PCFC Meeting Minutes

February 10th, 2021

AJ’s Café

Attendees: Jeff Connolly, Carl Wright, Tanner Linton, Amy Encinas-Yount, Mike Lithgow, Jim Stevens, Seth Callos, Liz Johnson-Gebhardt

Liz called the meeting to order at 6:35 am

Old Business

**December minutes and January electronic meeting ~** No changes were suggested. Jeff made the motion to accept both as they are. Amy seconded the motion. Unanimous.

**Website ~** Tanner said he would feel much more comfortable starting over with newer templates than to continue trying to ‘patch’ what we all ready have. Part of this is because Dan is unable to meet in person with him and the online tutorials are not that helpful. So we discussed other options and other people who may be able to help. Tanner still feels he can make it happen, but Liz did say that we are a year into talking about this and we really need to move this forward. *Tanner has started to research this more and has found some programs that he feels he can work with relatively eas*y. *Liz is trying to get him the info he needs to proceed.*

**Landsite update ~** Liz printed the latest communication from Steve Gill pertaining to the retesting of the landsite so we can move forward with our plans. The bigger part of the discussion was about two steps forward, one step back. We need to keep this moving in order to take advantage of the real estate market. Liz will stay on DEQ to at least be on this schedule. In the meantime, we can start with the conservation easement stuff. Jeff made the case that a loss to the tax base should also be a consideration and with a number of large county pieces going into easements, that has made it tough. We, on the other hand, are tax exempt, so that property should not be an issue, but it is a county concern.

**PFC update ~** Liz reported that although there have been delays in FS projects getting in the ground ~ mostly due to the COVID ~ a number of projects are moving forward that will keep forest restoration and management activities moving in this area. Of local importance is the Scattered Lands project on HooDoo. This project is looking to manage a bunch of scattered FS pieces in and amongst private and state properties. Mostly focused on fuels and aquatics, there is interest in recreation up there as well.

**Financials ~** First we were all thrilled and grateful for the donation from Mike and Cathy Reynolds. Mostly we concentrated on the checking account. Holding at about $7000, Liz asked if we should consider a transfer from EJ. The account is fine for day-to-day but with Expo coming on, there will be more bills. The yearly insurance is also coming due. Seth suggested that with the market doing so well, it might be advantageous to make the transfer right now. Jim made the motion to transfer $10000 from EJ to the checking, Amy seconded the motion. Unanimous. Liz asked what she needed to do and Seth said he would take care of it.

New Business

**Expo ~** There was a lot of discussion about who should attend, the pros and cons of the COVID situation with the schools, etc. Since our meeting Liz has shared the processes she is going through to include the WBCSD. We did decide that as of now, the Newport District students will not be attending, but we should provide the workbooks for them nonetheless. We also discussed making some sort of video for the students. Tanner thought that there may still be a video class/club at the high school that could become involved. Otherwise, here is a record of the email discussions:

Hi, Liz.

Terrie spoke to her program manager, and unfortunately, we will still not be able to host the Forest Expo at the Priest River Experimental Forest this spring.   If you want to entertain potentially postponing the event until fall 2021, we could take it into consideration again later this year. We hope by fall 2021 or spring 2022, risks will be minimized and we can once again host gatherings here.  These types of educational events and community involvement are very important to the Forest Service and the Rocky Mountain Research Station, and we hope you understand our current limitations.  We very much look forward to hosting the Forest Expo again here at PREF in the future!

Please let me know if you have questions or concerns.  Thank you.

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So, to answer some of the questions posed about the Expo location.

As far as I know, they are not allowing large gatherings on federal properties ~ right now I believe it is 25 or less and all outdoors.  So that, at this time, discounts ACOE properties as well as FS.  The Kalispel Community Forest is in Washington and their restrictions are still tighter than Idaho, which is why the Newport Superintendent is pretty much thinking those students will not be able to attend Expo. (Jill, we had some other discussions about this at the meeting and how to still get the students their workbooks, etc.)

Any way, that is why I think we should pursue Joslyn/West Bonner.  The caveat there is if Joslyn turns the property over to the City on time and the City gives us permission.  BUT, West Bonner could still work ~ maybe without a harvest site.  County Commissioner?

I am trying to work on this ASAP, as May is just around the corner ~ hopefully.

Thoughts?  Liz

Liz, would we be able to pull it off if we did a private land site for the expo? Something close to town? Steve

I will try to answer some of these questions, thoughts.  I usually try not to involve all of you on such details as you have other things going on, but different times mean different tactics, right?

So, private land or not, each student is required to have a signed parental okay in order for them to participate in Expo.  So, basically it is up to the parents/guardians if they will allow their child to attend, no matter where we hold the Expo.  We do have a safety plan in place for the PREF, so I would say we would want to do the same for any other location ~ this means access for emergency teams, communications to emergency teams, etc.  As far as insurance, we are covered for our programs, but a private landowner would want to check on their insurance specifics.

Our last thoughts were that that we would bring in the 7th and 6th grades ~ on separate days.  100 +/- students and the 30 + volunteers is plenty for one day.  The logistics become super strenuous and possibly dangerous to have more than that running around. As far as Memorial day weekend traffic.  I have thought about that as well.  Another reason why West Bonner/Joslyn would be easier/safer.  The buses would literally be going a few blocks. We have always held Expo on those days and it hasn't been terrible, mostly because the students are heading back to their schools before 2 pm.  Having said that, they are on those buses regardless, going home from school ~ not a big difference. The PLE students would have the longest route.

Please, everyone, send happy thoughts to Amy and her family.

And .. stay tuned for the meeting minutes later today.  Liz

**Kalispel updates ~** Mike didn’t have much for updates, but we did thank the Tribe for their generous grant to the new Library.

PORP Trail

**Progress ~** Since Jay was sitting right there, we asked what, if anything, has been done on the trail. He has not done anything recently, but does think he can get back to it with the way the weather is holding out. He did ask about getting rid of the slash. It would be prudent to burn it on site, but doesn’t know if that would be Steve’s call or not. Liz will ask Steve. The neighbor along the trail did say Jay could burn it there.

**ACOE mapping ~** Liz shared with the group the map that the ACOE put together for the trail going through that area at Albeni Falls. Jeff brought up the fact that that Great American Outdoor Act did pass and that millions of $’s are in the pipeline for trails and such. It does have to be spent on federal property, as far as we know, but that could cover that portion of the trail. Liz needs to meet with the guys over there to show them some specific specs and to schedule activities so we can put in for the “Handshake” application.

**Next meeting~ March 10th, 6:30 am @ AJ’s**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 am.