

Gravelly Landscape Collaborative Meeting
October 11, 2017 NOTES

Purpose: Focus on the Madison

Attending: Kevin Suzuki, Ethan Kunard, Darcie Warden, Linda Owens, Chelsea Pardo, Jennifer Boyer Facilitator

November Meeting Canceled. Our next meeting will be December 13, 2017 with The Ruby Watershed.

GLC Notes from September are OK to post on our website.

Introductions and Trap Line

Madison River Foundation - Lauren Wintorp – New Madison River Foundation Director.

Macro invertebrate survey conducted this year with education and outreach. The spring survey results will be compared to NW Energy monitoring. NW Energy surveys are focused below Ennis dam. These surveys will be continued next year as well. David Stogiano is conducting the surveys.

A restoration plan for riparian work is also being developed. The planning area is above Ennis and continues downstream along the mainstem of the Madison. Tom Parker (Environmental Consulting) is conducting the survey and developing the plan.

Beaverhead Deerlodge Working Group – there was some discussion that the Greenhorn Strike Team could be pulled to work on fire salvage. It is not a sure appointment and it is hard to say how this could impact our progress. The team may have begun some analysis but is likely to wait for comments before the analysis is begun. If they are pulled to the salvage project it is hoped it would only be for 6-8 months.

Greenhorn Scoping will close on November 4, 2017. GLC comment letter is in review by steering committee and will be mailed next week.

Update from Madison Valley Ranchlands Group – Linda Owens and Kevin Suzuki

Weed committee – last few years (19th fund raiser broke \$1M mark), we have tripled the donations with grants over the years. Melissa Griffiths is our weed coordinator and the funds are used for match. Project focus area for weed control with landowners with cost share on private ground (Pony Willow Creek area, Odell Creek, Jack Creek, South Madison project at the mouth of Quake lake to Grizzly bar) does spray day and some aerial, hand – main issue is knapweed also toadflax and hounds tongue. Also do trainings and certification for private applicators. Bio control program out of the school (12 years) hire students to collect bugs and distribute to landowners. They released a lot on leafy spurge in Bear trap. Beginning to look at toadflax bugs.

We do outreach and education and youth programs. We provide scholarships for high school and science projects.

Repository for the brucellosis information. We do public meetings every year. We had new animals test positive and this moves the ranch to 6 month tests and after a clear they move to annual testing. The transmission is not clear, can cattle transfer to cattle? It is unclear. We test over 73,000 cattle a year in the DSA, even if they are based somewhere else they need to be tested. We have information on our website.

Scavenger fetus study – over 100 sites that show how long it takes for carcasses to pick it up – cameras were used. USGS - less than 3 days before it was found, birds find it first (grizzly, 1 wolf, coyotes, raptors).

NRCS has site monitoring in the Madison and the MVRG wants more locations and so we are establishing more photo monitoring locations. These would be for range that has elk and those that don't. We should do photo points in the fall after grazing and in the spring as well.

Carcass pick up with the FS and USFWS trailer and we also have the Madison County Commission and we are allowed to dump at the dumpsters in Ennis for free. The compost site is on hold in definitely. Steve Primm is helping out too.

Over objective in elk numbers – over 9,000.

Update from Madison Conservation District – Ethan Kunard

Education Outreach programs, we have a coordinator which is housed in the Ennis school (farm to fork, CD, Madison River Foundation) she does natural resource education – Nicole Bailey – and also science teacher. Offers more consistency for the youth.

Madison Stream Team – 205 volunteer hours for 35 field visits – we are in our 8th year. Good volunteer base, many retirees.

Channel Migration Mapping project with support from other organizations and the County. Varney Bridge to Ennis Lake, looks historically and can project to possible future courses.

Landowner – Moores Creek re-channelization, was straightened and channelized and perched and would always spill out – 1600 feet EQIP project with match from NW Energy and Future Fisheries. Already re-vegetated and looking good.

Jack Creek project near the mouth that focuses on bank stabilization and meander work with bio-engineering and vegetation. Hope to start in March 2018, we have some funding but not fully funded, may do in phases.

Watershed Restoration Planning for the Madison after the DEQ TMDL. Many of the impairments are sediment but also some nutrients, metals and temperature.

Drought Mitigation Plan out of the Obama drought resiliency plans with a focus on the upper Missouri Headwaters. Headed up by DNRC. Looking historically and tying that to population projections and water use in the future including surface and ground water. We have an opportunity for forest management – control and store runoff and aquifer recharge – there is the possibility of forest projects that have a focus on drought and water budgets. We have 1.5 years left in this planning project. Shift from responding to drought to building resiliency on the landscape to drought – looking at soil health and water holding capacity – natural storage opportunities.

Dale Olsen USFS :

Opportunities for vegetation management (Doug fir) on Tabaco Roots – old EIS (2001) and they have looked at the project several times but most of the project hasn't been implemented. You would have to start from square 1 since so much time has passed. 16, 340 acres were proposed very similar to the Greenhorn projects with post and pole, fire, aspen etc. Granite Creek, Mill Creek and Dewey Creek areas – lots of WUI work and fuel breaks near private land. Looked at a landscape and was a poster child at the time. Lots of Doug fir (thin from below) get more open park conditions. Concerns here for mule deer habitat improvement and other wildlife in the areas that have become increasingly forested.

Discussion:

Ruby CD working on the Ramshorn projects for watershed work.

Future Meeting focus – reviews of certain areas – looking closely at issues, concerns and opportunities. Maybe South meadow Creek – linking landscape to drought resiliency and forest health. Tobacco roots broad overview of resource concerns to identify future project area.