

2017 High Divide Workshops

Ranchlands – Recreation - Forests

What can we do today to leave a legacy of vibrant communities and healthy lands & resources?

When: April 4 9 am - 5:30 pm
April 5 8 am - 3:00 pm

Where: Lewis & Clark Room, University of
Montana Western, Dillon, MT

Working Ranchlands, Healthy Forests & Recreation Resources

We believe that conservation at the landscape scale starts locally at the community level, includes civil and open dialogue among all interested stakeholders, is coordinated collaboratively, and looks to science to support the conversation.

Workshop Goals

- 1) Continue our planning process for High Divide Stakeholders to express their vision for the desired future condition of the High Divide Landscape, a vision that sustains vibrant local communities, economies and resources. To this end we will:
 - Confirm stakeholder community and conservation goals for the High Divide
 - Share current information on the status of some of our High Divide priority resources and issues: Wildlife Connectivity, Rangelands, Forests, Recreation
 - Update one another on resource issues and conservation
 - Learn stakeholder perspectives of the future for three more of our primary goals: Rangelands, Forests, Recreation
- 2) Advance the High Divide Collaborative
 - Continue to build trust and credibility within the collaborative and amongst stakeholders
 - Continue to discover added value through collaboration
 - Build capacity to work toward our collaborative goals

The High Divide Collaborative's eight primary conservation goals, as stated by Collaborative stakeholders, are to conserve:

- **Ecological Linkage** among core habitat areas to conserve wide-ranging fish and wildlife populations that are resilient to climate change
- A **cultural legacy** of traditional food sources, tribal treaty lands, and travel ways such as the Nez Perce, Continental Divide, and Lewis & Clark Trails
- **Working Ranchlands** that are central to communities, economy and way of life
- Nationally important dispersed **recreation** lands and waterways where people enjoy nature
- **Clean & abundant water** for headwaters fisheries, wildlife, healthy riparian communities, and human uses.
- Intact, resilient **sagebrush steppe ecosystems** that support sustainable ranching communities and are critical for many wildlife species, including the greater sage grouse
- **Healthy forest lands** managed for sustained economic, social and ecological values
- Open land in the **wildland urban interface** to protect life and property, reduce fire costs, and allow wildfire to play its natural role.

High Divide Workshop Agenda

April 4, 2017

9:00 – 9:30 Welcome, Agenda and Purpose of the Workshop – Michael Whitfield

The Why, How and What of the High Divide Collaborative?

- How and why we formed the Collaborative
- Our overarching tenets for how we work collaboratively: trust, respect, tolerance for disparate viewpoints, safe place to talk about new ideas

Working Together to Form a Conservation Vision for the High Divide

- Review of our collaborative progress to date—brief update from past workshop discussions and collaborative efforts
- Questions, comments, where we go from here

9:30 – 9:45 Experience One educational model: using the High Divide region as a natural lab to educate students, benefit the local community and promote natural resource sustainability

Dr. Rob Thomas – University of Montana Western Professor of Geology/Regents Professor, Environmental Sciences Department

The Current Situation for our Resources of Interest:

Forested Lands, Working Ranchlands, and Recreation Resources

9:45-10:15 The Current State of Forest Resources in the High Divide, Idaho and Montana

Bray Beltran, Science Coordinator, Heart of the Rockies Initiative

Bray will present some GIS maps that display forest health, tree mortality, and fire risk related to some key forest insects and disease in the High Divide.

Bill Baer, Vegetation Program Manager, Salmon-Challis National Forest

Bill will speak about the current status of forested lands, public and private, in the High Divide landscape, and how we got to where we now are. He will introduce us to the values of forested lands for our communities and landscape. Bill will speak about the health of our forests and primary threats to forest health and productivity in the High Divide.

10:15-10:45 The current situation for working ranches and public land grazing in the High Divide

Brent Brock, Wildlife Biologist and Modeler, Holocene Wildlife Services LLC

Brent will present a model of private ranches at greatest risk to development based upon current and projected residential growth.

Bray Beltran, Science Coordinator, Heart of the Rockies Initiative

Bray will present maps of current public land grazing allotments with grazing statistics.

