

# CMR Community Working Group Meeting Summary

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**Where:** Winifred Community Center

**Opening:** 10:12 am

**Attendance:** 33

**Self-Introduction:** Rachel Frost, acting facilitator, had everyone introduce themselves and asked them if they have ever been to Winifred before.

## CMR CWG Committee Reports:

- **Planning Committee Update:** Rachel updated the group on the planning committee's proposal for the 2019 year. The planning committee spent a whole day in Winnett developing a strategy for the 2019 meetings. The planning committee consists of: Perri Jacobs, Carl Seilstad, Jerry Collins, Levi Morgan, Paula Gouse, Dean Rogge, Claire Hood, Rachel Frost, and Bill Milton. She reviewed dates and locations for all 6 meetings for 2019. The theme for this year's meetings is community resilience. The focus of this first meeting is the state of rural community economics; Circle's March meeting will be on policy affecting livelihoods, Winnett will be land use and climate, Fort Peck will be success stories, Jordan will be about telling the compelling story, and Malta will be a symposium on (tools and strategies for community resilience) to bring everything together. Ron Stoneberg brought up wildlife management on the CMR NWR and surrounding landscape and noted that he does not see that incorporated into the theme. Dean Rogge mentioned that it will be incorporated into different topics it is just not specifically noted. Stacey Barta noted that a tour may be planned around the September meeting. Karl Christians mentioned having the land use meeting and the success stories depict both success and failures and also land use from the public and the private aspects. Ron Stoneberg again mentioned that CMR needs to be a partner and needs to be involved in all of these efforts. Most partner reports will be given every other meeting, although the CPP – HMP updates will be on all the agendas. Rachel noted that partner reports should build on each other so that a complete story is told by the end of the year of meetings. A report template will be distributed to help with this.
  
- **Montana Saltcedar Team:** Rachel reported that she has attended a couple of meetings with the partners in the Fergus County area. She reported that there is an area around Fred Robinson Bridge that can be tackled. She noted that there has been great communication and good partnership amongst the partners. The team applied for funding to supply 2 additional Montana Conservation Corps Crews to support agency and local county efforts in the area and they should know in mid-March if they were funded.
  
- **Winnett ACES:** Diane Ahlgren reported that the group is working on a grass bank idea focusing on young producers. They are moving forward with a targeted property and the group will partner with RSA. The group has developed by-laws. Another committee of ACES is working on a community center in Winnett. The land has been acquired through purchase and donation.

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- **MSGOT:** Carolyn Sime gave the group an update on the status of the HQT and mitigation processes. It was noted that the team is working with Triangle Communication for the cell tower at the DY Junction. She noted that they are working through the process with small businesses to ensure that they can get their projects done, but also ensure that they are doing their best to manage the disturbance impacts. Carolyn noted that there is give and take on both sides and that the team and the state of Montana understand that some of these are necessary services for people. Ron Portner asked if anyone had taken all of the different plans from the agencies and reviewed them to make sure they are all in line with each other. It was also asked which plan and requirements takes precedence if there was a challenge. There were several questions brought up about the DY Junction cell tower and that particular project is progressing. There were several questions about predation and habitat for the sage grouse and how those have impacted the sage grouse populations. The question of when the sage grouse would be re-evaluated for listing came up and Carolyn noted that would occur in 2020.
- **Prairie Communities in Action:** Kate Epstein recently facilitated a workshop in partnership with Winnett ACES and WWF. That workshop resulted in a list of options for direction and indicators for the group to consider. Katie also mentioned the community resilience research that has been occurring in partnership with conservation districts. Ron Poertner asked how the projects came to be; did the communities ask for help on how to continue to exist or did MSU initiate the work? Kate mentioned that Julia has worked with the group for the last three years and that she is working with the group on some of the tougher resiliency questions. Ron again inquired if the communities are asking for an outside expert to come in and tell them how to be resilient. He noted that families that are resilient are still on the landscape, while those that are not resilient left years ago. Rachel mentioned that there are several aspects of this program and that some communities are interested in how to tell their story of resilience and growth.

