

Conservation Lands Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Oct. 7, 2013

Time: 4-6pm

Headwaters meeting room @ Currents

Attended by voting members: John Pierce, Chris Ryan, Deborah Richie, Giles Thelen and Greg Howard

Non-voting: Vickie Edwards

Absent: Paul Parson, Beverly Dupree, Bert Lindler, Kathleen Kennedy, Kevin Verlanic and Allen Byrd

Others: Jim Habeck, Dan Rogers, Amy Gannon, State of Montana Grants Administrator, and Steve Gibbs

Public Comment:

Jim Habeck – inquired as to whether the Mount Jumbo management plan still exists or will be implemented? More specifically the site specific recommendation regarding management burning?

Valliant – the Jumbo Plan was incorporated into the Conservation Lands Plan – and is reflected in Chapter 6. I would love to use fire as a management tool and will be part of the discussion today.

Action Items

Minutes–August 12, 2013 – it was moved and seconded to approve minutes as submitted.

Updates/Discussion Items

Introduction of Forest management planning needs for areas utilized by Elk on Mt. Jumbo

Valliant there has been over 200 acres thinned with a majority done on the North Jumbo Loop road and some on the Backbone Trail. We have received another grant and are getting ready to prepare another contract. – The easy work has been completed and as we prepare for the next contract the key issue is wildlife protection. Mount Jumbo was purchased to preserve winter range for the elk, and thinning can impact the habitat.

The meeting today is a brainstorming session to discuss the impacts and Vicki Edwards can provide us some background information related to elk habitat. We don't have a firm understanding of migration patterns of the elk, and we need to expand our knowledge so that thinning doesn't adversely impact their winter range.

Vicki – One of the concerns of FWP is to keep the herd from being habituated with people so there must be a buffer zone provided from humans as well as elements. A herd would minimally need 250 acres. There are between 50-100 elk in the herd on Mount Jumbo. The North

Hills herd has grown from that size in 1996 to over 452 animals and they are more de-sensitized to humans.

Amy Gannon— one of the goals of the grant is to save the older legacy Ponderosa Pine tree, to reduce susceptibility to pine beetles and to get rid of evasive trees but how to do this in conjunction with elk management. The tree cover is necessary as a snow interceptor as well as visual security for the herd.

The committee continued to discuss the issues related to forest management as it relates to elk habitat on Mount Jumbo.

Morgan did not anticipate any major thinning projects until more information is gathered. This lead to the discussion of the next agenda item.

Development of citizen science projects to monitor elk use on Mt. Jumbo.

In order to better understand the migration patterns of the elk on Jumbo – Morgan proposed to have monitoring done by groups of citizens using GPS to map scat piles. This would give a map of the areas used by the elk and give baseline information for proposed thinning.

Discussion:

It would be beneficial to get group of people to start a small effort this fall.

Possibly use social media to coordinate data

Use wildlife cams during closures

How to best meet the grant – start to make progress on forest health

Vegetation management plan in progress – Amy would like to see a detailed prescription for the area.

Morgan will type up a document with goals, what does forest look like in 30-50 years

CLAC report to Park Board – Giles will present an update to the Missoula Parks & Recreation Board in February,

Adjournment @ 6:00 pm