

# Montana Forest



# Collaboration Network

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

# MFCN Charter



The Montana Forest Collaboration Network (MFCN) is an independent organization of volunteers providing information and services to individuals and groups across the state of Montana that support the management and protection of natural resources. The mission of the organization is to assist collaboration in forest and grassland restoration, conservation, and resource utilization for the benefit of all.

Participation in the MFCN is open to all who aim to make progress in the management and protection of natural resources in the state of Montana. Since a particular interest of the MFCN is assistance to community-based collaborative groups working on natural resource issues, members of these collaborative groups form a core constituency of the MFCN. In addition, employees of federal land management agencies may also be involved in the MFCN, but they will be considered ex-officio, non-voting participants in the MFCN. However, any citizen may utilize the services of the MFCN and become involved in its operations.

## Principles



Collaborative processes can advance the realization of public interests across the full range of land ownerships and natural resource settings.

Collaborative processes across Montana operate independently based on community interests and locally driven issues.

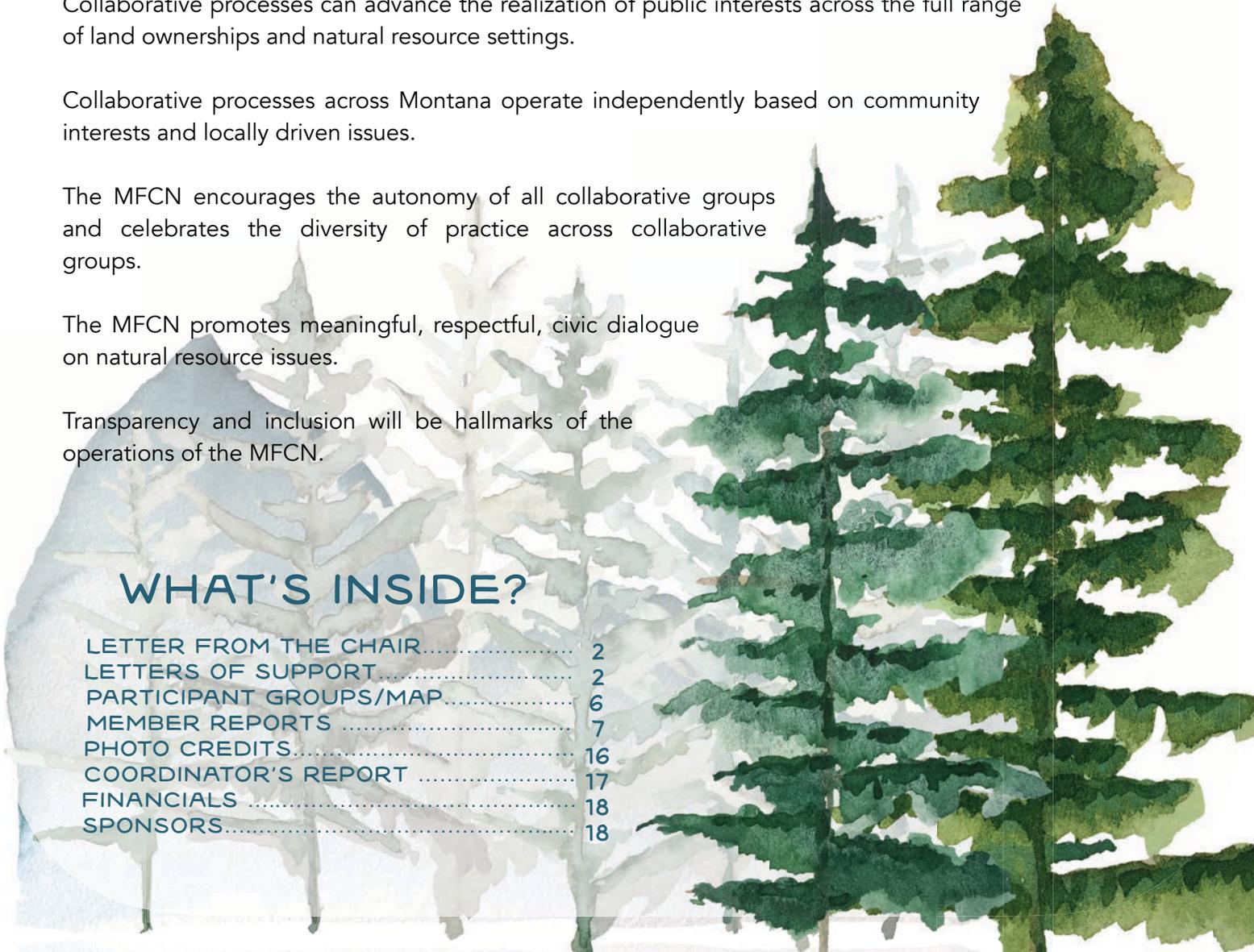
The MFCN encourages the autonomy of all collaborative groups and celebrates the diversity of practice across collaborative groups.

The MFCN promotes meaningful, respectful, civic dialogue on natural resource issues.

Transparency and inclusion will be hallmarks of the operations of the MFCN.

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# Letter from the Chair

GORDY SANDERS, MFCN CHAIR

Thanks to all of you who have participated in collaboratives and collaborative processes to create this ground swell of support for collaboration across Montana and across the Nation. Folks are gradually coming to realize the incredible potential collaboration offers to resolve differences, find common ground and to deliver a variety of benefits for our treasured forests and grasslands. Through the Montana Forest Collaboration Network we continue to build a bigger middle of common thinking while stretching to resolve tough issues. We provide continued access to science based and factual information on pertinent topics through our website, facebook and dashboard issue papers.

Looking forward, our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting on “Shared Stewardship/Forests in Focus/Good Neighbor Authority/Collaborative Engagement” offers a tremendous opportunity to hear visionary and insightful speakers during today’s climate of streamlining processes, focused end results and benefits of stewardship. We’ll also be introduced to the discussion about Montana’s Forest Action Council and the intent of the Montana Forest Action Plan with an update on its purpose, process and its potential to deliver benefits to those most interested in Montana’s forest lands. Next year’s joint meeting with the Montana Watershed Coordination Council in October 2020 in Butte is well underway led by our very talented Coordinator, Tim Love with the assistance of administrator, Debra Parker Foley. Both working part time to deliver professional and effective results. Montana is made up of very diverse landscapes, diverse folks with diverse values, interests, perceptions and certainly opinions, yet we are one Montana and collaboration is the umbrella that best reflects our ability to work together on good stewardship of our forests and grasslands for the benefit of all.

## Letters of Support

GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK

Improving the health and resilience of Montana’s forests continues to be among my highest priorities. I am grateful and invigorated by the leadership and effort of so many across the state working in partnership to restore our forests for the benefit of wildlife and fisheries species, watersheds, recreation, community wildfire protection, and local forest products and tourism economies. The Montana Forest Collaboration Network and its 23 affiliated groups are increasingly making a difference across the state’s landscapes. The groups are working side by side with local, state, tribal, and federal governments and local communities to design and implement projects that are improving forest health and decreasing wildfire risk. The positive results of your hard work are showing on the landscapes surrounding our communities. Because of you, we increasingly have more acres of resilient forests, a better understanding of our forest conditions, and an even greater understanding and appreciation of one another’s values. Yet we have a lot more work to do to even begin to address some of the more pressing issues. Over the past 10 years, nearly half of Montana’s forests have experienced epidemic proportions of insect infestations and disease, nearly 85% of forested acres are at elevated risk of wildfire, our fire seasons are 40 days longer than they were 30 years ago, and the average number of acres burned by wildfire per year has increased 15-fold over the past 20 years. And with current climate change trends, conditions will only become increasingly challenging. We need to be working together now, more than ever, in bigger and better ways.

