

Teton County WPLI Advisory Committee

Meeting Summary

November 8, 2017

USFS Building, Jackson, WY

Draft for Review

Approved

Committee Members Present:

Gregory Buchko
Amanda Carey
John Heberger Jr.
Lisa McGee
Mike Mielke
William Resor
Don Saner
Rob Shaul
David Sollitt
Siva Sundaresan
Dan Smitherman
Tom Turiano
Bruce Hayse (late arrival)
Abby Moore
Lloyd Dorsey
Steve Kilpatrick
Harry Statter

Others Present:

Tom Sergerstrom, *Teton Conservation District*
Morgan Graham, *Teton Conservation District*
Len Carlman, *public*
Leah Zamesnik, *Wyoming Wilderness Association*
Nicole Gautier, *UW Haub School*
Linda Merigliano, *USFS*
Ben Reed, *public*

Members Absent: Jim Woodmency, Mike Brennan

Agenda

- Business / Administrative Matters
- Working Session: Generating Options
- Engaging the Public: Meetings and Outreach
- Public Comment
- Next Steps / December Agenda

Handouts

1. November Meeting Agenda
2. Shoal Creek WSA Map
3. Palisades WSA Map
4. Teton County Public Lands Map
5. Abby Moore's proposal to the Teton County Public Library for a public outreach presentation

Actions Taken

1. October meeting summary approved, Nicole will upload to Teton WPLI website
2. Shoal Creek subcommittee (Rob, Siva, Steve, Mike M., Dan S.) next steps. Siva volunteered to chair the subcommittee, and set up a conference call for subcommittee members.
3. Requested outreach to Lincoln County Committee (members and who they represent)
4. Abby Moore will e-mail her library proposal to the committee for suggestions, then submit proposal
5. Data on critical habitat for ungulates was requested
6. Len Carlman will be sharing his WSA proposal on Nov. 15th at the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance conference room from 1130AM-1PM.

Meeting Summary

Business/Administrative Matters

- John Heberger Jr. presented the same slideshow he gave to the Teton WPLI committee for the Wyoming Geological Association in Casper.
- David Hodges resigned from the committee (see Hodges' Nov. 7 2017 e-mail to committee).

Dan Smitherman shared the date of the next Sublette WPLI meeting, Nov. 15th. The agenda will include finalizing options and interests for Shoal Creek WSA. They plan to start generating options for Scab Creek WSA, then look holistically at all the WSAs in Sublette County in December. The Sublette committee is waiting to hear on the Shoal Creek subcommittee for a response about moving forward. Bill Resor asked if Sublette has any draft recommendations. Dan Smitherman responded that Sublette has not drafted recommendations yet. The Sublette committee's Interests will be made public on the Sublette WPLI website. Lloyd Dorsey asked if the Sublette Committee is considering other public lands in their recommendations. Dan Smitherman said there are considerable Lands with Wilderness Characteristics adjacent to Lake Mountain WSA, but Sublette's main focus is recommendations for the WSA's in question.

Shoal Creek Working Group: Rob, Siva, Steve K., Mike M., Dan S.

It was discussed whether or not the Shoal Creek subcommittee had the power to negotiate on behalf of the entire Teton Committee. Rob Shaul mentioned that Sublette might not want to work with a subgroup that couldn't speak on behalf of the entire board. Mike Mielke shared that he reached out to Bill Lanning (*winter motorized*), but Lanning did not express much interest in engaging with Teton WPLI.

It was brought up that the subcommittee could use leadership. Siva Sundaresun offered to act as subcommittee chair. Siva will set up a conference call for subcommittee members to discuss Shoal Creek. Steve Kilpatrick asked if there are other instances of subcommittees going across county lines to look to for examples. Dan Smitherman responded Park and Washakie counties used subcommittees. For McCullough peaks WSA, separate meetings were held outside Park County meetings. Siva mentioned that this was also done for High Lakes WSA, and the subcommittee was empowered to make decisions.

Lincoln County may be more amenable to collaborative work after their experiences on a different collaborative initiative with Jess Western (Ruckleshaus Institute). Reaching out to Lincoln County was discussed.

Public Outreach: Abby Moore

Abby Moore shared a proposal she drafted to submit to the library to set up a presentation intended for the general public. She hopes to get the library to co-sponsor the event as a strategy to get more people involved. The proposal includes background on the Wyoming Public Lands Initiative, and a pitch to library. The goal of the presentation is to communicate who is involved, be transparent about the funding and options for input, and emphasize the nature of consensus building and collaborative decision making, particularly hitting on that the process is not majority rules. Abby will submit her proposal to the library, and hopefully get on the schedule. John Heberger Jr. is on the library board, and said the proposal would most likely be accepted by the library. Abby is looking for help with the presentation, and asked committee members to show up, ideally with each person taking a different section of the presentation. It was suggested that one person could act as liaison at Rotary and other community meetings.

