

CHARLES M. RUSSELL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP MEETING

10:00 am – 5:00 pm, June 26th

Flatwillow Hall

Winnett, Montana

10:00 Welcome & Grounding Question – Bill Milton

10:10 Self-Introductions and Answers to Grounding Question – All Participants

10:30 CMR CWG Committee and partner reports

- Montana Salt Cedar Team – Colin McClure/Rachel Frost
- Winnett ACES
- CMR Water Compact Update – Paul Santavy
- CMR Comprehensive Conservation Plan – Habitat Management Plan Update – Paul Santavy
- Update on Prairie Communities in Action project - Julia Haggerty
- Update on RSA Conservation Committee – Kelsey Molloy

11:30 Lunch Break – Lunch sponsored by Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program

12:30 Conservation options for Landowners

Introduction and purpose of the meeting – TBD

- BLM status of plans – John Carlson
- CCAAs for sage grouse and grassland birds – Kelsey Molloy, Jim Magee and ranchers enrolled in CCAA for Arctic Grayling in the Bighole
- NRCS – Kyle Tackett - SGI and NRCS Farm Bill programs
- FWP Habitat MT and NFWF Lease Program – Catherine Wightman
- Mitigation through MSGOT – Carolyn Sime

BREAK

2:30 Small group breakouts with the following questions:

1. If you have heirs that want to return to the ranch/operation, what outlook are you giving them for that possibility? Why?
2. What are the top 3 challenges threatening the future of your operation? Commodity prices, ESA and other government regulations, uncertainty concerning access to grazing lands, drought/fire or current range conditions, other?
3. Did you learn something today that would change the message you are giving your heirs, or that would help alleviate one or more of the top challenges to your operation?
4. What tools are missing from this toolbox that could change the way you think about the future?

3:00 Report from small groups

3:30 Wrap up

4:00 Adjourn

CMR NWR Community Working 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.

PURPOSE:

To convene a balanced group of stakeholders to discuss natural resource management of the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge, recognize conflicts 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 Community Working Group Three-part Goal for the Landscape

Describe the quality of life you would like to see be predominant in the region in 5 to 10 years.

"We want this region to maintain a diversified economy within which a prosperous agriculture industry is sustained and local communities are prosperous with 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, where people are committed to the working group and access to public land is ensured for both the public and producers."

What kind of production will be needed to sustain this quality of life?

"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. We must also 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, well-educated citizens."

What does the landscape need to look like to obtain your production?

"We desire a landscape that provides habitat for diverse and healthy wildlife populations, where further conversion of native prairie is discouraged, and where the needs of natural resource dependent industries are balanced with conservation. In short, healthy agriculture lands cooperatively managed for the benefit of the resource, wildlife, industry, and community."

CMR NWR Community Working Group Website:

<http://www.cmrcwg.org>