Under my most recent Montana forestry initiative Forests in Focus 2.0: A Cross-Boundary Collaborative Approach, I’m calling on partners to take action together in more creative and intentional ways to address wildland fire risk and forest health issues across boundaries and at larger scales. We are expanding our efforts under Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) to bring additional capacity to all seven national forests throughout the state as well as to the Bureau of Land Management. Under GNA, we are helping our federal partners increase their program of work and as we continue to grow this partnership, we plan to focus on priority areas important to local communities and collaboratives. Additionally, I have formed, via Executive Order, the Montana Forest Action Advisory Council to bring many cooperators, agencies, and tribal nations together to develop a statewide plan of action to address the highest priorities for our forests when it comes

to wildfire risk and forest health. The Montana Forest Action Plan will include a statewide assessment of forest conditions, identify priority areas for treatments, and propose cross-boundary solutions to accomplish landscape-scale forest restoration. Many members on the Council are seasoned collaborators from groups affiliated with the Montana Forest Collaborative Network. We will be asking those members as well as the principal representative from the Network appointed to the Council to help us best engage all of you throughout the development of this process. We are relying on your participation and the leadership of Council members to develop a plan that emphasizes broader action across boundaries, finds creative ways to expand our joint capacity to accomplish shared objectives, and further supports and brings benefits to localized collaborative work across the state.



Through GNA, the Forest Action Plan and other efforts in Forests in Focus 2.0, I am asking the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Forestry Division to take a lead role in convening multiple partners to jointly identify goals and targeted investments, to ensure that our actions are better coordinated in both the planning and implementation stages, to ensure that resources are shared to the extent practicably, and to jointly track and celebrate our successes. It is time for us to align our knowledge, resources, and efforts to accomplish greater results on the ground.

This all-lands, all-hands partnership approach to restoring healthy forests in Montana is working in many places. We have proven we have the experience, focus, and determination to succeed in our efforts going forward. Healthy forests, protected communities, vibrant economies, and stronger partnerships will be our legacy through this vision and effort. Thank you for your good work and for your continued commitment to Montana's forests and the communities that rely on them.

## LEANNE M. MARTEN, REGIONAL FORESTER

The Montana Forest Collaborative Network (MFCN) has an important role in our efforts to think, plan and act in a more coordinated effort to achieve cross-boundary work. I would like to thank MFCN for the assistance they have provided to collaborative groups on organizational effectiveness and the suite of new briefing papers on topics of interest, such as the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA). MFCN's 2018 workshop offered an important opportunity to advance dialogue between federal, state and collaborative partners on how we can better tell our story of active management and collaboration in Montana.

The vision and principles of Forest in Focus 2.0 and Shared Stewardship emphasize working together to accomplish landscape-scale treatments in priority areas that make a meaningful difference in and around Montana communities. The Northern Region is committed to working with collaboratives as we engage in Shared Stewardship with the State, Tribes, and other stakeholders to address our most pressing needs in forest health and wildfire risk across Montana. We look forward to our continues partnership with MFCN and the 2019 workshop on Shared Stewardship and GNA.



## KATIE STEVENS, BLM MT DISTRICT MANAGER

When I started in early April 2019 in my new position as the BLM Western Montana District Manager, the Montana Forest Collaboration Network (MFCN) and its members and staff were high on my list of effective partnerships to learn about and people to meet. Fast forwarding almost 20 years from the National Fire Plan, we have learned that we need collaborative, coordinated effort from agencies, private landowners, and state and local governments if we're to be successful with protecting our wildland urban interface and managing our timber stands. Our regional timber industry is also essential in our ability to reduce fuels and improve wildlife habitat on lands we manage, and having mills and niche industries up and working gives us the flexibility we need to create desired conditions on the public lands. As I've learned more about the partnerships and people involved in MFCN, I am so impressed by the pragmatic, positive focus that members bring to the table. People are interested in solving problems and getting work done on the ground, and I'm convinced that we not only get the work done, but get it done better than we would have if it were possible to work on our own. I look forward to continuing to work with MFCN.

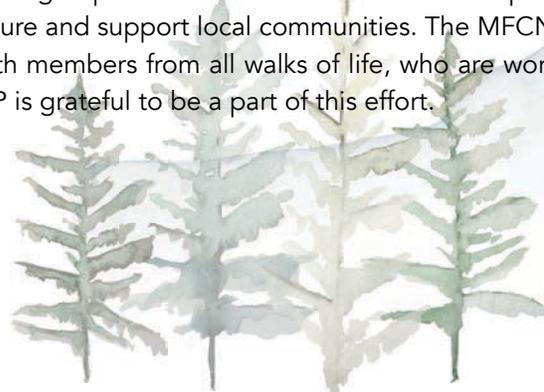


## TOM WATSON, NRCS STATE CONSERVATIONIST

In fiscal year 2019 (FY19), Montana NRCS began the transition to a focused approach to implementing conservation, referred to as Montana Focused Conservation (MFC). Rather than funding conservation through random acts, Montana NRCS will focus Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds in targeted areas to achieve clearly defined natural resource outcomes as identified by our local partners through the locally-led process. The Montana Forest Collaboration Network (MFCN) mission fits seamlessly into MFC, and I believe local collaboratives will be an essential partner in the locally-led process moving forward. Montana NRCS is excited to continue working collaboratively to address forest health and wildfire risk on private lands in Montana, while also engaging in cross-boundary efforts such as the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership. Montana NRCS is poised to be a key partner in the shared stewardship of the vast forest resources in Montana, and we look forward to working with the forest collaboratives and other partners to move the needle on forest health and wildfire risk.

## SCOTT LAIRD, MT REPRESENTATIVE, THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP

The issues that surround the management of our natural resources is getting more and more complex. Collaboration is a way to bring all interests together to learn about the issues that face us and our natural resources as well learn and gain respect for other people and their opinions. The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) believes in finding bipartisan solutions to move conservation issues forward. That is why we support the Montana Forest Collaboration Network (MFCN) and its efforts to improve cooperative natural resource management processes and find results that are built on consensus and local input. The MFCN mission, which is to assist collaboration in forest and grassland restoration, conservation and resource utilization for the benefit of all, will ensure that there is consensus, understanding and a balance of representation from all interest groups as we move forward with complex conservation and restoration projects that improve our resources for the future and support local communities. The MFCN plays an important role in providing support to local collaborative groups, with members from all walks of life, who are working hard on issues in their own back yard to find broad based solutions. TRCP is grateful to be a part of this effort.



# BRIAN KAHN, ARTEMIS COMMON GROUND

*Collaboration and Common Ground: Demagogues and Fear*

Fear is a natural and intensely potent reaction -- our mind and body's response to perceived threat. It raises our blood pressure and intensifies adrenaline flow. Fear often produces anger, making it hard to think clearly.

Constant change in modern life breeds simmering anxiety: Am I, my values, my way of life obsolete?? If they're at risk, who's to blame? Technology leads to specialization, creating separate groups that see the world differently -- "parts of the elephant" each wants to believe is the whole. The disagreement easily leads to the conviction that "those people" are wrong!

Depending on the nature of the issue results can range from low-key tension to full-scale war. Groups may live for decades, tolerating the tension. In 1982, a friend attended Yugoslavia's winter Olympics. Speaking Serbian and Croatian, he stayed two weeks. In bars and on the streets, at an interfaith Muslim/Christian marriage, he sensed no hint of ethnic or religious tension.