Abby suggested getting an article or op ed published locally. She mentioned wanting to make clear that there are different paths towards what to do with these lands, and WPLI is just one path. Abby mentioned she is open to feedback.

Bill Resor said he is fine with going ahead on the presentation, and that he plans to attend. He said he believes outreach is good, however, he thinks it is not critical right now. He believes the committee needs a rough idea of what they are going to propose before public involvement will be effective. Lloyd Dorsey asked about a date for the presentation. Abby Moore said after the holidays.

Mike Mielke shared his desire to support the event, and mentioned the importance of making clear to the

public whether they are focusing on specific WSAs, or talking about all of Teton County. Abby responded that this information is available on the Teton WPLI and WCCA WPLI websites. She said there is opportunity to look outside WSAs (such as BLM parcels), but that the committee might need to look at other lands in order to deal effectively with other WSAs. She said this is an ongoing debate to be transparent about.

This reminded Abby of part of the WPLI charter, which includes a provision to consider of any proposals (informal or formal) put to the committee by the public. Len Carlman brought such a proposal, which he will be sharing proposal on Nov. 15th at the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance conference room from 1130AM-1PM.

Deb Kleinman: Option Generation

Bill Resor requested an opportunity to go around the table and share options. Deb requested a chance to explain option generation and its purpose beforehand. She explained that out of the five phases of the negotiation process, the committee is in Phase Four: Option Generation. At this point, everything gets put on the table. The goal is a comprehensive list of options for each WSA, potentially with other lands included. Editing and debating will be saved for the final phase.

Bill Resor mentioned that the ultimate goal is a new federal law. He said that WSAs have been around for over 30 years, and will probably be around for another 30 years. He mentioned it is easier to kill a bill than to pass it, and if it does pass, it might take a decade to get through. He would like to see the status quo change, but thinks that is unlikely. He emphasized that in order to receive traction, everyone needs to be getting something good out of what the committee comes up.

Deb explained that options lead to recommendations. By January, the goal is to have three lists of options, in order to examine them together, and look at potential trade-offs. The aspiration is to wrap up by early summer. She further explained that there will be ideas in conflict, or that are mutually exclusive, but that is fine. Options become coherent later.

Abby Moore used the analogy of thinking of options as puzzle pieces. Right now, the committee is creating the puzzle pieces, and putting them all up for everyone to see. In the next phase, the puzzle pieces get pulled down and rearranged.

Lisa McGee clarified these are not interests. Rather, options reference interests, and the committee is coming up with an idea that meets those interests. Deb said yes, options are potential solutions that meet interests expressed. Questions about feasibility and assessment come later.

OPTION GENERATION in SMALL GROUPS (45 min) three groups: two committee, one public

The committee spent about 45 minutes in option generation. They split into two groups, wrote options on slips of paper, and posted those options on a large sticky board. The options were then arranged thematically. A document detailing their ideas will be provided separately. Nicole Gautier and Leah Zamesik worked with public in attendance on the same options generation activity.

4:08 Break

4:30: Resume

Option Generation Debrief

Deb asked the committee to reflect on the option generation activity. Tom Turiano pointed out that everyone had worked on options independently beforehand, so this was a good opportunity to share ideas as a group. He thought the categorization of options helpful. Lloyd Dorsey appreciated the willingness to think outside the WSAs.

Dan Smitherman added that at the highest level, there seemed to be general agreement about what is or is

not to be protected. The divisions are the hard part. He said that there is some level of consensus on multiuse recreation, wildlife values, and wilderness values. Grazing did not seem like an issue.

Bill Resor responded that grazing was a minor issue. Steve Kilpatrick said grazing was a major concern of his due to the diminishing bighorn sheep population, and the potential for disease transmission from domestic sheep and mountain goats. Bill Resor commented that this issue will be dealt with regardless of recommendations for WSAs. Dan Smitherman added that the issue is relegated to Game and Fish, so designation does not have great impact.

John Hebberger Jr. commented that this was a key step the committee has been trying to get to for a year. He said it makes a big difference for people to get ideas down as a group and save judgments for later.

Legislative Language and Process

Mike Mielke asked about the details of a potential recommendation at the congressional level, if a highly detailed draft would get shot down immediately. Dan Smitherman responded that getting legislation through Congress is difficult anytime, but that land use bills are easier to get through Congress in partisan times, if the bill is supported at the roots level. He said it is going to be a long process, but he is not pessimistic. Smitherman said a single congressman cannot shoot it down if it is supported at local level. Wyoming's delegation will look at the bill before it goes to Congress. He mentioned the Rocky Mountain Heritage Act as a successful example.

Bill Resor said the details are not the problem, but stressed that there has to be a bigger picture being solved. Siva pointed out that the job of the committee is not over once the recommendation is done. It gets aggregated at state level, and then is converted into legislative language. There has to be further support to help their legislation pass through Congress after it gets introduced. Dan Smitherman added that people on committees in Wyoming will be asked to testify.

