

5/01/2014

Meeting was called to order by John Hollenback at 6:30 pm. John discussed the surrounding landowner meeting. He said there was good attendance and interest in working with FWP. Bill Mosier said as a landowner inside the WMA there are some concerns about wildlife management and what is acceptable. This may be a way to work together. He said one of their concerns is hunting and hunting regulations. He said when Rock Creek owned the property they might only hunt 2 or 3 days and give the elk an opportunity to return to the WMA. Dan McQueary said when FWP bought this property their concern was to be a good neighbor. He said it doesn't matter what you are managing for, from cattle to elk they need to be managed. He said the surrounding landowners need to give and take and so does the FWP. If we can come to some common ground and an honest working relationship that is the direction we need to head. He said he does not think this is an opportunity for someone to increase their cattle herd but an opportunity to make better range throughout the WMA and the surrounding landowners. John said the surrounding landowners are interested in grazing and Paul Hansen said that cattle are an important part of the scenario. John Beck said he felt all the surrounding landowners were present and that there is interest in working with FWP on a grazing plan. John said this is a working document and it is not just landowners attending a meeting but working on a viable plan year around, etc. He said the next meeting for the surrounding landowners on May 28, 2014 at 7 pm at the community center.

John said he has talked to the NRCS and want to work with FWP on doing some monitoring , inventory, and evaluation of the WMA. He said this will be good to have data to work with the public. Ray said they have had their botanist out setting up some permanent plots. Rick Northrup said right now we have bids out to award a contract to do the inventory on the east side of the Spotted Dog and this will start this summer during the growing season.

Neil Horne said this is going to be an uphill climb with hunters and anglers as they will fight for not having grazing until they understand better what grazing can do for the WMA. He said he had to be educated himself on why grazing is important. John H. said this group was called to develop some proposals for the WMA to present to FWP. He said a lot of people are donating their time to help develop some serious resources. Dave Dziak said this season FWP is currently working on more fencing. He said they just put out bids for aerial application for 10,000 acres of spotted knapweed. He said Keith Edge just got the bid for the next 5 years for hounds tongue along all the logging roads. He said there will be some road work done as well.

John Stavlo asked if we had a list of recommendations that this group has presented to the FWP. John H. said we have not made any recommendation yet. Ray said that perhaps we need to recap and think about what recommendations are important and what this group needs to work on. Ray said we do not want to rush the process and make the wrong management plan for the WMA. He said the management plan is a working document and they are trying to get some consistency of management plans across the state. Rick N. said they have left it up to each region to address what their priorities are and what is important.

Brian Q. said we need to tour the property on a regular basis to understand what is going on within the property. Brian said he felt that some areas of Spotted Dog has been undergrazed and it needs to be used. He felt FWP has already mismanaged Spotted Dog. John said the decision has already been made not to graze so we need to move on.

Jodi said she has talked to our range specialist and wondered if the group would be interested in setting up an educational day for the committee. Everyone thought that would be good. Dan Lucas said as we go back and look at some of the goals he said it would make sense to get out on the ground to understand some of the management as a unit. He said he thought that we could not make a plan unless you are actually out on the ground and identifying what is important. Brian said he has heard from a lot of people about the access to the property and that people are not pleased. Jim Flynn said he still thinks that having some sub-committees would be important rather than having the whole group try and make decisions on everything. He said we need to develop some recommendations with some science behind them so that we are not like the Forest Service in which activists are stopping recommendations and they are in court all the time. With FWP becoming larger landowners he said activists could begin to do the same sorts of things. He felt coming up with concrete management plans is important to help move forward. He said grazing is a big part of the plan but other areas need to be covered and if certain groups want to tackle those areas that would be good. John H. wondered what the committee thought. Jason Swant thought that access is very important and should be split into hunting access and recreational access. Dan Lucas said there should be 5 areas. Access and travel management, East side there may be forest health and management, water resources and fish management, rangeland resources with weeds and grazing, and wildlife management. Donna wondered if at the next meeting if we break into groups and let people break into whatever group they feel comfortable and then we could come back together at the end to discuss as a larger group. Dan M. said he thought that breaking into the 5 committees is good and let them go to work. He said it might not always be right but it is a starting point. Jodi said they could pull out those bullet points at previous meetings that we talked about and have them for each group. After more discussion it was decided that we would break into 4 groups, 1.)Access and travel management, 2.)Water resources and fisheries, 3.)vegetation management including grazing, rangeland, weeds, etc. and 4.)wildlife population and resources.

The next meeting would be back to the 3rd Thursday of the month which would be June 19. Bill Pierce said he thought the minutes were good and are very informative for the group. Neil Horne said there has been no encroachment of snowmobiles out of the 314 district. He said FWP has done a good job with signage on understanding where they can or cannot be on the WMA. Dave Dziak said the WMA opens May 15 at Noon. Rick said he would not envision any major implementation on the WMA before there is a management plan in place. He said there are formal processes, public process and NEPA processes that need to be followed. Donna asked what is the time frame for the management plan? Rick said that might be a question for Mike Thompson. Rick said there is no plan done yet and would probably still need some more input from this group. Bill Pierce asked if we get together with a plan and work together would it be feasible to say that grazing could be in place by the next year. Rick said whatever we do it needs to be ecologically sound and defensible and to the purpose of the WMA. Rick

said that by including the adjacent landowners to increase the WMA is the right direction. John said it is also important to make sure that the adjacent landowners stay in business and that it works for them. Rick said they also work with DNRC and private landowners on land swaps so the WMA may look different a few years from now.

Respectfully submitted

Jodi Pauley