A decade later he was back, reporting on the Kosovo war and saw the bodies of murdered children, killed because of a mother's headscarf. How such horror could suddenly explode? "The ancient tension had to be under the surface, dormant embers," he said. "Then the economy tanked, Yugoslavia splintered, and the demagogues fanned the flames of hate." It rang true. Hitler blamed Jews for Germany's WWI defeat; he made no headway for 8 years, but when the Great Depression hit the lies took hold and he seized power. It's amazing but true that collaboration--the disciplined human search for common ground--has the power to change that, to break the spiral of animosity.

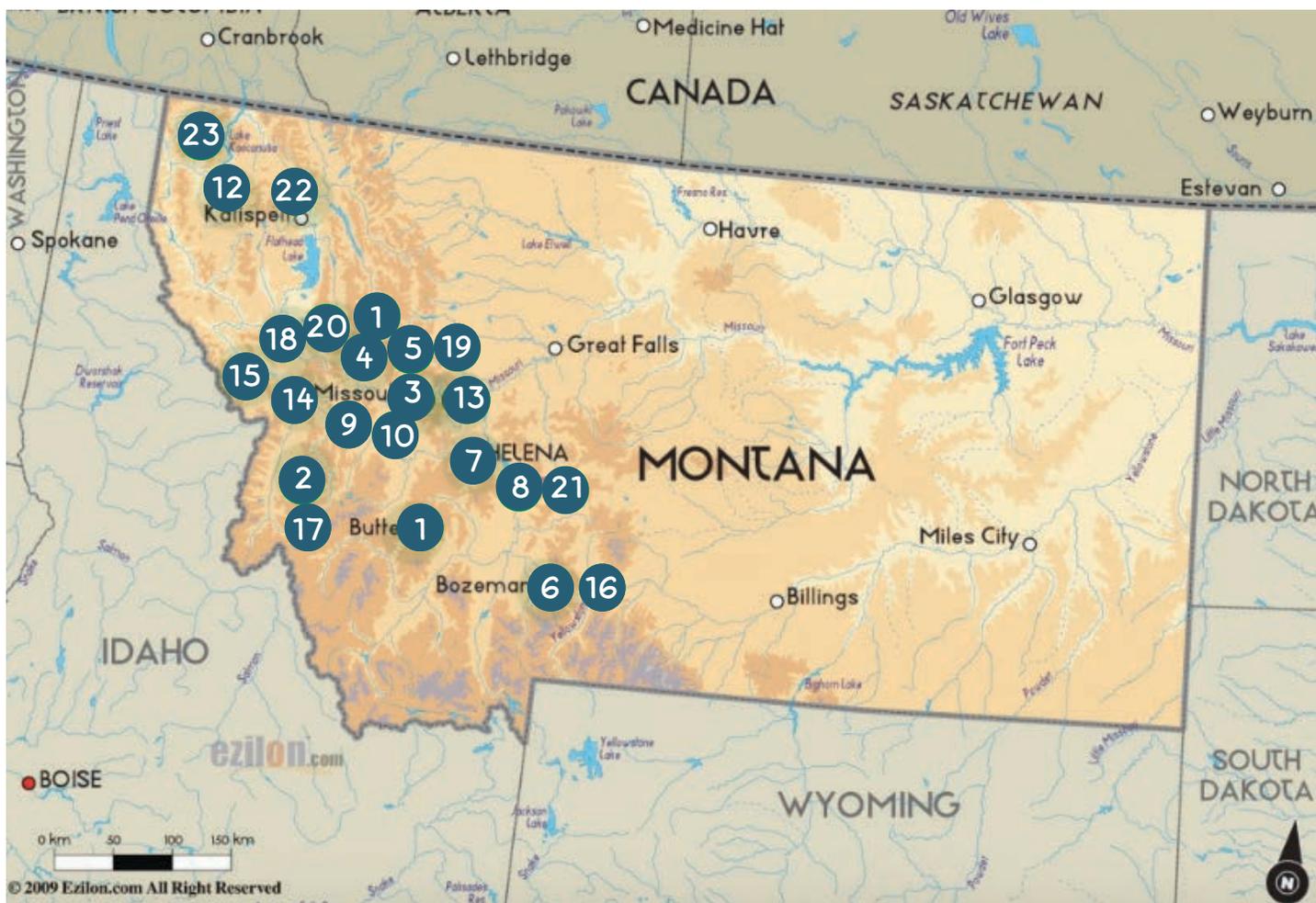
Ranchers, timber folks, conservationists, environmentalists and public agency staff, begin the process sitting at the table, looking the "opponent" in the eye, watching her or him speak, listening to the words, intuitively testing for human integrity. And when people see and feel that integrity something profound happens: We sense a basic human bond. Our guards begin to lower, minds and then hearts open at the glimmering of potential common ground. With focus and discipline over time, the primal bond dissipates fear and anger and clears the mind, enabling us to see new aspects of the elephant--both theirs and ours, and how, just maybe, they might function together for the good of all.

Some years ago a group of men came together from farms, towns and cities, from north and south, from rival regions. Some owned human slaves and some hated slavery, radical progressives sat with liberals and rock-ribbed conservatives. Some depended on foreign trade, others on agriculture or building domestic industry. Men of different denominations, theists and atheists... They worked hard and collaboratively for some time. And in 1789 produced the Constitution of the United States of America.

207 years later I sat with 6 ranchers at the Crumley's kitchen table in McAllister, Montana. The newly-formed Madison Valley Ranchlands Group had invited 2 guests, a wildlife biologist and a Forest Service district ranger. There was tension in the room as introductions were made. One rancher began, "Let's talk elk." Backs stiffened as we all saw the public's elk hammering ranchers' haystacks. A long pause. Then rancher Lynne Owens said, "Let's not talk elk. We won't agree on elk. Let's find something we might agree on and talk about that. Then in two years we'll talk about elk." They're still talking, and getting good things done.

From Dillon to Plentywood, from Helena to Washington, D.C., there are folks who want to work to find common ground, and also demagogues who seek power by driving us apart. The Founders gave us the tools to choose.

# MFCN Participant Groups



- |     |                                       |     |   |
|-----|---------------------------------------|-----|---|
| 1.  | BEAVERHEAD-DEERLODGE WORKING GROUP    | 13. | LINCOLN RESTORATION COMMITTEE                 |
| 2.  | BITTERROOT RESTORATION COMMITTEE      | 14. | LOLO RESTORATION COMMITTEE                    |
| 3.  | BLACKFOOT CHALLENGE                   | 15. | MINERAL COUNTY RESOURCE COALITION             |
| 4.  | BLACKFOOT/CLEARWATER STEWARDSHIP      | 16. | MONTANA FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION (MFOA)      |
| 5.  | CLEARWATER RESOURCE COUNCIL           | 17. | RAVALLI COUNTY COLLABORATIVE                  |
| 6.  | CUSTER-GALLATIN WORKING GROUP         | 18. | SANDERS COUNTY COLLABORATIVE COMMITTEE        |
| 7.  | ELKHORN RESTORATION COMMITTEE         | 19. | SOUTHWESTERN CROWN COLLABORATIVE (SWCC)       |
| 8.  | ELKHORN WORKING GROUP                 | 20. | SWAN VALLEY CONNECTIONS                       |
| 9.  | GREAT BURN STUDY GROUP                | 21. | TEN MILE/SOUTH HELENA COLLABORATIVE COMMITTEE |
| 10. | HEART OF THE ROCKIES INITIATIVE       | 22. | WHITEFISH RANGE PARTNERSHIP                   |
| 11. | HIGH DIVIDE COLLABORATIVE             | 23. | YAAK VALLEY FOREST COUNCIL                    |
| 12. | KOOTENAI FOREST STAKEHOLDER COALITION |     |   |

# Member Reports

## BEAVERHEAD-DEERLODGE WORKING GROUP

The Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group (BDWG) started in 2011 to bring diverse interests together to develop agreement around priorities and approaches for project work and increase the pace and scale of restoration on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (BDNF). The BDWG is a collaborative with members that represent a diversity of interest, geographies, and knowledge of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (BDNF). Members represent timber industry, county government, agriculture, quiet and motorized recreation, conservation, mining, hunting and fishing, permittee, economic development, and citizen-at-large interests. Members of the BDWG work to develop common understanding of issues among diverse stakeholders and serve as a bridge to broader constituencies with interests in the (BDNF). Members work to resolve forest-level issues in a manner that results in more restoration work getting done on the ground and in a way that achieves ecological objectives and community benefits.

