands of miles of non-system roads on the forest. They do very little actual road decommissioning.

**26 Sally Ferguson, SBFCF, Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation Volunteer & Internship Program, \$111,572**

They are a non-political organization with the Forest Service being their primary partner. For every \$1 they receive, they give back about \$2.50.

In 2014, they maintained 240 miles, completing 17 projects. They focused on 11 mainline trails and cleared 600 water bars and drains. They contribute a lot of volunteer hours, about 12,000 as an organization, and 8400 hours on the Nez Perce-Clearwater NF. This equates to \$180,000 in volunteer match hours. They have been working with Carol and Heather Berg on a proposal for the Lochsa Historical Ranger Station. Part of their proposal is for \$5,000 to fund an intern. Volunteer reimbursement for travel is another request. Increase to cabin hosting reimbursement rate. They also asked for funding for leadership. They do their best to support local businesses.

Q: Salaries are for staff that lead the interns and interact with the Forest Service. They could reduce by \$10,000 in the salaries. Per Diem and travel reimbursement is for the leadership positions.

They could take less on the Lochsa Historical interpretive intern. Maybe the Forest Service could find some funding for that. They could reduce in the per Diem and staff travel.

Overall, they could probably reduce the total budget by \$12,000.

**III. Opportunity for any RAC Member to Address the Committee**

**IV. Public Forum: Comments and questions from the public to the committee**

**V. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm.

## June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015

**RAC Members Present:** Kent Henderson (Chairperson), Don Ebert, David Bodine, Bob Abbott, Steve Didier, Emmit Taylor, Brett Bennett, Jim Rehder and Chris St. Germaine.

**RAC Replacement Members Present:** None, positions are currently vacant.

**Guests:** Geoff Kaerberle (Forest Service), Ralph Rau (Forest Service), Alex Irby (Clearwater Basin Collaborative), Sally Ferguson (Selway Bitterroot, Frank Church Foundation, Linda Hinds (Forest Service), Jeff Lau (Forest Service) and Ken Marshall (Forest Service)

**Designated Federal Official:** Laura Smith

**Recorder:** Lisa Canaday

### I. Call to Order and Agenda Review

Introductions: 8 members and 7 guests were present.

Agenda Adjustments - None

27 Jeff Lau, LiDar Data Acquisition, \$243,392

They need information a minimum of 6-8 months before they can use it.

Q: If this is such a great tool, why can't you acquire the funding to do it? A: Because these are project level flights, the Regional Office can't fund, but the forests can.

The funding requested would button up the North Fork, while last year's funding covered the Palouse District.

Q: Are you utilizing it for vegetative health? A: Yes, the University of Idaho is using this data.

Q: Is LiDAR getting specific enough to identify vegetation other than trees? A: Definitely, it can't identify species, but it look at the height to determine.

Chris mentioned a conversation she had with congressional representatives and they strongly suggested that we write a letter to our congressmen to encourage them to have funding available.

A point of concern was mentioned about the Pierce Community Center proposal and whether it fits into the parameters of the Act. Laura has sent a message to the Washington Office about this. Were any other sources of funding looked at? Yes, and Don Ebert added that if there were any money out there for the project, Chris would have found it.

Weed wash station feedback: No one disagrees with the concept of having a weed wash station. It was an enforcement issue, it doesn't do any good if someone decides to drive by, and you have no way to stop them. Check with the Idaho Dept. of Agriculture, there could possibly be a partnership opportunity. Should have someone stationed at the ports of entry. It is hard to support a feasibility study. If there is a mechanical washing station, people tend to not take care of it, checking the oil, etc.

The RAC broke into their groups and decided which projects they recommended for funding. The list is attached.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 pm.