

Sublette Forest Collaborative Small Group (#3) discussion

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Doug Linn, Austin Mansell, Jennifer Hayward, Joel Bousman

Define: Project – Location – Objective

Austin Mansell (Sublette Trails)

Working within the group to bring back trails that are in disrepair; uses CalTopo to help but many trails are on the map but no longer available.

- Elk Chase Trail
- Sweeney/Grouse Mountain (affected by blow down)
- Burnt Lake area used quite a lot and likely
- Big Sandy/Irish Canyon

Objective: open trails throughout the area to enhance recreation opportunity; mission statement is non-motorized but will help provide access for all. Build recreation in the County even though we may be short on capacity and funding.

Joel: does it make sense to set a longer term goal of making all trails on a map more accessible (from Highline to Lowline, for example)

Austin would love to make contact with outfitters to see how his group can help.

Joel: objective to benefit all trail users, including agriculture who need trails to move livestock; the objective should be broad enough to include all trails that are mapped but not accessible.

Austin: make an effort to prioritize trails in order of greatest need.

Do we need some kind of temporary task force of people who will work on the ground to address the slowdown?

Doug: we should first sort out site-specific actions to enhance access. 1) where are trails located (in terms of who manages them), 2) is it a designated trail?

Our focus should be to provide continuity across land management so people have access. BLM can enhance contribution through standing agreement with the FS.

Jennifer Hayward: in the ten-year plan, perhaps we need to discuss expansion of the busiest trailheads to address increase in use and impacts as a result.

Jennifer H: would like additional detail on Shad's CWPP. Sees support for the collaborative in the plan, as well as for the County; hopes the County can provide seed money to grow support for the plan

Joel: Agrees this is an important plan; we need to gather resources to fund the plan.

Doug: priorities are fuels, trails, weed management and the development of information to support future agency planning. The CWPP is an important lever to meet the needs of the community.

Jennifer Hayward: the use of chainsaws seems really important as a tool to reduce the amount of time needed to get important work done. If volunteers are limited, we need them to be as efficient as possible. The express purpose should be to open trails for access and for public safety.

Austin: supports pushing for the temporary use of chainsaws.

Doug: BLM has no Wilderness in WY. We need to understand the constraints that the FS has to live with so that the outcome can be managed.

**Group recommendations:**

1. Enhance recreation and address the blowdown impacts. The collaborative should create a smaller group to define a process for setting trail priorities with the rubric above from Doug. All mapped trails in the County should be open for access. But we need to be clear that only designated trails (not social trails) should be addressed with agency resources. We then need to create an approach to determining which trails need the work first. Create a priority list.
2. Suggest that the BT's 10-year plan address the potential need for expanded trailheads in the busiest places (e.g. Big Sandy and Elkhart)
3. Collaborative should express formal support for the County's CWPP and request that the County provide seed money to build support for it. This is an important lever for improving conditions for all in the County.
4. Encourage the FS to help us understand the limitations of using chainsaws in Wilderness on a temporary basis to address specific issues related to public safety and public access.