In the last year, the BDWG has developed a shared understanding of the:

- Region 1 objections process
- Economic impact of BDNF activities
- BDNF's Integrated Resource Strategy process
- Possible routes for Greater Yellowstone and Northern Continental Divide grizzly bear populations to intermingle
- BDNF's 5-year timber management plan
- BDNF, Custer Gallatin, and Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest's new POD

In the last year, the BDWG has worked to:

- On-board new BDNF staff including the Forest Supervisor, Deputy Forest Supervisor, and Range, Recreation, and Partnerships Staff Officer
- Update the information BDWG uses to identify priority landscapes for restoration
- Consider applying to the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP)
- Secure facilitation and coordination funding from Jefferson County, Sun Mountain Lumber, Madison County, Anaconda Sportsmen, and Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
- Approve four new members
- Stand up the Jefferson County, Projects, and CFLRP Subcommittees
- Address range permittee issues with falling beetle-killed lodgepole
- Understand the lessons learned from Montana's first Good Neighbor Authority project, the Boulder Lowlands Vegetation project
- Understand the management history and implications of releasing Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) on the BDNF
- Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of project design and implementation
- Outreach to fill seats on the Southwest Montana and Tri-County Resource Advisory Councils (RAC)

The BDWG will continue to work side-by-side with agency partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of on-the-ground work and the BDNF and will continue to advocate for increases in the BDNF's capacity.



## BITTERROOT RESTORATION COMMITTEE

The Bitterroot Restoration Committee (BRC) is in a process of transition that could change the way that we work with the Forest Service in the future. A number of our long-time members have left the collaborative for various reasons; Ravalli County has established its own collaborative, with members appointed by the county commissioners; and the Bitterroot National Forest has had some significant changes in leadership. Each of these changes has provided incentive for the BRC to reevaluate how we operate and set priorities, in order to work in the most efficient and effective manner. During the past year we have provided input, comments, and recommendations on a number of Forest Service projects, including Three

Saddle, Westside, and Gold Butterfly. The Bitterroot Forest has been very helpful by making their subject area specialists available to help us better understand Forest Service procedures, methodologies, and prescriptions for management. The subject areas included old growth management, silvicultural prescriptions for ecological restoration, and the implications of insects and disease on forest stands. In addition, we are currently working on a large-scale restoration proposal (Mud Creek) on the West Fork Ranger District. This is a complex project that covers a variety of issues, such as forest health; mitigation of wildfire risk to private property in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI); protection and enhancement of fish, wildlife, and watershed values; and restoration of heavily roaded lands that were extensively terraced in the 50's and 60's. Mud Creek differs from other projects in that the Forest Service has sought our input at the very earliest stages of project development. Our committee attended a field trip on the project last fall, and members were able to provide comments that were used to develop the "Purpose and Need" for the restoration proposal. We hope that this early involvement will reduce the need for recommending significant changes to project alternatives as the project moves forward. Another first for our Committee is our involvement in the Three Mile project. This is a "Good Neighbor Authority" (GNA) project involving Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) and Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) on FWP's Three Mile Game Range and the Stevensville Ranger District. This project will permit the Forest Service to treat isolated FS parcels within the Game Range in conjunction with DNRC and FWP. By using GNA in conjunction with a project proposed by FWP, the Forest Service will be able to restore timber stands that would otherwise be uneconomical to treat. With great assistance from MFCN's Jim Burchfield, Tim Love, and Gordy Sanders, the BRC held a committee retreat in Hamilton on June 24<sup>th</sup>. The session helped new members understand the history of the MFCN and BRC and then focused on the future of the committee. We discussed our individual definitions of restoration and expectations of the BRC, our hopes for the future of the committee, and our ideas for working more effectively as a collaborative. We identified subcommittees to work on position statements or principles that will guide our input on Forest Service proposals. We all left the retreat with a high degree of enthusiasm and are committed to making significant headway on these items in the coming year. We will report on our success next year.

## BLACKFOOT CHALLENGE

The mission of the Blackfoot Challenge is to coordinate efforts to conserve and enhance the natural resources and rural way of life in the Blackfoot Watershed for present generations. At our core, we are a process. Established in 1993 (though building on the strength of partnerships that date back to the mid-1970s), our ethos has always been about recognizing that if we approach conflict by focusing on what we all want to achieve – not what divides us – we can be effective. We bring people together, facilitate respectful conversations focused on shared values, and build trust. By following this approach for the last 26 years, we have been able to deliver responses to community needs that stand the test of time.

By committee and program area, our outcomes in 2018 include:

**BLACKFOOT COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AREA:** 60 acres of open pine grassland restored to historic conditions.

**CONSERVATION STRATEGIES:** Hosted a Ranch Estate and Succession Planning Workshop in Helmville in November, with more than 40 residents and partners in attendance.

**EDUCATION:** Rotating naturalist speaker series included presentations on bear biology and safety, pollinators, beavers, and osprey, and reached over 200 students.

**FORESTRY:** Coordinated 415 acres of hazardous fuel reduction around homes to improve forest and community resilience to wildfire.

**LAND STEWARDSHIP:** Provided 50 landowners with property-specific stewardship recommendations.

**RURAL SUSTAINABILITY:** Coordinated the development of Envision Lincoln, a community-led plan for enhancing Lincoln's social and economic priorities.

**SWANS:** Six trumpeter swan nests fledged 11 cygnets.

**WATER:** Coordinated a "shared giving" approach to drought response, involving 90 landowner water conservation plans, reaching thousands of visiting floaters and anglers, and sustaining habitat for native trout.

**WILDLIFE:** Over 90% of central watershed ranchers participating in carcass pick-up program during calving season to reduce carnivore attraction.

**VEGETATION:** 165 acres treated across fence lines; 30 miles of Blackfoot River shoreline treated; and 2,500 acres of weed species inventoried.



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# BLACKFOOT/CLEARWATER STEWARDSHIP

In June 2019, Senator Tester stood on the banks of the Blackfoot River to announce reintroduction of the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act (BCSA), the result of a 13-year collaborative effort on the Seeley Lake Ranger District of the Lolo National Forest. This reintroduction built on momentum created by BCSP steering committee outreach to emphasize the legislation's protection of the ecological health of the iconic and important Blackfoot watershed. A five-minute film, *Hallowed Waters: The Legacy and Lifeblood of the Big Blackfoot*, released in February 2019 featured biologists, local business owners, and community members sharing this message. Success for the BCSA in this session of Congress is predicated on bipartisan support from our Congressional delegation and on the support of our fellow collaboratives around the state. The BCSP steering committee continues to work to cut through divisive politics in calling on our entire Delegation to focus on what is best for our rural landscapes and communities. The BCSP is currently asking Congressman Gianforte to introduce a companion bill to the BCSA in the House of Representatives and asking Senator Daines to support the BCSA in the Senate and we strongly encourage or fellow collaboratives around the state to contact our Congressional delegation to ask them to advance this bill. Passage of the BCSA will be a significant milestone for the project and for all collaboratives across Montana, achieving the conservation outcomes that have been goals since the collaboration's inception and proving that collaboration can deliver durable outcomes that benefit all interests. The BCSP also continues to pursue non-legislative outcomes as well in the areas of ecological restoration and recreation.



