

Missoula County RAC – 4/14/2020 Orientation Meeting Notes

*Meeting was held via conference call and Microsoft TEAMS due to COVID-19 pandemic/Governor's Shelter in Place Order

Attendance (only one member missing)

Roll Call 2020	Member	4.14.20
CATEGORY A:		
Organized Labor or Non-Timber Forest Product Harvester Groups	Zachary Bashoor	x
Developed Outdoor Recreation, Off-Highway Vehicle Users, or Commercial Recreation Activities	Mike McGrew	x
Developed Outdoor Recreation, Off-Highway Vehicle Users, or Commercial Recreation Activities	Kristen Baker-Dickinson	x
Commercial Timber Industry	Scott Kuehn	x
Federal Grazing Permit or Other Land Use Permit Holders, or Representative of Non-Industrial Private Forest Land Owners	Jack Rich	
CATEGORY B:		
Regionally or Locally Recognized Environmental Organizations	Dr. Seth Wilson	x
Dispersed Recreational Activities	Dr. Steven Gaskill	x
Dispersed Recreational Activities	Ben Horan	x
Nationally or Regionally Recognized Wild Horse and Burro Interest, Wildlife or Hunting Organizations, or Watershed Associations	Christine Hastings	x
Nationally or Regionally Recognized Wild Horse and Burro Interest, Wildlife or Hunting Organizations, or Watershed Associations	Sawyer Connelly	x
CATEGORY C:		
County or Local-Elected Office	Commissioner Strohmaier	x
Area School Officials or Teachers	Dr. Alisa Wade	x
Affected Public-At-Large	Dr. Jim Burchfield	x
Affected Public-At-Large	Janet Krivacek	x
Affected Public-At-Large	Chris Fellet	x
DFO -Quinn Carver		x
Coordinator - Kate Jerman		x

General Notes:

- The Committee elected unanimously Ben Horan to Chair the Committee and he accepted; the RAC also approved the Charter
- The Committee decided to hold one informational/Q&A meeting first to discuss/digest proposals and then another formal voting meeting a month or so after that depending on schedules.
- A call for project proposals will go out April 21 with a deadline of August 1. This call for proposals will go to the press and be circulated within the Forest Service and partner networks.
- Kate will package & distribute to RAC members the project proposals and fee proposal information for review prior to the informational meeting.

- Janet had a question on the Charter – it expires in two years. Kate answered and said in two years the Committee would need to again approve/adopt the Charter.
- Scott asked about the ‘boundaries’ for project approval – Kate and Quinn answered that the Missoula RAC will only consider projects within Missoula County and same with the fee proposal.
- Dr. Burchfield noted that a monitoring field trip in the future (maybe summer of 2021) would be a great idea to see the work the RAC chose to fund in action!
- Kate noted the technical difficulties and that me may try a different platform for the next meeting if we are still in restrictions.

Additional Follow-up Questions received via email:

- **QUESTION: Where does the money come from? How is the money allocated to different RAC's?**
 - The below information is taken from a [press release from our National Office](#):
The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service has distributed more than \$215 million to 41 states and Puerto Rico for distribution to 742 eligible counties that will be used to support public schools, roads and specific county programs.

Since 1908, 25% of Forest Service revenues from timber sales, mineral leases, recreation, grazing and other sources have been shared with states and counties in which national forest lands are located. In the 1980s, Forest Service revenues began to decline, largely as a result of diminished timber sales volume.

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 authorized enhanced and gradually declining payments. Payments were most recently reauthorized for fiscal years 2019 and 2020 by the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020.

Over the past 10 years, the Forest Service has distributed \$2.6 billion through the Secure Rural Schools program.

- **QUESTION: Though a ways off, how do the other RAC's rate proposals they receive? Is there a point system and categories similar to Stewardship contract awards? I can see us going around in circles unless we have some type of scoring system. Are there extra points for bringing in other partners/funding? How does a project in Condon have the same priority as one in Missoula?**

- First, we will make sure the projects adhere to the criteria set forth in the ACT. What gets funded is based on the RAC discussion/consensus - we (the Forest Service) can't decide this. Likely the RAC will not be able to fund all projects. It is the RAC's responsibility to decide the priority projects based on need, merit of the proposal, etc.

Prior to those tough decisions and conversations on project funding, Kate will send each individual RAC member a ranking sheet so you can rank your individual preferences. I will then consolidate everyone's rankings and let you know which projects 'came out on top' with highest rankings as a starting place.

We will have to wait and see what kinds of projects we receive. Some things the RAC may want to consider are – is the project ‘shovel ready’ (has NEPA been done); are there additional partner dollars to leverage to make the project go even further, etc.?

Every RAC is different based on location and the communities within that county, and each has different preferences for decisions on funding projects. Some RAC’s favor road projects and noxious weed projects, some favor recreation projects, some do a mix of both. We can’t dictate that to you all, it should come out naturally in discussion while working together.