

Detailed Project Description Gallatin Collaborative - Phase 1

Background

The Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area (HPBHWSA), 155,000 acres that straddle the Gallatin Range between Bozeman and the northern boundary of Yellowstone Park, was created in 1977 by Congress as one of the eight National Forest Wilderness Study Areas in Montana. The initial intent of this designation across the West was to preserve important wild areas in a type of “holding pattern” until Congress either passed a Wilderness bill for each one, or released the area to another management type.

From the beginning, the HPBHWSA has had its challenges. Initially it was comprised of 31% private lands. The Wilderness Study Area designation prompted the Gallatin National Forest to gradually consolidate lands through purchases and trades, to the configuration it is today, at 8% private lands. Most of the consolidation took place in 1999, 22 years after passage of the Montana Wilderness Study Act.

The Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan of 2006 added mobility restrictions in an attempt to balance preservation and recreational use, but it became the focus of an environmental lawsuit by those contending the Plan did not sufficiently protect the WSA’s wilderness character. This lawsuit was settled in 2009, but the resulting travel restrictions have been highly controversial and have led to several appeals of the court decision.

This proposal is being advanced as an alternative to having the HPBHWSA managed by litigation, interim plans or a non-inclusive process. The desire for a permanent resolution of HPBHWSA issues has been expressed to the Yellowstone Business Partnership (YBP) by a group of key stakeholders in the controversy. YBP is responding to this invitation with a proposal to assess the prospects for success in reaching consensus on the future of the WSA using a public, collaborative approach.

Gallatin Collaborative Project - Phase 1: Assessment of Collaboration Potential

Launching a collaborative approach to consensus-decision making that is similar to the Clearwater Basin Collaborative in Idaho first requires a comprehensive assessment of its potential. The Yellowstone Business Partnership is willing to conduct this assessment that will:

1. Assess the willingness of the key recreational stakeholders to participate in a collaborative process. Determine under what conditions such collaboration could occur given positions that have been at conflict for many years.
2. Assess the institutional climate for local collaboration. Communicate with city and county officials; state and federal agencies; and educational institutions as to their willingness to participate in and help fund a Gallatin Collaborative.
3. Evaluate private sector and adjacent landowner interest in seeing a resolution to the WSA controversy. Interview permittees, chamber leaders and recreational businesses.

4. Affirm the level of commitment by the Montana's Congressional delegation and other key elected officials. Document their intent to participate and their willingness to advance/support a consensus agreement if reached in Phase 2.

The deliverable will be a written assessment that is derived from one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders and officials, small focus groups, and online public surveys. A bonus offering will be a hands-on workshop for interested RAC members and WSA stakeholders to demonstrate public participation and consensus-building techniques that have been successful with collaborative groups. Included in the final report will be sections on the following:

- History of the Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn WSA conflict and a summary of efforts made to resolve the issues. The policy implications of this history of conflict and a preference to maintain the status quo also will be discussed.
- Prospects for a successful collaboration based on the research and input received. A summary of interview and focus group input will be provided with confidentiality of all individuals maintained.
- If prospects are favorable, a structure, timeline and budget for launching a Gallatin Collaborative will be outlined. Approaches for organizing and facilitating the Collaborative will be recommended, along with an RFP for hiring a professional facilitator with nationally recognized credentials (e.g. IAF, IAP2)

Organizational and Team Qualifications

The Yellowstone Business Partnership (YBP) is a nonprofit, 501(c) 3 organization founded in 2002 by Bozeman-based business and conservation leaders. Our mission is to enhance the environmental, social and economic well-being of the Greater Yellowstone region by inspiring, empowering and leading business and community partners. We believe that to achieve long-term profitability in this special place, businesses must fulfill their social and environmental responsibilities and care for the region as a whole.

Janice Brown became the Executive Director of YBP in July 2003 after 27 years of involvement in the Idaho conservation community. Since her hire the Partnership has united more than 150 businesses dedicated to preserving a healthy environment and shaping a prosperous and sustainable future for communities in 27 Montana, Idaho and Wyoming counties surrounding Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks. The Partnership, with field offices in Billings, Idaho Falls and Driggs, promotes scientific understanding, informed dialogue, and collaborative approaches in resolving our region's most complex socioeconomic and natural resource challenges. Her role in Phase 1 of the Gallatin Collaborative Project will be to design the 3-month assessment, guide the YBP staff and volunteers, and ensure there is sufficient stakeholder and public outreach in the process.

Ms. Brown holds a B.S. in Resource Recreation Management from the School of Forestry at Oregon State University and has more than 35 years of professional experience in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. She was executive director of the Henry's Fork Foundation in Ashton, Idaho, from 1991-2000, which included seven years as co-facilitator of the Henry's Fork Watershed Council. This collaboration of irrigation, angling and resource agency interests

still meets after 17 years of consensus-building using the M. Scott Peck community-building approach. Jan's government service includes two tours of duty at the Idaho National Laboratory in ecological sciences and radioactive waste management, and service as natural resource advisor to former Idaho Governor John V. Evans. Jan also has completed the three Certificate Courses in Public Participation offered by the International Association for Public Participation.

YBP Sustainability Programs Manager Heather Higinbotham has gained region-wide respect in managing YBP's two signature sustainability programs (*UnCommon Sense and the Greater Yellowstone Framework for Sustainable Development*) since February 2008. Montana DEQ has contracted with YBP not only to deliver business leadership programs to the benefit of Montana businesses, but to deliver responsible purchasing workshops to local governments and universities all across the state. Heather's project role will be conducting and analyzing the bulk of personal interviews required for the assessment and helping to organize the small focus groups and collaborative techniques workshop.

Heather graduated from the University of Montana with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry and minors in Environmental Studies, Wilderness Studies, and German. She received her Master of Science degree from the University of Montana in 2003, in Environmental Studies, Alternative Energy and Sustainable Building. Heather is a licensed Real Estate Agent in Montana, a LEED Accredited Professional, and is an approved continuing education provider for the ID, MT and WY Boards of Realty Regulation, the America Planning Association and the American Institute of Architects. She lives in Bozeman.

Phase 1 Budget Narrative

The YBP Team proposes to dedicate 300 hours of executive, program and communications staff time over a 12-week period to perform research and analyze online surveys, conduct at least 25 personal interviews and three focus groups, hold one collaborative techniques workshop, and prepare the final assessment. This staff work is being budgeted at \$13,500 for January – March 2011, based on a \$45/hour charge for total compensation. Estimated work share will be 50% (150 hours) for Sustainability Programs Manager Heather Higinbotham; 35% (100 hours) for Executive Director Janice Brown; and 15% (50 hours) for Communications Specialist Kim Billimoria.

Direct costs will be minimal, with \$750 budgeted for Jan's travel (1 trip per month from Idaho Falls, 420 miles round trip plus costs), and \$250 in materials and meeting costs. Indirect costs are being budgeted so not to exceed 2.5%.

Monitoring Plan

A monitoring plan will be critical should Phase 2 of the Gallatin Collaborative project be recommended in the final assessment. Given the short duration of Phase 1, however, we suggest that the Gallatin RAC establish an oversight committee to which the YBP Team will report monthly on our progress and challenges. This monthly meeting could occur in person or by teleconference to ensure that YBP is fulfilling its contractual commitments and is on target to deliver the final assessment report by March 31, 2011.