## CLEARWATER RESOURCE COUNCIL

The Clearwater Resource Council (CRC) in Seeley Lake, MT works to engage the community and facilitate efforts that will enhance, conserve, sustain, and protect the natural resources and rural lifestyle of the Clearwater Watershed for present and future generations. CRC partners with many other agencies and organizations to fulfill its mission. CRC has led the Seeley Swan Fuels Mitigation Task force for the past 15 years. This collaborative group focuses on coordinating fuel mitigation efforts on public and private lands in the Clearwater and Swan Valleys, and helps promote outreach to the public on making our communities more fire safe. It includes representatives from two Districts of the USFS, two units of DNRC, local fire departments, Missoula County, Swan Valley Connections, and local homeowner associations. CRC has been a leading organization in the Southwest Crown of the Continent Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project. This project is now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, and has worked with the USFS to implement numerous restoration and conservation projects. It has included a comprehensive monitoring program. CRC has helped support the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship

Project which is a collaborative effort to promote stewardship in the Seeley Lake District of the USFS. Both of these groups have been very active over the past year. Locally, CRC has led diverse aquatic programs with monitoring of lake water quality through our volunteer Adopt-a-Lake program, monitoring of stream water quality through our volunteer Adopt-a-Stream program, and our work on monitoring and protecting lakes from aquatic invasive species. In 2019 CRC has launched a new initiative called the Clearwater Lakes Alliance which targets individual lakes within the Valley and engages local lakeshore owners in proactively addressing potential threats to their lakes. Our Students-in-Action program engages local school students in field projects related to stream ecology and monitoring. CRC also manages a local initiative to prioritize needed trail maintenance and development opportunities. We also administer a funding program to assist private landowners with fuel mitigation work. Finally, we have an active public engagement program that brings in a diverse set of speakers to make presentations to the public about natural resource management and related topics.



# CUSTER-GALLATIN WORKING GROUP

The CGWG continues to be active in the North Hebgen Multiple Resource Project, the Smith Shields Forest Health Project, the North Bridgers Forest Health project, and the Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan Revision. Following is a summary of key activities and priorities of the Working Group:

**North Hebgen Multiple Resource Project:** The CGWG filed a Declaration of Harm to support the North Hebgen Multiple Resource Project in a 2018 lawsuit filed by the Alliance for the Wild Rockies and the Native Ecosystem Council. The U.S. District Court granted the plaintiffs' request for a temporary injunction in August 2018. The CGWG continues to monitor this project.

**Smith Shields Forest Health Project:** The CGWG also filed a Declaration of Harm to support the Smith Shields Project in litigation filed by the Alliance for the Wild Rockies and the Native Ecosystem Council. This project received the go ahead from the U.S. District Court in August 2018 and work is underway to implement this project.

**The Forest Plan Revision:** In March 2018, the CGWG provided scoping comments on the desired conditions, goals, objectives, standards and guidelines of the Proposed Action. This past spring, the CGWG provided comments on the Draft EIS for the Forest Plan Revision. The committee met for well over 20 hours in hard face to face discussion and countless hours of personal time comparing the CGWG comments on the proposed action with the draft EIS. We did not address the issues of wilderness or wild and scenic rivers where there was little chance to reach consensus.

**North Bridgers Forest Health Project:** The CGWG North Bridger forest health project committee hosted one public meeting and at least two field trips to help involve the public in the development of this project. The CGWG published a guest editorial supporting the project in the Bozeman Daily Chronicle in September 2018. Litigation was filed against this project in June 2019.

**Red Lodge Mountain and Moonlight Basin Waste to Warmth Energy Projects:** The CGWG submitted letters of support for proposals by both Red Lodge Mountain and Moonlight Basin ski areas for the development of biofuels heating sources that would primarily utilize fuels off of their own property and may also utilize slash and other biofuel debris from the CGNF that would otherwise be burned in slash piles. This type of project provides economic opportunity, reduces air pollution and provides for a renewable resource for heating of the ski area facilities. The CGWG is carefully considering our capacity for taking on additional projects considering both membership capacity for additional work load as well as funding for the CGWG. The CGWG has received funding through the DNRC in the amount of \$7500 that will provide for administration of the CGWG. The CGWG will utilize this funding to continue its collaboration on projects with the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

## ELKHORN RESTORATION COMMITTEE

This is the last Annual Report to be issued by the Elkhorn Restoration Committee. As times change and issues, people and priorities change then so must the local collaboratives that work on and with the public land management agencies and private land owners. The members of the Elkhorn Restoration Committee have determined that they must evolve and have changed their landscape focus to include a larger footprint that will engage people, resources and agency priorities better. The committee will now focus on the Big Belts Mountain landscape, the Elkhorn Mountains and the Divide (all lands from Interstate 15 westward to the Salty Dog State lands area) landscape. The committee is now the **Big Elk Divide Restoration Committee** (BEDRC) acknowledging each landscape in the new committee's name. The BEDRC looks forward to working with all the agency and private land partners in the expanded area just as we have in the Elkhorns. We will be looking forward to expanding our membership to reflect this diverse landscape and involvement. During the past year ERC has reviewed the Draft Revision of the Helena-Lewis and Clark Forest Plan, prepared and debated our findings and have formally submitted our collaboratively reached final comments. We look forward to the next phase. Our joint Monitoring Committee with the Elkhorn Working Group submitted a letter to the Forest requesting recognition of the importance of monitoring to be part of the revised Forest Plan. ERC has attended a couple of field trip looking at some industrial forest management by Marks Lumber and private land thinning and fuel treatments conducted through NRCS programs. ERC involvement with the BLM continues and with ERC supporting efforts to get through a Supplemental EA on the Indian Creek Forage Reserve project. The Forest Service decision on Johnny Crow was affirmed in District Court, in which ERC and several other parties filed as Amicus members. That court decision has now been appealed to the 9<sup>th</sup> District court. We will be engaging in followup with that court case. The ERC has been deeply involved in the on-going debates, discussions and comments to the Helena-Lewis and Clark Forest dealing with non-motorized trails and use within the Elkhorn Mountains and the Cooperative Wildlife Management Area.

# HEART OF THE ROCKIES INITIATIVE

Through the generous support of a private family foundation, we were able to deliver \$113,000 in April to our land trust members through a competitive grant program. These funds will help support 13 different projects across our service area. In May we held our partnership meeting in the Upper Green River Valley of Wyoming. We heard from a great panel on the long history of partnerships in the Upper Green that is the core of successful land protection and stewardship work in the region. We also learned about current migration research in the state, and were able to see some of those key migration paths on a field tour. During the meeting the HOTR staff provided updates on the developing landscape campaign, and had a productive conversation on how to move forward. We were thrilled to approve applications for three new land trusts to join the partnership this Spring: *Bear River Land Conservancy (Logan, Utah)* works in the Bear River watershed on the southern terminus of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem which provides an irreplaceable link to the Southern Rockies of Utah and Colorado. *Land Trust of the Treasure Valley (Boise, ID)* serves some of the fastest growing cities and counties in Idaho and hopes to expand the pace of land protection, continue trail work and broaden their base of supporters. *Payette Land Trust (McCall, ID)* operates in four counties of West Central Idaho to promote a community ethic that values and conserves its working agricultural and timber lands in balance with thoughtful development. Heart of the Rockies is also happy to announce two newly elected board members: Chris Bryant, the Western Montana Lands Program Director for The Nature Conservancy, and Dave Hillary, Director of Corporate Development & Strategic Partnerships at the Canadian Wildlife Federation. As an organization we want to become more inclusive and help our partners do the same. We have started by mentoring two interns over the summer from the Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program, committed to increasing the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the conservation field. Madeleine Gefke and Isabella Johnson will spend time learning about our partnership and land trust work, meeting with conservation practitioners, and doing field work with some of our partners to measure gene flow across migration corridors. We have also been invited to send a staff member to attend Hewlett Foundation's Inclusive Community workshop this Fall to learn best practices in building indigenous partnerships and advancing shared priorities.



