

**Smokey Bear Collaborative Group**  
**February 27, 2019**  
**Lincoln County Emergency Services Office**  
**111 Copper Ridge Road**

The meeting was called to order at 3 PM. In attendance were Laura Doth, Robert Barber, Mary Ann Russ, Omar Barnes, Curtis Coburn, Joseph Graham, Jill Andrews, Anne Myrick, Scott Lerich, Clark Taylor, Jodie Canfield, Andrew Ellis, Stephanie Garrison, Daniel Garrison, Leroy Cockrell, Mike Buechter, Stephen Carter, Wallace Downs and Joe Kenmore.

After introductions, the group reviewed the previous meeting notes.

Jodie Canfield led a discussion of the current timeline and how it was affected by the government furlough. We originally wanted to have a recommendation by the end of September 2019. That was a pretty aggressive schedule. She wants to make sure we are successful as a group. She still wants to move as fast as we can, but we probably won't make those original projections.

The next step will see the District send out a letter to the general public. This is not a scoping letter, but will explain that we are gathering information. With that in mind, she is hopeful that we can have an integrated alternative by mid-April. After the group comes up with the alternatives, the Forest Service team will begin a "forest plan consistency check". She is hopeful that this will go fairly quickly.

Jodie also mentioned that she met with Rebekah Davidson who is with the National Forest Foundation. They discussed the Ski Conservation Fund, which is funded by \$1 per lift ticket sold. These funds are what paid for the Cedar Creek/Perk Canyon trail system. A new RFP has gone out, and we may want to look at applying for funds. You can build trails and road improvements with the funds, but you can't by "stuff".

The group discussed creating a "stewardship fund", where businesses can tack \$1 on to services, and the funds go to the NFF as part of the required dollar for dollar match. Those funds can be used to purchase things like signs.

The group then discussed some of the concerns as we move forward with the Hale Lake project. The group will need to come forward with alternatives in the area so that we can begin to formulate a proposed action. When we look at some of the substantive issues, we can ask if there is a need for another alternative. Andrew also noted that we need to advise people on how to comment. We don't want to just identify a problem and say we don't like it. We need to explain why it is a perceived problem and what impacts there are.

Following the initial analysis, a draft will be sent out. There is usually a minimum of 30 days for comment period. After the decision is signed, then there is a 45 day objection period.

Andrew also discussed the status of the GIS map. There are still some issues before they can go public.

The goal is to have some options/recommendations to the USFS by April 15, 2019.

Members of the various constituencies then presented their recommendations/options to the group as a whole. One map was used as the master and they were able to draw on the map, making notes as necessary. What follows are highlighted points of the discussion.

Clark Taylor started off the process representing the ranchers and permit holders. Noted on the map was:

- Fire Access and sites where emergency personnel could get in. He identified some hilly spots where you could land a helicopter (Coe Canyon, Hale Lake).
- Water hole area – Arc sites
- He identified some areas that should be left alone (ie: Rock Water Hole which is really steep)
- Road to the old church is on private land
- West Hale Lake Road is great for horse and bike trails
- From Hale Lake, there is no access across private land
- Could develop a parking lot at the Tunstall murder site and then develop a trail to the site. People would come from all over to see the site.
- Keep trails ¼ mile from private land boundaries
- Recognize areas that have grazing activities

Omar Barnes - hunting

- He has talked to a number of landowners and noted that some of the existing roads can be quite nasty.
- The area identified for the helicopter pad would also make a great parking lot. People could branch out from that point
- He would like to see a new access road open to the public
- Coe Canyon and Hale Lake need improvement for access to trailers

Leroy Cockrell – motorized vehicles

- He noted that there are 35,000 acres in the Hale Lake area and there should be room for everyone.
- Green lines on his map for OHV use – we should think about multi-purpose roads
- South of 443 not really accessible
- Foot traffic (hikers) and horses can really go anywhere
- In thinking about motorized vehicles we have to include OHV/Single Track/ATV/Side by Side vehicles
- Uses noted did not really include jeeps – if you open it up for jeep traffic, then you are really opening it up for everything

- Keep in mind “size specific” tracks – once somebody sees tracks, it’s going to become a road.
- Old rule was the 50” rule – if a track is going to be for OHV use, we need to look at size restrictions
- Don’t open up more than you can economically maintain
- Be aware of maintenance and erosion control measures. We need to have sustainable trails.
- Signage needs to be included in the plan
- Fully GPS tracked system

#### Jill Andrews – horseback riding

- Develop a camping site at Hale Lake
- Provide bathrooms there
- Would be a good area to separate horse campers
- Develop pull off areas
- South area would be great for horseback riding
- Stetson Drive entrance should not be locked
- SE section – develop a trailer parking area
- Horse & hiking trails can be compatible
- Mountain bikers seem to want separate trails
- FS Road – easements may not be available

#### Anne Myrick – horseback riding

- She is looking at areas of possible economic development too
- Develop an accessible parking area
- Develop camping area
- Remote campsites along the Mescalero Reservation line
- Connecting trails
- Guiding services with horses?
- Shuttle Service from private sector?
- Facilities are close to towns – would this compete with RV parks, etc?
- Is it possible to get across Hwy 70? If so, how do we do it?

#### Wallace Downs – mountain biking

- Trails accessible off of Hwy 70
- Near camping area – loop riding for a variety of different levels
- Develop a back country route
- Heading east, there are some really good trails
- Area has heavy ranching usage – we should try to avoid conflicts
- Create a Billy the Kid Loop
- Many of the trails are fine for mountain bikers
- How long should loops be? 10 miles

- Area does lend itself to a competitive venue
- Double tracks can be converted to single track fairly easily
- Buffer zones to allow for animals

Some random thoughts from the group:

- Some hikers prefer not dealing with motorized vehicles
- We could look at staggering availability on shared use trails
- Leave blank spots where animals can go to rest
- Think of the area in terms of habitat
- We need to reach a balance to restore the landscape
- Animals have lower success rates with higher road density
- Currently hunters have no off road retrieval in the Lincoln National Forest

Next meeting will be the week of March 18 – Laura will notify the group of the final date.