

CMR Community Working Group Meeting Summary

Where: Fort Peck Interpretive Center, Feb 27th, 2018

Opening: 10: 04 AM

Attendance: 34

Self-Introduction & Grounding Question: What is an important insight you learned in living through this winter?

CMR CWG Committee Reports:

- **Montana Saltcedar Team:** Will be meeting at the Ft. Peck interpretive center tomorrow convening all of the weed coordinators around the area to set the next project. A couple of ideas have come forth; so far the group will be working through those as well as looking for possible funding for those projects. A potential regional project is to tackle weed control in the access areas that go into the CMR Refuge. Bill mentioned that the *Diorhabda* beetle has been an effective biocontrol method for decreasing Saltcedar stands in the Southwest. Rachel gave an update on the status of the beetle in Montana and that an MSU graduate student who is working with those beetles will be giving a presentation at the Saltcedar meeting tomorrow. The Saltcedar group is now part of the Invasive Riparian Tree Species Committee under the Montana Invasive Species Committee (MISC), which has the potential to find new funding opportunities and provide outreach support.
- **Winnett ACES:** Gave some background on ACES and noted that in the last few months they have been talking with RSA about being part of that group. Feasibility of whether a group could purchase land similar to the TNC Matador Ranch. They are taking part in Julia Haggerty's project on Community Sustainability for the Winnett area.
- **CMR Water Compact:** The Water Court is in the final stages of tying up the loose ends and then the final compact will be completed.
- **Rural Community & Economic Research in Six County region:** Julia Haggerty, MSU Professor – no update other than doing surveys in the local communities.
- **Ranchers Stewardship Alliance Conservation Committee:** Committee is made up of RSA members and conservation groups. RSA was awarded funding to do a variety of conservation projects on private lands. Currently, the first year of funding has been allocated so they have applied for another round of funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF).

Ranchers Stewardship Alliance Presentation: Perri Jacobs talked about the goals of the Ranchers Stewardship Alliance (RSA) including: educational workshops, outreach to the next generation, produce food and fiber for the world, and improve conservation on the land. They work closely with a variety of partners such as US FWS, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the local Chamber of Commerce. RSA already has a good working relationship with TNC through the grassbank on the Matador Ranch. Some of the partners are also funders and have contributed towards the planning and development of RSA programs and projects.

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Lunch was served

CMR CWG Website Conservation Events Calendar: Andrew showed where to find the events calendar on the CMR CWG website and noted that he has posted events from partners' websites. The events will focus on agricultural, wildlife, and conservation related activities in Central and Eastern Montana. He asked that people send their information to either himself or Rachel (contact information can be found on the events page). Andrew will be posting to Facebook pages as well as sending out e-mails requesting event information.

Montana Conservation Menu: Rachel showed the online conservation menu and then asked if the group thought that there should be a reprint of the paper menu. The general consensus was that a print version was useful, but that it should refer people to the website for a more complete picture of the programs. It was also brought up that the CMR CWG website should have a link to the Montana Conservation Menu website.

Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team: Carolyn Sime provided a brief report on the Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Committee and how it is involved in the mitigation process. She also discussed the status of the BLM plans for sage grouse conservation and the review of how those plans lined up with individual state plans.

CMR CWG Presentation: Rachel Frost provided a presentation on the overview of the CMR CWG and how it was formed. She reviewed the 3-part goals and the mission statement of the group. She then showed a series of maps that depicted the conservation efforts of many of the partners in the region and how their efforts are intermixed. The presentation provided insight on how one partner's project or event ripples out to affect conservation efforts on the entire 6-county region and beyond.

Break Out Sessions: Instead of randomly assigning folks to groups, Bill divided the room into "Land Owners", "NGO staff and representatives", "Local Govt representatives" (including conservation district, local watershed groups, and county commissioners), and "State or Federal Govt representatives". He then assigned the following questions for each group to answer.

Q 1: *Review the mission statement and the three part goals for the CMR CWG. Do these still apply? Note any concerns and amendments, etc.*

Q 2: *Why are you here today, and why do you want to/continue to participate in this group?*

NGO Group: *The summary of the suggested changes can be found at the end of the meeting summary*

Mission: same

Purpose: change to "in and around" the refuge.....

Had issue with the word conflicts, wanted something that reflected differences

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Cooperation and partnerships between the user groups

3-Part Goal to Landscape

Had lots of changes/suggestions – will get handout.

Agency Group:

Mission and Purpose has gone beyond just focusing on the CMR.....landscape and region surrounding the CMR. BUT CMR is the placeholder for the group.