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## HIGH DIVIDE COLLABORATIVE

The High Divide Collaborative was born out of an opportunity to bring Land and Water Conservation funding into the landscape. In 2016 and 2017 the collaborative successfully secured \$30 million in LWCF funds and to date, partners have conserved over 2,300 acres, with additional projects expected to close in the near future. With money secured, the High Divide Collaborative is now determining what to focus on next. In 2019 we hired a new staff member to support partner participation by coordinating meetings, creating agendas, taking notes, and organizing events. The collaborative is home to a new Forestry and Fire Working Group which is currently focused on aspen community resilience and health in the High Divide. There is also interest and potential in starting another working group centered around ecological connectivity. We hope that these working groups will be just one of the tools leading to actionable projects in the High Divide. We had a great

turn out in April for our 2019 High Divide Collaborative Workshop. More than 100 people came together in Idaho Falls to share and learn about aspen communities, the intersection of working lands/water management/sagebrush habitat, and ecological connectivity in the High Divide. The rotating conversation session allowed for smaller, more personal conversations about connectivity topics and tools that impact our region and inform our work. Our panelists sparked some great discussion surrounding partnerships in sagebrush country, and working lands. Paul Rogers from the Western Aspen Alliance filled us in on the important role that aspen plays both ecologically and socially in the High Divide. The breakout sessions on the last day were great primers for advancing action in the collaborative around capacity building, ecological connectivity, the Farms and Fish project from the Upper Snake, and aspen restoration.



# KOOTENAI FOREST STAKEHOLDER COALITION

Recently, the Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Coalition (KFSC) has been focused on improving our engagement with the Kootenai National Forest (KNF) during their time of transition, collaborating around three forest management projects, and beginning to engage more deeply on recreation issues. The KNF is in the process of appointing a new Forest Supervisor, while also revising their five year strategic plan. During this time of transition, the KFSC has been actively working with KNF leadership, including the interim Forest Supervisor, to ensure that opportunities to collaborate around and employ policy tools to projects will remain a priority in their restructuring process. Right now we see an opportunity to improve communication with the Forest Service and clarify our methods of engaging with each District. We will be discussing these changes in more detail when a new permanent forest supervisor is hired. Currently, three localized KFSC teams are engaged on three separate projects across the Forest. KFSC team members a field trip to the Ripley Project on the Libby District in May. On the Three Rivers District, the KFSC team has put our collaborative principles to the test with the Black Ram project. It presents challenging issues around grizzly core habitat, protected areas, and vegetative management. We have been engaged in the scoping process and we are prepared to submit a cohesive comment letter once the EA comes out. On the Cabinet District, we have been involved in the development of the Purple Marten project since the beginning. Project goals include improving forest health, wildlife habitat, and fuels reduction, and creating some additional recreation opportunities by utilizing HFRA provisions. Some issues regarding motorized designations of trails have been controversial in the community and resolution will be up to the deciding officer. The KFSC is also entering a new collaborative space by engaging on recreation-specific projects. KFSC members have been participating in a new grassroots group of recreational users called the Libby Outdoor Recreation Association, which is exploring opportunities for local trail connectivity. We are also working on the Pacific Northwest Trail (PNT). The PNT is a National Scenic Trail that was established in 2009 with little input or collaborative involvement from local communities. The current route presents impacts to wildlife particularly grizzly habitat, timber projects, cultural resources and it does not offer the best possible experience for those hiking it. Last winter, the board voted to create a committee to examine the issue and suggest a course of action to the board. The KFSC supports a broad, community-based collaborative process and analysis to consider a better alternative for the PNT on the KNF.

# LINCOLN RESTORATION COMMITTEE

Formed in 2008, the Lincoln Restoration Committee has involved participation from local fire managers, conservationists, logging interests, recreationists, businesses, and sportsmen from the Lincoln Valley. While initially formed with a specific focus on forest restoration projects on the Lincoln Ranger District, the scope of the LRC has broadened to include emphases on community and economic development, outdoor recreation, and conservation, among other things. LRC members have catalyzed a number of successful off-shoot efforts for Lincoln in recent years including a vegetation management group focused on noxious weed eradication; Envision Lincoln, an effort focused on Lincoln's economic future; and the Upper Blackfoot Working Group, a collaborative promoting a landscape vision for the Lincoln Valley via the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest Plan Revision and eventual federal legislation. Having invested several years of collaborative engagement in the Upper Blackfoot Non-Winter Travel Plan, the LRC and offshoot groups are now partnering with the Lincoln Ranger District to implement the plan and help new recreation opportunities benefit the community of Lincoln. LRC members and other partners supported the Lincoln RD in 2018 in a successful application for a \$100,000 Recreational Trails Program Grant to build new mountain bike and ATV trails. This Beaver Creek Trails system is currently under construction in the Lincoln Valley while collaborative partners are working with the Lincoln RD to inventory and market new trail opportunities for the general public. The completion of a Lincoln community trails plan in 2018 by off-shoot group Envision Lincoln has led LRC and community members to focus in 2019 on implementing top priority community trails, with a long-term vision of providing trail connectivity between the community and its nearby national forest trail system. Recent years have seen delays in progress on implementing forest restoration projects on the Lincoln RD, including the mid-2019 lawsuit filed against the Willow Creek Restoration Project. While these developments play out in court, LRC and partner groups in Lincoln continue to focus on advancing projects related to trails, recreation, and economic development. Years of collaboration and recent successes in these areas led Governor Bullock to select Lincoln in late 2018 as one of six Montana partner communities for his Main Street Montana Rural Partners program. LRC members and community partners are working together with the Main Street program to catalyze and advance community priorities in 2019.

# LOLO RESTORATION COMMITTEE

The Lolo Restoration Committee continued its focus in 2019 on the realization of the Wildfire Cohesive Strategy in the Missoula valley. In coordination with the efforts of the Missoula County Cohesive Strategy Work Group and the Missoula Ranger District of the Lolo National Forest, the group considered methods to engage local landowners in neighborhoods around Missoula to adopt practices that would help create a Wildfire Adapted Missoula. Based on existing relationships with landowners in the Pattee Canyon area, as well as the approved Pattee Maintenance Project on National Forest lands in upper Pattee Canyon, the LRC began working with the Pattee Canyon Landowners Association to discern potential opportunities and barriers to reducing wildfire risk to property owners. Already substantial assistance to landowners in this area has been provided via the Bitterroot RC&D's Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program, and the Lolo Restoration Committee will attempt to link nearby properties to generate larger core areas of treated forests. A major step forward was realized when the Missoula Ranger District and the Missoula Office of the Natural Resource and Conservation Service (NRCS) was awarded one of the nation's few major conservation grants under the nationally competitive Joint Chiefs Proposals. The Lolo Restoration Committee had helped develop and support this successful "Wildfire Adapted Missoula" initiative. For the next three years there will be substantial new funds available to the two local, federal offices to treat fuels, explore biomass utilization options, and conduct pre-commercial and commercial thinning projects in the landscape surrounding Missoula. The Lolo Restoration Committee also continues to monitor the results of the Marshall-Woods project on the Missoula Ranger District, where the one set of commercial harvest units designed within the project were treated and burned in early 2019. Post treatment field trips helped community members observe the potential for fuel reduction programs to occur even close to a major urban center.