Zakery Miller, Idaho Farm Bureau and public land grazing permittee

Zak will speak about the current state of working ranches and threats to ranch viability in the High Divide and the importance of public land grazing and the impacts of permitting rules and changes.

10:45-11:15 The current status of recreation resources in the High Divide

Noelle Meier, Forest Recreation Program Manager, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

As a Forest manager with a deep family history in Southwest Montana, Noelle is very interested in providing the full measure of recreation opportunities to visitors to the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Noelle will talk about recreation uses, resources and management.

Kathy Rinaldi, Idaho Conservation Coordinator, Greater Yellowstone Coalition

Kathy will present preliminary data from GYC's recreation inventory for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and discuss their ongoing project to provide a measure of recreation activity.

Bray Beltran, Science Coordinator, Heart of the Rockies Initiative

Bray will display the maps that we have and summary statistics for recreation resources.

11:15 –12:00 Public Lands Planning Processes – Forest Service and BLM updates

Gina Knudson, Salmon-Challis National Forest - Gina will describe the ongoing forest planning update process now underway on the Salmon-Challis National Forest.

Mary D'Aversa, Idaho Falls District, Bureau of Land Management - Mary will talk about the Bureau of Land Management's plans to advance its plan updates in the Salmon field area.

Alex Dunn, Environmental/NEPA Coordinator, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

Alex will discuss examples of stakeholder led collaboratives that can lead to all lands conservation at large scale

12:00- 1:00 LUNCH served on site

1:00-1:30 Updated information on wildlife connectivity in the High Divide

Bray Beltran, Science Coordinator, Heart of the Rockies Initiative

Bray will very briefly introduce our ongoing efforts to collect data on wildlife connectivity in the High Divide and to model fine scale connectivity habitats for key species.

Brent Brock, Wildlife Biologist and Modeler, Holocene Wildlife Services LLC

Brent will provide an update of efforts to model wolverine connectivity in the High Divide for the current and future conditions and as an example for how to look at scenario analysis

Scott Bergen, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Scott will talk about our cooperative effort to model elk core habitats and connectivity across boundaries in the High Divide with use of maps of elk GPS locations, seasonal herd movements, and key seasonal habitats.

Questions and Comments from Stakeholders

1:30-2:30 Cowboys & wetlands: connecting water, wildlife, and working lands in the Intermountain West

Patrick Donnelly, Intermountain West Joint Venture, US Fish & Wildlife Service

Patrick will describe his ongoing work to characterize the core and connectivity habitat needs for key avian species that use the High Divide, including sage grouse, sandhill cranes and water birds.

Forested Lands

Our goal—To conserve healthy forest lands managed for sustained economic, social & ecological values

Liz Davy, District Ranger Ashton/Island Park, C-T National Forest. Liz will introduce and moderate session.

2:30-3:15 Socio-Economic Values of our Forests

Dane Buk, Founder and Owner, Terra Firma Organics, Inc. (via Skype)

Dane has an in depth understanding of the challenges that timber producers face in their work on public lands in the current working environment. What social and economic values do we derive from forested lands in the High Divide? What are the economic drivers/challenges, infrastructure,

wood products, what it takes to sustain a mill, what kind of markets, what are new and emerging wood products?

Bill Baer, Vegetation Program Manager, Salmon-Challis National Forest

Liz Davy, District Ranger Ashton/Island Park, Caribou-Targhee National Forest

Bill and Liz will be prepared to provide some responses from a land management agency perspective.

Questions and Comments from Stakeholders

3:15-3:30 *Break*

3:30-4:00 Ecological Values of our Forests

Travis Belote, Research Ecologist, The Wilderness Society

Travis will speak about the ecological values of the forested lands of the High Divide landscape for forest dependent wildlife, ecological connectivity, and ecosystem services in the context of needs and opportunities for forest restoration and fire ecology.

Questions and Comments from Stakeholders

4:00-5:00 Breakout Session

Stakeholders will be provided with an opportunity to list and post their thoughts on the social, economic and ecological values of forested lands and how to conserve those values.

Once stakeholders have posted their interests, we will break into small discussion groups to go deeper into the messages that have been posted.

- What is our vision to achieve conservation of Forested Lands, what does it mean, what are our values and objectives?
- What can stakeholders do in our local communities and watershed collaborations to engage in this issue?
- How will the agencies achieve their monitoring goals in their land management plans, is there opportunity for Community Engagement: citizen-science/volunteering.