Additional information to purpose - will get handout from Marissa.

Ranchers Group:

Mission and Purpose is good.

Goals were good, but need more emphasis on the value of the people that live in the region.....

Conservation Districts

Both CMR and 6-county

Diverse interests but similar objectives

Goals – what is “stability”? There are fluxes in communities in population and economics, but stability may be defined in whether a county is able to support the population that is there and maintain the quality of life. All levels of being in the community are important.

Adult education, not just classroom or institutional education in our communities, education should be to non-residents. Also encompasses peer-to-peer information exchange, word of mouth...push through the boundaries of what education encompasses.

Why are you still coming?

Conservation Districts

To meet new people, network, learn what is going on with other groups, pick up on things you might have missed at previous meetings. Group shows a lot of inclusivity....

People want to help each other in conservation, so great place to share resources, ideas, and projects and how to implement them in your community.

Community is a key word and this meeting is part of the way that we express our community.

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Rancher Group

Communication is key, care about what is going on our world, want to preserve and protect our way of life, have leadership, gain respect of the agencies and NGOs...diverse interests, put a face and name to "ranchers", gather information on groups their goals, purpose, and activities on the ground.

Agencies

Network, gather information, how to work to support the community, how to help landowners succeed in the stewardship of their land and livelihood.

NGOs

Hear what the local issues are and gain perspective because many of them are based in Helena or Bozeman.....
Network and develop future partnerships,
Desire for more concrete projects with deliverables and results
Poro
us boundaries to the geography of the 6-county region.

Next Meetings:

June 14 or 21 – Winnett (A 'Save the Date' will be sent out) ****Note Date changed to June 26th****

Summer/Fall - Circle

Fall/Winter - Malta

Closing Remarks:

Grateful/ inspired of the turn out

Motivated, Insightful

Communities and Agencies need better communication

Common vision amongst diverse partnership

Ability to learn more about the group

People represent a lot of interests and backgrounds but care about what is happening here

Growth that Expand beyond one issue or one place

Positive progress even if it was in small chunks

Likes the breakout sessions

Likes to hear about the partners

Have the CMR actually give an update on the refuge

Inspired about the younger generation representation and ability to learn from those with experience

Meet new people and learn a lot (taking agriculture and working with the communities is important)

Future partnership potential

Adjournment:

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3:06 pm

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Suggested changes to the Mission, Purpose, and 3-part goals by the Breakout Groups

Local Government Group: saw no need to change the 3-part goals

Mission: Like it as read, should incorporate “6 counties” but important to keep CMR NWR and the surrounding communities as well. Community is centric to the quality of life.

1st goal: “Stable populations” – not necessarily a certain population, rather stable should be interpreted to mean that the county is able to support the people that live there, and provide them with all the needed services.

Agency group: Unanimous that the mission and purpose should be broadened, but the goals still stand.

Mission: A partnership working to support the community, economy, and landscape of the 6-county region around the CMR NWR.

Purpose: To provide a forum for stakeholders to advance stewardship of the 6-county region around the CMR, recognize conflicts among user groups and agencies, identify and work collaboratively toward solutions, and provide for increased understanding, cooperation, and partnership among user groups, agencies, and other interested parties.

NGO Group:

Mission: A partnership of diverse interests working to ensure the vitality of both the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge and the surrounding communities. ****wanted to emphasize the 6 counties.*

Purpose: To convene a balanced (visionary?, interested?) group of stakeholders to discuss natural resource management in and around the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge, recognize the differences among user groups and agencies, identify and work collaboratively toward solutions, and provide a discussion forum for increased understanding, cooperation, and partnership among user groups, agencies, and other interested parties.

CMR NWR Three Part Goals: Suggested changes by the NGO group

1. We want this region to maintain a thriving natural landscape with public land access for all, within which an agriculture industry is sustained, resilient local communities have stable populations. We desire an atmosphere where agencies, local government, NGOs, and citizens work together to create positive outcomes for the community and citizens: focusing on common ground, mutual respect, and community-based decision making.
2. A diversity of unique goods and services to support economic and social values will need to be produced from a working landscape that maintains its scenic value, healthy soils, and ecological integrity. It is important to identify and implement best management practices that integrate local ecological knowledge; succession planning in all entities, local working groups to address challenges, incentives to practice conservation, steady tax base to support infrastructure and responsible, informed citizens.”
3. Really liked the last goal.

Rancher Group: saw no need to change the mission or purpose, but do need to put more focus on the value of people in the discussion of conservation. Currently, it seems that all the emphasis is on wildlife.