



Montana Association of Counties

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MEETING MINUTES MACo PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE Great Falls, MT | Heritage Inn: February 10, 2020

Members

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Todd Devlin, Vice Chair, Prairie | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jim Hodgskiss, Teton | <input type="checkbox"/> Sig Pugrud, Petroleum |
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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Carnahan, Phillips | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Lee, Rosebud | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jane Weber, Cascade |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bruce Christofferson, Phillips | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mikel Lund, Daniels | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kellieann Morris, MWCA Rep. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Fahlgren, Valley | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ralph "Rem" Mannix, Powell | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Donna Giacometto, Powder River | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike McGinley, Beaverhead | |

1. Roll Call & Introductions

Chair Chilcott called the meeting to order, and roll call was conducted (see above).

Others Present: Staff from Senators Tester and Daines' Office; and staff from Congressman Gianforte's Office

2. Appoint Temporary Secretary

Commissioner Devlin was appointed to act as Temporary Secretary.

3. Review & Approval of Minutes: September 24, 2019

There was a motion and a second to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2019 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Speakers/Presentations/Updates

- Mark Albers, District Manager, North Central Montana District Office
 - Keystone XL updates: Permits have been given by BLM to go forward with project.
 - RMPs: Final almost complete for Missoula and Lewistown Districts almost with a 30-day protest.
 - Efforts to streamline the EIS / RMP and NEPA process so as to shorten the time frame of final Record of Decision.
 - Grazing permits and rights: Scoping public now for input what the public opinion is on grazing regulations, permits, and the procedures. Deadline February 28th for comments and suggestions.
 - American Prairie Reserve: 18 grazing permits have been requested to be changed from cattle to cattle and bison; NEPA process—late summer decision.
 - The BLM, Miles City District was sued over their coal leasing in a 2015 lawsuit has satisfied the courts. Alternative selected was leasable coal reserves where they managed both the surface and subsurface rights.

- RACs for BLM: Attempt to get RACs actively going again. No quorum left currently due to terms expired of members
- Steve Kimball, Local Government Forest Adviser, DNRC
 - Montana Forest Action Plan: Look at landscape management, pursue collaborative partnerships; all to build healthy and sustainable forests. A council of federal, state, local and tribal will have collaborative partnerships with watershed groups, recreation groups, and other relevant partners to develop and implement the Montana Forest Action Plan. Sept 2020 deadline.
 - Good Neighbor Authority seems to be working well even though it is in its infancy. Legislature funded 6.5 FTEs presently with 2 being full – time.
 - Montana Forest Counties Summit- June 4, 2020, Helena
- Cory Calnan, DNRC County Co-op Manager
 - Wildland Ad Hoc Committee with DNRC and MACo
 - DNRC is pursuing a new strategic vision for which they want input.
 - Objective of Ad Hoc meetings with MACo is to see where there are shortfalls. DNRC has had a very successful county coop for equipment.
- Leanne Marten, Region One Forester, USFS
 - Ms. Marten said they had 4 timber sales approved that were estimated to harvest 8.6 MBF generating \$1.2 M with 2 more sales in the permit process. One sale (Pilgrim 2) was stopped to address grizzly bear impact.
 - Forest Planning is working well with DNRC and other federal agencies so as not to create conflict between agencies so as to complement each other for the benefit of forest health.
 - In fiscal year 2019, Region One harvested 409 MBF and so far in 2020, has harvested right at 100 MBF.
 - Lawsuits seem to keep coming on issues anywhere from bison to water.
 - Lewis and Clark / Helena Forest Plans Completed; RACs almost completed for Montana.
 - Access for Pilgrim 2 timber sale has been stopped due to grizzly bear impacts. Have satisfied the court.
 - 2019 timber harvest for Region 1 was 409 MBF and so far this fiscal year are at approximately.

5. Kellieann Morris, MT Weed Control Association

- MT Dept of Agriculture considering certifying weed free gravel/construction materials program.
- The North American Invasive Species Management Association will be having their annual conference in Whitefish, MT on October 6-8, 2020.
- Counties were encouraged to apply for the Department of Agriculture’s Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant Program. Last year (2019) \$2.5M was applied and \$1.6M granted.
- The 2017 Legislature set aside \$2M of Pittman-Robertson to control noxious weeds. For every \$3 in federal, one must match with \$1. Used to improve wildlife habitat by controlling noxious weeds.

6. Review/Update Committee Policy Statements

There was no action on the Committee’s Policy Statements.

7. Other Business

- The MOU between USFS and MACo was signed.
- NACo Resolution on Expediting NEPA Process: Sponsored by Chilcott was approved and supported by the MACo Public Lands Committee.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.