

LAC (Limits of Acceptable Change) Meeting
2005 Annual Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex Public Meeting
April 9, 2005 - Community Hall, Seeley Lake, Montana

Agenda for Meeting:

Welcome and Introductions

2003/2004 Visitor Use Survey

Forest Plans Revision

- New Forest Plan (New Planning Regulations)
- Process – Time Lines
- Public Involvement / Collaboration
- Public Interest

Lunch

LAC Plans Recreation Management Direction

- Outfitter Allocation Proposal

Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks Updates

Forest Service Updates

- All Involved Forests

Bob Marshall Foundation

Other Topics or Issues



2003/2004 Visitor Use Survey

The visitor survey has combined surveys from 1970, 1982, 2003, 2004 and made a comparison of how visitors have changed and in some cases stayed the same.

The study design used 10 - 13 of the heaviest used trailheads; in 2003, 78% or 467 respondents were used; in 2004, 72% or 297 respondents were used. The design used splits by; outfitted – non outfitted; day – overnight; fall – summer; horse – hiker.

Lessons learned from the surveys are as follows:

#1 There is no such thing as an average year.

#2 Motivations for visiting the Bob Marshall remain fairly consistent.

#3 Visitors are older with educational levels rising.

#4 Day use and short stays are rising meaning all visitors are shortening stays.

#5 A strong desire to visit wilderness areas remain despite fires.

Forest Plans Revision (Forest Plan)

The new forest plan regulations will come into effect possibly next week if the new forest plan is implemented. The new process will not require an E.I.S (Environmental Impact Statement) they will still use the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process.

The new Forest service plans allow for more site specific areas within the forests. There was many questions brought up by the public on how specific details would be handled within the new plan, but nobody had any answers because this is a new plan and has not been used yet, so it will be a new learning process by all involved if the new plan takes

effect. If you click the following link you can see the two papers handed out at the meeting on the new forest plan revision. [New Forest Planning Regulations.](#)

Outfitters Allocation Proposal

In the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex along with the commercial outfitters there is a category of Institutional Outfitters. The current policy defines institutional outfitters as: “a variety of membership or limited constituency institutions such as religious, conservation, youth, fraternal, service club and social groups; educational institutions such as schools, colleges and universities; and similar common interest organizations and associations. This category also includes applicants who operate commercially on an omitted, intermittent, or irregular basis in providing service to selected customers clientele rather than to the public at large.” Non-traditional outfitting allows for skiing, dog sleds, kayaks, and such things not related to traditional outfitting.

Overview of the outfitters within the Bob Marshall Complex will maintain the existing camps, as well as keeping the current number of outfitting days the same. “As a complex we now have 30,000 days allocated for outfitting, the days are broke down as follows”:

- #1 Traditional Outfitting; 24,000 Days
- #2 Non Traditional Outfitting; 3500 Days
- #3 Institutional Outfitting; 2500 Days

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks

The report started with an update of the wolves in the Bob Marshall Complex there are currently four known packs in the interior of the complex. FWP has asked that if anybody observes wolves in any areas to please contact your local office of FWP and tell them the number of wolves seen and the location that they were observed, so that they can get updated information on them. Currently there are 153 wolves in 15 packs in the state of Montana. It was also stated that the 153 means there are 153 wolves known the actual number might be more. To see a map of the current wolf packs, click on [MAP](#) or visit the [FWP Wolf site](#). This summer FWP is going to pack 40,000 grayling eggs with incubators into the Sun River Drainages within the Bob Marshall and try hatching the eggs in the river, because the past introductions of grayling were not successful using live hatchlings. The Grizzly bear DNA studies completed last year collected 34,000 hair samples, they are being tested in three groups and the first batch has been completed the two remaining will be tested this year with results of the DNA studies to be released in 2006 sometime. Also on the Grizzly bear agenda this year is to try and capture and or snare, then tranquilize and collar 25 sow Grizzlies within the Bob Marshall Complex and collar them with either radio or GPS collars so they can track their movements, the bears that are collared will all have DNA samples taken. To learn more on the DNA Studies click on [DNA](#). You can also visit [FWP Grizzly Bear](#). All dead grizzlies that are found or reported to FWP are having DNA samples done also. The Bull Trout are still listed as a threatened species, but with the exceptions of having some angling on Hungry Horse reservoir where you can keep two fish, and on the South Fork of the Flathead it is catch and release. For more information see [FWP Bull Trout](#). The Westslope Cutthroat project is still in the planning stages to learn more see the enclosed conservation program [release](#) from FWP or visit the [FWP Westslope Cutthroat](#).

Forest Service Updates

Seeley Lake Ranger District, Lolo National Forest; This year they will be continuing with their LAC monitoring which is in the 3rd year. Projects this year include clearing blow down on trails, and also clearing some other areas that have not been cleared in recent times. The district also has around 1000 water bars that need repairing, and they will be doing noxious weed spraying.

Lincoln Ranger District, Helena National Forest; Will have trail projects in the Valley of the Moon, along with working on Black Tail Pass which is part of the Continental Divide Trail and this project is being funded by the Continental Divide Society. They will also have water bars being repaired and trail clearing. The Bob Marshall Foundation and Back Country Horsemen will be helping out with some projects this summer and they will also continue with their LAC monitoring

Rocky Mountain Ranger District, Lewis and Clark National Forest; Kraig Lang thanked all volunteers that worked on the district last year and stated that the district logged five years of donated time in 2003. This year projects will include trail clearing. Re-working the trail along the wall which is in its 3rd year and they hope to get to Indian Point this summer. They have some bridge replacements on Rock Creek; they will also be opening some trails that have not been done since the 1988 fires for instance the Lick Creek trail and Ray Creek trail. There will be 4 wilderness rangers in the field and helping with trail work. They will also be formalizing weed capture on weed problems.

Hungry Horse Ranger District, Flathead National Forest; With only two wilderness rangers the district relies on groups like the Back Country Horsemen, Bob Marshall Foundation and the MCC Corps to assist with trail projects. They have some puncheons that need replacing this summer along with trail clearing and continuing with their LAC monitoring.

Spotted Bear Ranger District, Flathead National Forest; Their projects this year will include redoing the Michaels Creek trail along with the Little Salmon Bridge contract. They will also have a 5 or 6 person crew working out of Schaeffer Meadows on trail reconstruction and other items. There will also be a 4 or 5 member crew doing the same working out of Spotted Bear.

Bob Marshall Foundation

They have 42 projects planned for this year; they will be receiving help from the Sierra Club, the Boy Scouts from Kalispell and Whitefish. The license plate sales are doing real well. They are asking that if anyone can help with trail projects or packing supplies to please contact the Bob Marshall Foundation, P.O. Box 903, Whitefish, MT 59937. Phone (406)863-5411 Fax (406)863-5437.

Website www.bobmarshallfoundation.org or e-mail: trails@bobmarshallfoundation.org

Other Issues

The rapid decline of the Whitebark Pine was mentioned as an issue that needs more attention, to find more information on this subject you can check out these two web sites; [Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation](#)
[Management of Whitebark Pine](#)

Minutes Submitted by: Rich (Fred) Fitzpatrick