Lunch was served at 12:00 pm

**Rural Communities and a Changing Western Economy** – Mark Haggerty – Headwaters Economics, a non-profit in Bozeman that does research and policy work. Mark noted that 59% of areas lost more businesses than they gained coming out of the last recession. He noted that all the new jobs coming in require a degree and that the metropolitan areas are the only areas experiencing notable growth. He also noted that rural areas have seen a decline in manufacturing jobs so that productivity gains in traditional sectors are no longer equating to jobs. Five counties in Montana have created 75% of the new jobs in the state. ***More info from presentation.***

**What does “Community” mean to you?** – Dean Rogge mentioned that the people/ community are his passion and that is why he is here and does what he does. He asked people to raise their hands if they live near where they were born and raised. There were about 15 hands raised in the room. He talked about how the people

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on the land have been here and not only made mistakes but they have learned from those mistakes and moved forward to continue to be on the land. He noted that there have been some changes from the outside that have played into the communities that affects their resilience. Those inside or within the community are the only ones that know what has happened and that these communities are indeed still thriving although the outsider looking in thinks they are dying.

**Break Out Sessions:** What does Community mean to you? *See next page*

**Wrap Up:** Several announcements were made about bills in the legislature. An impromptu presentation was given by members of the Save the Cowboy, Stop the APR movement.

**Future meeting topic:** Policy affecting livelihood

**Next Meeting date:** March 21<sup>st</sup>, Circle

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 3:05, many attendees went to the tavern for the “meeting after the meeting”.

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## CMR CWG Breakout Discussion: What does community mean to you?

Date: 1/17/19

Location: Winnifred, MT

### Safety and Security

- Having that feeling of security that help of any kind is only a phone call away
- Sense of connection and security
- Safe environment where people are friendly and know one another

### Helping Neighbors

- People looking after people and being involved. Working together
- “Making dinner for your neighbors when they’re sick even if their dogs drive you crazy”

### Coming together during hard times/crisis

- Small communities create bonds, can rely on others when the “chips are down”
- People come together in times of tragedy and respond quickly
- Not everyone gets along but that’s put aside especially during times of crisis

### Knowing your neighbors

- Knowing people, feeling sense of community when entering a business, etc
- Recognize faces in the community
- Knowing the people and where you can meet and visit with them
- Inclusion, knowing folks in the grocery store

### Raising youth within the community

- It takes a village to raise the youth of a community
- Sometimes it’s difficult to get younger people involved
- Helping youth that are returning to their first community

### Having accountability and integrity

- Sometimes makes you more accountable for your actions, which can make you a better person and draws people in
- Sense of responsibility

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## Similar Interests

- Having a shared sense of pride and values
- People coming together with similar interests sometimes from different geographical locations

## Welcoming outsiders

- Smaller communities are often incredibly welcoming of outsiders
- Important for those entering community to understand the community already in place

## Involvement in community

- Small communities as a whole are united by the involvement of its people, feeling part of that
- Being involved is a part of community, you get what you put in

## Volunteerism

- Cooperation: Everyone comes together and people often volunteer

## Events

- Events (such as weddings or funerals) show huge ties and desire to support one another
- Events are held where people can come together
- Gathering places are essential, sharing events and spaces

## Schools

- Schools are often central to smaller communities
- A lot of pride in local schools

## Rural lifestyles

- Certain mentalities can be important to get the full enjoyment out of what you have
- Can be a stressful way to make a living

## Connections to the land

- True community has a connection to the land
- Instills values in places

## Conservation efforts

- Can help to promote rancher's conservation efforts of native grasslands to which can help maintain rural communities

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## Supporting the local economy

- Fundraiser, financial balance and giving
- Big wheel- needs to be greased, every member is a spoke, businesses are key

## Small Communities are fun!

- Humor is part of small towns
- People acknowledge one another, even if simple "Thanks"
- Waving to people on the highway
- Going to the bar and putting your beers on a buddy's tab, even if he's not there

## **Montana is community**