There was more discussion over how to approach option generation. It was debated if beginning with a single WSA was the best strategy, or to come at it from a county or state landscape level.

Abby Moore asked if anyone knew what is happening with other committees, and if any counties were contemplating full release. Dan Smitherman responded that one county recommended full release of all WSAs. Three others are looking at land swaps, while others have wilderness and recreation areas. There are recommendations across entire spectrum. Abby reminded the committee that this is part of an overall compromise package for entire state.

Deb asked about paths forward.

Rob Shaul said he was pleasantly surprised by the lack of stridency from the conservation representatives. Don Saner stressed keeping the big picture in mind, and mentioned that one of the draws of Teton County is recreation. He said this is a national move, and that there is a need to think of more than just Teton County. John Hebberger Jr. brought up that, at the same time, the committee is designed to represent Teton County. He mentioned that the majority of people in this county have to buy in on the recommendation in order for the county commissioners to sign on.

Lisa McGee said that she would love to agree with Dan S., but that she did not get that sense that there was great agreement over options. She thought there was agreement in some categories, but that conflicting options existed. She wondered where that leaves the committee, and that the path forward seems challenging. Mike Mielke agreed about the difficulty, and asked if elimination of options was next. Deb confirmed that difficulty is to be expected. Looking forward, the goal is to have a comprehensive list of options for Palisades and Shoal creek, without feasibility implied. Once those lists are in place, then the conversation begins about how to work through it. It will be evident that some things are off the table.

Hard lines and non-starters were discussed. Mike Mielke said he is anxious to see where those hard lines get drawn.

Rob Shaul asked the conservation representatives about Wilderness Designation for the Palisades. Lisa

McGee clarified that the conservation groups are not a monolith. Dan Smitherman shared that he put up three different potential options for Palisades. Rob Shaul said he thinks Palisades is the crux, and asked the recreation representatives if they agreed.

Dan Smitherman made a point about the use of language, saying the word “win” bothers him. The collaborative process is not a win/loss exercise, and if they are thinking of it from a positional frame, no one will succeed. Deb clarified that it is not just set of recommendations for representative interests, but the goal is to meet other interests at the table.

Deb asked what conversations the committee members are not looking forward to.

Siva pointed out that if one does “throw a five”, the individual is required to explain the reasoning behind it. Abby referred to the charter that there is some wiggle room for dissent, but it has to come in a formal, written format. This enables everyone (commissioners, legislature) to see why a particular thing is not supported. There was discussion around what happens if someone “throws a five”. Some mentioned that this conversation was premature.

Lloyd Dorsey asked if there was a formal decision about not having any more informational presentations. This was discussed among committee members. It was decided that option generation was a priority due to time limitations. However, it was agreed that if it became clear more information was needed to make a decision around a particular topic, presentations would be welcomed. A concise presentation on wildlife in particular was requested. Deb suggested dedicating a couple more meetings to options generation, then opening it up to targeted presentations.

John Heberger Jr. asked about the vision for the next two meetings, because he would like a document of potential options to share with his constituency. Deb responded that the timeline includes one more option generation session, with the hope of having complete lists by January/February. This is when the negotiations will begin.

There was a discussion about how to share the options with the public. It was agreed that it would be made clear that the options were in draft format, and shared in a responsible manner.

Public Comment

Dave opened the floor for public comment.

Leah Zamesik shared what the public brainstormed during the option generation session. This will be included in the separate Options document.

Ben Reed shared his comment as a private citizen. He asked that the committee consider areas that are not currently WSAs, and add them to the toolkit. He suggested using maps to focus on points of agreement. He said that starting with Palisades seems like a way to draw tensions before the full picture is available. Ben suggested keeping the conversation in a positive frame.

Maps were discussed. Linda Merigliano pointed out that a request for “wildlife maps” is too broad, and suggested narrowing requests to such things as specific species, connectivity or corridors, or seasonal range. With ample notice, Morgan Graham at the Conservation District is a resource for maps. Siva would like to see maps primarily of Palisades and Shoal Creek that include winter observations of big game, mixed/old growth conifers forests, and important trout spawning streams (critical habitat data). Tom Sergerstrom pointed out that the committee might have to do some homework on their own time. Lloyd Dorsey would like to see maps that include Wildfire Urban Interface boundaries, and user numbers in certain geographic areas. Mike Mielke would like to know the levels of winter use level for specific areas. He is going to check with his constituency, but knows that is on a different plane than scientific data.

Final Announcements

Siva announced a presentation will be given by Len Carlman, on Nov. 15th at the Jackson Hole Conservation

Alliance conference room from 1130AM-1PM. Dan Smitherman mentioned a couple of disclosures. Two groups signed a public letter about use to the Shoshone National Forest. On the lawsuit, The Wilderness Society joined the lawsuit in Idaho, but not Wyoming.

6PM Deb adjourned the meeting

Next Meeting

December 13, 2017, 2-6 PM