5:00-5:30 Report Back, Wrap-up

5:30-7:30 Reception – appetizers and cash bar

Film screenings: The High Divide

Nature's Sponge – TNC/UMW

Stewardship with Vision – MVRG/WLA Jeff Laszlo

April 5, 2017

Rangelands

Our Goal—To conserve working ranchlands central to communities, economy and way of life.

8:00-9:00 Panel Discussion: The Benefits of Sustaining Working Ranches in the High Divide

Zakery Miller, Idaho Farm Bureau Zak will introduce and moderate the panel.

Stacey Barta, Rangeland Resource Program Coordinator, MT Dept. Nat. Resource Conservation

Rangeland Goods and Ecosystem Services that ranchlands provide, some Montana statistics.

Merrill Beyeler, Beyeler Ranches, Leadore, ID

The social benefits of sustaining working ranchlands

Eric Kalsta, Kalsta Ranches, Glen, MT

Working ranchlands and climate/drought adaptation

Jim Hagenbarth, Hagenbarth Livestock, Dillon, MT

The Ecological benefits of sustaining working ranchlands

Questions and Discussion

9:00-10:00 Conservation activity for working ranches and public land grazing in the High Divide

Kristin Troy, Lemhi Regional Land Trust. Kristin will introduce and moderate the panel

Kristin Troy, Lemhi Regional Land Trust

Land Trusts and Conservancies have worked with many ranchers in the High Divide to conserve ranchlands through conservation easements, with great benefit to ranch owners. However, conservation easements are not the only conservation tool in the toolbox. Many land trusts, watershed groups, conservation districts and others in the region go way, way beyond easements in the name of furthering conservation and supporting ranchers and ranching community.

Tracie O'Neill, Rangeland Management Specialist, Natural Resources Conservation Service

The NRCS and Conservation Districts do much to assist ranchers with conservation programs and to respond to the need to coordinate with other resource issues such as sage grouse conservation.

Cornelia Hudson, Dillon Field Office, Bureau of Land Management

Cornelia will speak about the Dillon field office's ongoing watershed program and over a decade of collaborative work with grazing permittees to enhance the watershed health of grazing lands.

Jeff Laszlo, Granger Ranches, Ennis, MT

Jeff will speak about restoration efforts on his multi-generational ranch and the impact to operations. Jeff will speak about some tools that are available to landowners and how they can access them.

10:00-10:15 Break

10:15-10:45 Break-out Discussion

- What is our vision to achieve conservation of Rangelands, what does it mean, what are our values and objectives?
- What can stakeholders do in our local communities and watershed collaborations to conserve working ranches and public land grazing lands?

10:45-11:00 Report Back and Discussion

Recreation Resources

Our Goal – To conserve nationally important dispersed recreation lands and waterways where people enjoy nature

11:00-12:00 Recreation needs and challenges—World Café

(Tables organized by topic to talk about recreation needs, user groups, and impacts in different sectors. Small audience groups will rotate to topic tables every 15 minutes.)

Motorized Recreation in the High Divide – Greg Bitters, Performance Motors Sports, Ashton, ID

Mountain Biking/Trails - Cory Birkenbuel, Beaverhead Trails Committee

Hunting Outfitters -Bill Kemp, Montana Bucks & Ducks

Mac Minard, MT Outfitters & Guides Association

Wildland Recreation - Rob Mason, Central Idaho Representative, The Wilderness Society

Sally Cathey, Southwest Montana Field Director

John Gatchell, Senior Conservation Advisor, Montana Wilderness Association.

*Economic values of Fishing - Brandon Hoffner, Executive Director, Henry's Fork Foundation
Jamie Laatsch, Conservation/Outreach Coordinator, Henry's Fork Foundation*

12:00 - 1:00 LUNCH provided on site

1:00 – 1:45 Break-out discussions

- What are stakeholder priorities for recreation opportunity, key concerns for recreation management

1:45-2:00 Report Back and Discussion

2:00 – 3:00 Our next steps in development of a community vision for the High Divide Landscape.

- Discussion of next steps to identify our vision and strategies for all High Divide goals
- Committee structure and governance

University of Montana Western Campus

