

Smokey Bear Collaborative
May 18, 2018
Smokey Bear Ranger District Office, Ruidoso, NM

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Jodie Canfield, Smokey Bear District Ranger, Lincoln National Forest
Andrew Ellis, Smokey Bear District Ranger, Lincoln National Forest
Laura Doth, South Central Mountains RC&D
Rick Merrick, South Central Mountains RC&D
Kent Reid, NM Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute
Alan Barton, NM Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute
Mark Cadwallader, U.S. Forest Service, Lincoln National Forest
Travis Moseley, U.S. Forest Service, Lincoln National Forest

Meeting Purpose

This meeting was convened to initiate a new collaborative group, based in Ruidoso, NM, and focusing on the Smokey Bear Ranger District of the Lincoln National Forest. The participants in this meeting are here to discuss ideas for this new collaborative organization.

The impetus for this meeting came from a conversation between district rangers at a training. The Cibola NF has several collaborative working groups, which were initiated as part of the Cibola's Forest Plan Revision process. These groups provide input to Forest Plan Revision, representing different interests in the area. This seems like a good idea and opportunity for the Lincoln National Forest as well.

Jodie Canfield, the Smokey Bear District Ranger, has worked with collaborative groups before in Montana. One she started 20 years ago is still going.

This year, the Smokey Bear District is looking at changing its travel management on one part of the district. They have had a travel plan in place since 1986, which is ready for updating. There are lots of issues on the District, and the demographics have changed substantially.

In particular, there have been many complaints about the roads in this part of the district. Jodie has convened a group from the District's hot shot corps to conduct an assessment of the area. They have done an inventory of all the roads in the area. To follow up, Jodie wants to put together a reasonably balanced stakeholder group who can develop a set of recommendations on what the USFS can do to address some of the issues.

Jodie and Rick Merrick from the South Central Mountains RC&D have met to discuss this. The RC&D can assist with facilitation. They have preferred partner status with any federal agency. They used to be part of NRCS, but still have status as a congressionally authorized group.

Recreation as a Theme

Jodie said that recreation drives the Smokey Bear Ranger District, and is a source of conflict. Everyone supports vegetation management – she can do a CE and gets no push back. But motorized versus non-motorized recreation is really the key issue right now. Recreation and particularly roads and access would be the first issue for this collaborative to address.

Smokey Bear Collaborative
May 18, 2018
Smokey Bear Ranger District Office, Ruidoso, NM

Laura Doth from the South Central Mountains RC&D asked who should be included in the group. She can start reaching out to people if she knows what groups should be included. She can identify who in the community can represent each group.

The interests and organizations that were mentioned include:

- ◆ Hunting interests
- ◆ Mountain biking interests – this has grown a lot in the past few years on the District; they now hold rallies and the like
- ◆ Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- ◆ Roads group
- ◆ Ruidoso Parks & Recreation (Rodney Griego)
- ◆ Allan Payne should be involved in this group
- ◆ Mescalero Apache Tribe

Collaboration and Forest Plan Revision

What role will this group have in the new forest plan?

Andrew Ellis from the Forest Service said they are looking for groups coming to the table, not individuals. He also wants to make sure it is clear from the start that the collaborative group will not determine Jodie's decisions; rather, the group is to make suggestions.

Travis from the Forest Service said the collaborative will help the USFS understand how it can tap into local groups to get feedback on USFS efforts. The national forest is looking for feedback and information on what problems people see and what ideas there are out there for solving them.

Jodie noted that the Forest Service did a travel analysis in 2008. There is lots of information in this report. For example, there is information on opportunities for tying roads together to provide ATV opportunities. The national forest gets a lot of comments about travel planning in the forest plan revision process, so it is an issue that is on people's minds.

In addition, recreation and restoration are two of the three guiding goals for the Southwest Region of the Forest Service.

Andrew said the collaborative should consist of groups that are represented by participants, but should not include individuals. Anyone who participates in the collaborative should do so as a representative of various other people.

Rick asked what would happen to the collaborative once it completes one project? Jodie said the group could continue, perhaps tied to the forest plan revision process. For example, the current forest plan includes good standards for forest management planning. The collaborative may look at this and see what works on the ground, and then they can advise the forest plan revision process accordingly. Travis noted the collaborative would be more beneficial to the Lincoln National Forest if it focused on on-the-ground work, rather than forest plan revision. Rick said he thinks having a collaborative to advise on recreation is a good idea and should go well.

Jodie suggested that at the first meeting, each representative present should identify what their organization's interests are. Not what their positions are, but their interests. We need to identify

Smokey Bear Collaborative
May 18, 2018
Smokey Bear Ranger District Office, Ruidoso, NM

what each participant is contributing to the group. Andrew suggested that once the task is established up front, the collaborative can help it to move forward after that. People can come and talk to Jodie and bring up tasks.

Question: How about tourists and part-time homeowners? How can they be represented on the collaborative?

This is tough. There may be people in the city government, or the chamber of commerce, who are attuned to the interests of tourists and part-time residents, but since the people are not in Ruidoso, they cannot participate directly.

Next steps:

- (1) Pass out info (bylaws) and see how people want this group put together
- (2) Put together maps, such as a map showing what is on the ground from the inventory, or a motor vehicle use map
- (3) Plan and schedule the initial meeting