# MINERAL COUNTY RESOURCE COALITION

We want to thank the Montana Forest Collaborative Network (MFCN) for all the support they provide to the Collaboratives across Montana and for providing us with the opportunity to share our story and hear the stories from other Montana Collaboratives. The Mineral County Resource Coalition (MCRC), formerly known as the Mineral County Resource Advisory Group (MCRAG), was formed in 2002 with a specific mission to advise the Mineral County Commissioners on forest-related issues within Mineral County. While maintaining this emphasis on Mineral County, the MCRC recognized the need to broaden the diversity of interests within our membership and expand the scope of work we do. Recognizing the socioeconomic ties we have across State, County and Forest boundaries, the MCRC now actively engages in many projects across most of Western Montana and portions of Eastern Idaho. In 2017 the MCRC established two subcommittees, one to work on improving recreational opportunities within Mineral County and another to deal with vegetation and timber related issues. We have three agencies that regularly attend our monthly meetings, the Lolo National Forest, the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and Montana Department of and Fish Wildlife and Parks. Working with these agency partners, our subcommittees have successfully added several projects to the program of work. One of these projects was the Murphy Creek Project on the Superior District of the Lolo. Initiated by the MCRC in 2016, the Murphy Creek Project is an integrated stewardship project located between St. Regis and Superior just one mile off I-90. In addition to providing logs to our local sawmills, the vision for this project included the construction of 3.5 miles of non-motorized trails, interpretive signs, parking areas, restroom facilities, benches, and picnic tables. With the timber harvest now completed on the project, the Forest Service applied for an RTP grant to complete the remaining work. The grant request was for \$94,000 with \$54,000 being rewarded. These funds will be used to complete the Trail and parking area. The MCRC worked with the Forest Service to help secure over \$6,000 in matching funds required to be eligible to receive the grant. Another grant will be requested next year to complete the work. We have two primary challenges: 1) improving the economic conditions in Mineral County, and 2) the development of a GNA program on the Lolo National Forest. We continue to support the Secure Rural Schools program while working to increase the pace and scale of vegetation management on our National Forests to increase the funds available through PILT and the 25% Fund. The staff on the Lolo National Forest continues to work to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration. Developing an active GNA program on the Lolo National Forest is essential to the success of the forests restoration program.

# MONTANA FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION (MFOA)

MFOA is a 24 year old Montana non-profit corporation. Its sole purpose is to support Montana's non-industrial private forest landowners (NIPFLs). While being a voice for forest owners, MFOA carries out its mission in a collaborative spirit. All sides to an issue must be considered in order for action to be effective and respected. MFOA continually monitors and attends events on the local, state, and national level relevant to forest owners. In the recent past MFOA busied itself around the 2019 Montana legislative session, culminating in testifying before House and Senate Committees. These activities included supporting the Good Neighbor Authority which was led by MFCN and Tim Love. MFOA also supported and participated in the March Forestry Mini-College sponsored by MSU Extension Forestry, and the April annual Forest Landowner Conference in Butte sponsored by the Forest Stewardship Foundation and Northwest Management, Inc. MFOA also supported collaboration of private forest owners and the firefighting establishment during fire suppression. MFOA thanks and acknowledges the efforts and success of MFCN and its team Tim Love and Debra Parker Foley.

## RAVALLI COUNTY COLLABORATIVE

The Ravalli County Collaborative (RCC) was established in 2017 with the membership appointed by the Ravalli County Commissioners. Currently there are 14 members including 1 county commissioner. During the past 2 years the collaborative's primary emphasis has been building collaborative relationships; developing operating procedures; educating itself on important national forest resource issues; and, commenting early in the development of forest service project proposals. Currently ideas are being considered to develop operating procedures which may increase efficiency and effectiveness for responding to numerous forest service projects which are anticipated to be announced for the Bitterroot National Forest. Such procedures would require important resource issues to be considered at the project and forest level thereby allowing collaborative input on forest service projects to meld project and forest level thinking. Furthermore, forest level issue position statements may provide greater efficiency and effectiveness in reviewing multiple forest service projects and also be helpful in preparing the collaborative for the upcoming Bitterroot National Forest plan revision. Finally, the RCC remains enthusiastic and optimistic about collaboration as an effective method for providing local community thinking into forest service decision making.

## SANDERS COUNTY COLLABORATIVE COMMITTEE

The Sanders County Collaborative kicked off the start of our 3<sup>rd</sup> year this January and we're very proud of some of the work we've been able to accomplish. Our group was started to help improve the economic conditions of Sanders County by providing public input on some of the projects and to find more constructive ways to work with our local agency partners to help increase the pace and scale of forest restoration. One of the projects we are very proud of as a group, is the Swamp Eddy Project. The Forest was in the final stages of developing the preferred alternative for the Swamp Eddy Project when the Sheep Gap fire burned through the center of the project area in 2017. Working collaboratively with the Forest, we were able to get the unburned portions of this project back on the program of work and increase the area identified for management by 450 acres. We believe this was a really good step in the right direction for our group moving forward and we look forward to seeing a signed decision in the near future. Like any collaborative, we encourage healthy discussion on the diverse issues that affect our rural communities. In order to facilitate these discussions and ensure key issues are being fully addressed, we will continue to work to improve the diversify our membership. This year, we're looking to build on our past successes. We have plans to begin working to develop some timber projects using the Good Neighbor Authority, and Categorical Exclusions, along with looking at long term, wide scoped integrated restoration projects that include increased recreational opportunities, improved wildlife habitat, fisheries and water sheds, and timber production on the Plains/Thompson Falls Ranger District. Our group is small, but we believe that as we continue to see some positive results with our projects, more support will come our way.

# SOUTHWESTERN CROWN COLLABORATIVE (SWCC)

The Southwestern Crown Collaborative (SWCC) celebrated its tenth year in 2018 and entered into the final year of funding (FY2019) from the USFS Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program. We plan to apply for an extension of CFLRP funding to complete restoration projects that were slowed in planning or litigation and to continue vital monitoring projects. The Collaborative currently has 16 voting members representing 11 different entities. Many other people are involved in the SWCC monitoring program or involved in other ways. In 2018, several projects finally came to fruition including the Stonewall Creek mine rehabilitation project on the Helena-Lewis & Clark NF and prescribed burning of the Colt Summit project on the Lolo NF. Post-fire rehabilitation and salvage planning consumed considerable Forest Service staff time in 2018, particularly on the Seeley Lake RD. The SWCC also continued to participate in the planning of the Mid-Swan Landscape Restoration and Wildland Urban Interface Project (274,000 acres) on the Flathead NF with multiple field trips and input exchanges. A draft EIS for this project is expected in the fall of 2019. The SWCC monitoring program continued to make exciting strides in the past year. We implemented a scientific mail/online survey asking questions about forest management from community members in our landscape in 2018. We are currently analyzing the results and discussing what it means to managers. Using citizen scientists, we continued monitoring turbidity, flow, and temperatures of local streams, including those affected by the Rice Ridge Fire of 2017. Through this work, we estimate that 862 hours were contributed by 40 students and 67 community members. We also re-inventoried roads in watersheds burned at moderate and high severity, including jammer roads and stream crossings, and compared them to control roads outside the fire perimeter. Data from our meso-carnivore monitoring project continued to be used by several agencies because it is one of the most comprehensive datasets for these rare species. The USFWS used our data as important components of their wolverine and lynx status reviews in the past few years. We have also been working closely with the R1 office and Rocky Mountain Research Station while they develop a regional meso-carnivore monitoring strategy. Information for all of our monitoring projects can be found at: <https://www.swcrown.org>.

