

Conservation Lands Advisory Committee Meeting
Date: 4/7/14
Time: 4 to 5:30pm
Place: Headwaters Conference Room – Missoula Parks Office

Attended by:

Chris Ryan, Bert Lindler, Beverly Dupree, Giles Thelen, Kathleen Kennedy, Kevin Verlanic, John Pierce

Absent: Greg Howard, Paul Parson, Deborah Richie

Staff: Morgan Valliant

Guests: Dean Hoistat

Minutes – March 3, 2014 – Notes Approved

Discussion - Mount Jumbo “L”

Maintenance agreement for “L” – Ask for special access.


Mount Jumbo Closure – Ineffective and confusing to the public

- What’s the Park Boards role, should they be part of the investigation regarding the snowboarders?
- How should ongoing incursions be dealt with?
- Mayor - Concerns of CLAC & Park Board
 - Blatant violations should be dealt with.

Create a comprehensive closure policy.

- How do we get the word out: signs, social media?
- How do we effectively close Jumbo?
- Beneficial to include various groups: Meet with Police, Fire, 911, FWP, Lolo National Forest – approvals go to City Council for final decision
- Create a subcommittee: anticipate more closures during fire season.
- Evaluate effectiveness of closure
- Don’t wait until next year – create policy now.
- Are there discussions on changing the closure?

Raise awareness for users:

- Notification
- Physically writing out a ticket
- As of early April street sign posted entering Rattlesnake indicating Mount Jumbo closed.
- Majority of people respect closing
- Small % will continue to poach unless they experience a legal consequence.
- Many people don’t understand the closure or they disagree on what is closed.
- Important work needs to be done on policy and how it should be dealt with.
-  Park Board requested that CLAC and others create a sub-committee. Keep committee to four or else we’ll have to advertise. Come up with a strategy by September.

Move to create a subcommittee to address Park Boards request.

All in favor – yes

Kids went up Poplar St. Trail Head – didn't see small sign and missed fencing. Enforcement or State Statute becomes difficult when signs are torn down people can claim ignorance.

Discussion: Forest Management Plan

A 60 year old fire scar cross section log brought to April 7 meeting. The log is approximately 300 years old and was living from approximately 1600's to 1900. The log indicates there was a fire approximately every eight years.

Mount Jumbo

Back Bone – No cover for a long time – now were down 1.4 acres per year since 1940.

Forest grown in backbone trail with lots of undergrowth. Spread out management of forest over a long time, want minimum impacts as to not disturb elk.

Mapped Pellets

Unit 1 - Couple pellets found	
Unit 3 - Close analysis – travel corridor	Unit 6 - Travel corridor
Unit 4 - Skipped	Unit 7 – Lots of elk use
Unit 5 - Toured	Unit 8 –

District line where pellets drop off.

Core Units 4, 5, 7, 8

- Working with FWP – Don't want to disrupt any more than a 1/3rd of the area.

General guidelines for forest selection – create more diversity

CORRECTION: Do Not Remove Ponderosa Pines.

Select Douglas Firs not Ponderosa Pines – Keep native species

Morgan – will double check the goals they are not prioritized.

Road to the Mine –

Signage Outreach – Monitor public access

Proceed to discuss layout changes in regards to the goals.

Thinning within 12 inches

Research on mortality – can't align with long winter, basically a good place to winter.

Slash – Consider leaving up to 50%

Helps erosion, nutrient supply, eliminates tons of burn pile, wildlife habitat, more difficult for humans to access.

Landscape: Level prescriptions annually

- Identify large mature trees, spread out over 250 acres
- Unit 6 & 8 follows backbone trail, slated for increase in forest cover.

Phase I: Thinning prescription – Unit 3 & 4

- Next phase: Increase spacing between trees - fuel breaks not fire breaks.

- Vertical fuel breaks – reduce fire potential from crown to crown.
- No understory fire burn planned.
- All slash would be removed and burned

Phase II: Starting 10 years out from 2014, by phase II we'll have 10 years of data.

Unit 2 – Lopping and scattering (40 acres)

Unit 5 - Thin the rest (20 acres)

Unit 7 - Start

Continue to maintain fuel breaks

Phase III:

Unit 7 – Finish up – entire area treated by this phase.

Aware of Pine beetle in the overall thinning schedule.

Research and Monitoring:

Some portions are unfunded

Elk movements statistics based on individuals & areas surveys & photos

Elk spotters – Phenomenal success!! Great way to get people involved.

Call in hotline – Not successful

Develop a new method for pellet count.

Vegetation Monitoring:

Composition, size and health of forest.

Track density and stand structure through trees.

Basic Costs

-Fuel breaks

-Phase II & III - \$106 thousand dollars

-Significant amount of Parks Labor

-Spread seed on burn piles

-Continue on weed control

Phase II

– If we have to do actual planting of native shrubs – 93 thousand – Put together species list.

-Conservation Corp

-Efforts to contact neighboring landowner – A good working relationship.

Budget Plus

Long term goal = Park Board & Council

May CLAC meeting needed? - NO MEETING IN MAY

MOTION: to go ahead with management program along with edits as long as edits don't change the intent.

Vickie – no concerns

All in favor of management plan – Yes

- Briefly meet for major edits.

Discussion Greenough Park:

Greenough map

Build boxes to hold map -Rattlesnake Garden & University

Parking lot

Picnic shelter

Elbino Drive

Paved Trails – mainly for ADA Access.

Trails are not posted on site as no bikes.

Map Details

Map remains as is - \$ spent

There's no posting on site, no bikes.

Include – Please recycle, return to trail head

Stewart Site – 39 inches at site – Probably continue to build concerns of flooding

Morgan cut some channels by shelter to handle additional water level.

Trees

Cottonwood blocking the light

New cottonwoods coming in.

Weed

Need to set this project up with a volunteer program.

Saturday, May 3rd Mount Jumbo Weed Pull

Greenough weed pull poison hemlock on a different day. Poison Hemlock will be burned and property fence will be pushed back.

Citizen Concern:

Dean Hoistat – voiced the following concerns during the Mount Jumbo discussion.

Dean is concerned about the overall fire potential on Mount Jumbo and the ultimate exodus of elk if a burn does occur.

He feels the fundamental question is not being addressed. Where's the expert surveys, reports, wish lists. He hasn't seen data or information. He wants substantive discussion from qualified people on fuel load removal.

Morgan Response, Key Points:

Currently in place is the Wildlife Habitat Management plan

- Foresters have a huge capability to put out fires
- With a 40% plus slope – you will never make it fire proof.
- Need 30 to 50% space between trees
- Goal is to make the forest more diverse, resilient to handle fire.

Dean - Plan:

- Show where main fuels are located
- Show how the fire will play out.
- Fuels can't wait another 20 years, climate changes etc...

Morgan –

- There's very little data collected for a fire plan.
- Would need more money for
 - Research
 - Management

Giles – The current funding is for bug control

Morgan would need soft money.