## SWAN VALLEY CONNECTIONS

Swan Valley Connections (SVC) is a conservation and education non-profit based out of Condon, MT. SVC works with the various partners in the area to connect people with this extraordinary landscape as well as coexist with the wildlife that inhabit the Swan Valley. This includes everything from visitor services to wetland restoration to helping private landowners secure grizzly bear attractants. What makes SVC unique is our two accredited college field semester programs: Wildlife in the West (spring), and Landscapes and Livelihoods (fall). Students learn about the various challenges of living with and managing wildlife and people in northwest MT and with how people live and adapt to living in rural Montana. One important aspect of Landscapes and Livelihoods is the Forest and Communities section which focuses on students learning about the local ecology, fire history, and forest management history of the area. Students visit forest practitioners as well as tour the local forest products industry. This ties into SVC's continued effort to assist private landowners with their questions and concerns around managing their forest and wildfire resilience. SVC's forest stewardship program offers cost-share assistance with the help of grant funds from the US Forest Service and Montana DNRC, which can help landowners reduce the cost of forest thinning and wildfire risk reduction projects. At the same time, landowners can employ local contractors providing valuable jobs and wood products to local mills in Seeley Lake, Bonner, and Columbia Falls. These wildfire risk reduction projects on private land directly complement adjacent forest management and forest thinning on Forest Service and State lands in the Swan Valley. For the Swan Valley to become a fire adapted community, it will take continued effort by many partners and local landowners, and SVC is committed to helping in that effort. To learn more about SVC visit <https://www.swanvalleyconnections.org/>.



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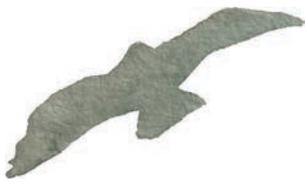
# TEN MILE/SOUTH HELENA COLLABORATIVE COMMITTEE

The Ten Mile / S Helena Forest Collaborative (TSH) was formed by resolution of the City of Helena in July 2014, and renewed in January 2018. The Ten Mile/South Helena forested area is just south and west of Helena. It consists of over 60,000 acres of USFS/BLM/WUI lands. It includes Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT), two IRA's (Jericho Mtn and Lazyman Gulch), and Ten Mile Creek, which is one source of the City of Helena's fresh drinking water. The City of Helena formed the "collaborative to consider management opportunities in the Tenmile Watershed and the City of Helena's wildland urban interface (WUI) for mitigation of fire risk and to reduce the potential for damage to the City's public water supply infrastructure". The TSH Collaborative consists of 11 diverse background members from all land/water/forest/users interests points. We have met over 40 times since 2014 to discuss the USFS Ten Mile / South Helena Project that ultimately lead to a ROD published on December 19, 2018. This ROD is under litigation by 3-entity's, but with no injunction in place, the FS is preparing timber sales and fuel mitigation's outside of the two IRA's. The project calls for thinning, logging, and burning on more than 17,500 acres within the project area south/west of Helena. Goals of the project include "mitigating wildfire, improving firefighter safety and protecting city water infrastructure". The TSH Collaborative also put in comments to the Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest Plan renewal. Specifically the Ten Mile / South Helena geographic area. With the two big projects comment periods over the TSH Forest Collaborative is switching modes into a monitoring and assisting the FS on their proposed timber sales and fuels mitigation programs to promote fire safety and protect the Ten Mile watershed.



## Photo Credits

1. Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group
2. Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group
3. Southwestern Crown Collaborative - Some of the mine tailings removed during Stonewall Creek restoration project.
4. Elaine Caton – Education (Blackfoot Challenge)
5. Heart of the Rockies Initiative
6. Michael Whitfield – Cattle
7. Heart of the Rockies Initiative
8. Heart of the Rockies Initiative
- 9.. Southwestern Crown Collaborative - Stonewall Creek (Lincoln District, Helena-Lewis & Clark NF) mine rehabilitation restoration
10. Heart of the Rockies Initiative
11. Bitterroot Restoration Committee
- 12 MFOA President Mike Christianson and Hillary Hutchison, winner of MFOA's fourth annual Stihl chainsaw raffle.
- 13 Mineral County Resource Coalition
14. Lincoln Restoration Committee members discuss recreational trail opportunities on Lincoln Ranger District.
- 15.. Mineral County Sunrise Salvage Project
16. Chris Boyer <http://cfboyer.com/>
17. Mineral County Resource Coalition
- 18.. Lincoln Restoration Committee off-shoot Upper Blackfoot Working Group presents collaborative proposal for Lincoln Ranger District at May 2019 public meeting in Lincoln.
- 19.. Marks Ranch lands in the back ground of current BLM fire mitigation-restoration, treated by Marks Lumber, 2018.
- 20.. Southwestern Crown Collaborative - Prescribed understory burning in the Colt Summit Vegetation Project 2018.
21. Chris Boyer <http://cfboyer.com/>
- 22.. BLM fire mitigation-restoration post treatment 2018, work done the winter of 2016 by Marks Lumber.
23. High Divide Collaborative
24. High Divide Collaborative
25. Stephen Beaumont – Blackfoot River (Blackfoot Challenge)



# Coordinator's Report

TIM LOVE, MFCN COORDINATOR

Many people ask me if collaborative groups in Montana are making a difference. I simply answer, yes. To be sure, collaborative groups face many challenges: garnering participants with diverse interests, confronting differences of opinions and strong personalities with different expectations for outcomes, and when these take too long, fatigue. Sometimes people forget to leave their "swords" at the door. But such is the hard work of democracy & collaboration. The work isn't for the faint of heart.

I think it's important, on occasion for groups to review their By-Laws, Mission Statements, Goals, Guiding Principles and Member Responsibilities. This can help everyone keeps things in perspective as they work with each other to craft thoughtful recommendations to agency leaders regarding projects and plans.

This MFCN Annual Report highlights Member Reports so network participants can read and learn from each other. The work reflected in the respective Member Reports answers the question asked about collaboration making a difference. Yes, collaborative groups in Montana are making a difference. As the saying goes; "the world is run by those who show up". So please continue to show up because it matters.

MFCN sponsored two excellent workshops in 2018. In March we participated in a joint workshop in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, "Thriving Resilient Landscapes Communities: Achieving a Collaborative Vision of the Future." In November in Kalispell our Montana workshop was "Telling the Collaborative Story" to help individual collaborative's tell their story in a meaningful way. We've designed the 2019 Workshop to help collaborative groups better understand how to engage with the Shared Stewardship and the Forests in Focus initiatives. We are planning a Joint Workshop with the Montana Watershed Coordination Council for October 14-16, 2020 at the Clarion Copper King Hotel in Butte. Please mark this on your calendar because it will be an outstanding event. Thanks for all you do for collaboration in Montana!

**AS THE SAYING  
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# Financials

JULY 2018-JUNE 2019

## Expenses

- Supplies - \$99.51
- Meeting Expense - \$976.75
- Contractors - \$36,442.48
- Project Cost - \$2973.50
- Event - \$6162.13
- Administrative Costs - \$1782.01
- Indirect - \$7427.34

**Total: 55,863.72**

## Income

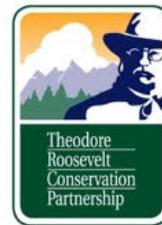
- Corporate - \$1200
- Foundation - \$2000
- Individual - \$852.62
- Federal/State - \$50,916.67

**Total: 54,969.29**

## Sponsors



MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION



CINNABAR FOUNDATION

THE KREILICK FAMILY FOUNDATION



THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

The Nature Conservancy  
Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

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